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General Education and Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of Co-Teaching in High Schools

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Walden University

College of Education

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Julia Pitts

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University

2021

Abstract

General Education and Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of Co-Teaching in High

Schools

by

Julia A. Pitts

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2021

Abstract

Students with special needs are being integrated into general education classrooms. To accommodate these students, schools are using an instructional delivery method with two teachers, one general education and one special education in the same classroom. The goal of this qualitative study was to understand perceptions of general and special education teachers who were assigned to work in co-taught classrooms. The concept that supports cooperative learning is the sociocultural theoretical framework of Vygotsky that focuses on connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they act and interact. Six general education teachers and six special education teachers who are now or have been involved in co-teaching participated in semistructured interviews and provided valuable information regarding three facets of co-teaching: common planning time, administration support for co-teaching, and professional development for co-teaching. Data from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis, with four themes emerging from the data: common planning time, lack of professional development training for general and special education teachers, lack of administrative support, as well as challenges and benefits of co-teaching. Implications for social change include improving educational opportunities for students with special needs, as well as encouraging social interactions among all students. Based on these themes, a three-day professional development program was developed to provide teachers and administrators with information and strategies that could be used to make co-teaching a more viable instructional method that would provide optimum teaching and learning for both teachers and students.

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Julia A. Pitts

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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Walden University

March 2021

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this doctoral study to my late mother who will forever be my rock. My mom became a widow at an early age to 13 children and raised us all to be the change that we wanted to see in others and to always give back to our community. I salute my mom for never giving up on me when the doctors and other medical professionals told her that I would not live to be a teenager because there was no cure for my diagnosis as an infant with chronic asthma. I acknowledge gratitude to my family who has so diligently supported me in the pursuit of this degree. My amazing husband of 35 years and our phenomenal twins, D'Angela and D'Angelo Jr., for always being my number one cheerleader throughout this process. A heart-filled thanks to my seven sisters and three brothers for being my biggest fan and for supporting my personal aspiration to obtain a doctoral degree. I pledge to continue to make our family name proud. Without the loving support of family and friends, the completion of this goal would not have been possible. I will forever be grateful for my two best friends Shirley Knight and Sylvia Mosby for their unconditional love, support, friendship, and prayers. I would be remised if I did not pay homage to my steadfast and dependable friend and editor, Mrs. June Cline for giving her time and talents to proofread and edit my research throughout this process.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

School districts experience unique challenges when determining how to meet the needs of a diverse population while ensuring all students attain academic success and meet the federal guidelines and state requirements. To ensure academic needs are met, some local schools have implemented co-teaching as an instructional approach to support learning in diverse classrooms to improve student academic performance. The co-teaching approach can be used to ensure procedures are met while still accommodating the needs of all learners (Conderman & Hedin, 2014). Such instructional strategies are essential when general and special education teachers work together with the assumption that collaboration leads to improved student academic achievement.

Co-teaching is a model in which general and special education teachers collaborate to co-plan, co-assess, and co-deliver instruction that enables students with special learning needs an opportunity to attend classes with their typically developing peers (Drescher, 2017). Co-teaching involves pairing two teachers, one general education and one special education, who are considered equal although their contributions to the instructional process are different (Samuels, 2015). The model distinguishes between collaboration, cooperative learning, and a form of inclusion that influences student achievement (Drescher, 2017). Collaboration, cooperative learning, and inclusion do not imply that two teachers will be working in the same classroom. These instructional models could involve meetings among teachers, grouping of students, or providing the same instruction to students with and without special needs. While co-teaching gives

opportunities for students, teachers assigned to this instructional model often find it challenging. However, in their shared classroom, co-teachers work to develop the capacity to achieve consensus on conceptual and behavioral issues regardless of their differences in education, skills, postures, or position as either general education or special education teacher (Friend et al., 2015). According to Friend et al. (2015), when co-teachers become a cohesive team, they perceive that their contributions are valued, and their presence in the classroom is considered equal. Teachers' beliefs have an influence on their motivations in terms that affect the quality of their co-teaching practice (Klehm, 2014; Nichols et al., 2010).

Teachers' perceptions could play a considerable role in the effectiveness of the co-teaching environment. This case study sought to understand the experiences of regular and special education high school teachers in co-taught classrooms. Teachers' perceptions and experiences related to professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons were explored. In responding to semistructured interviews, general education teachers and special education teachers, who are now or have recently been involved in co-teaching, offered their perspectives regarding the efficacy of co-teaching as a practical instructional delivery practice.

The Definition of the Problem

A problem exists between concepts associated with co-teaching presented in the literature and the actual practice associated with co-teaching in high schools (Solis et al., 2012). Co-teaching is proposed as the most likely route for closing the achievement gap

between students with disabilities and their typical peers (Friend & Barron, 2016; Walsh, 2012). While the literature has provided strategies and theories associated with co-teaching, little research investigated teachers' perceptions of co-teaching as an effective way to offer inclusive education for all students.

Researchers (Friend & Barron, 2016; Solis et al., 2012, Walsh, 2012) have helped understand teachers' perceptions regarding the use of co-teaching practices used in high school classrooms. Following in this line of inquiry, my study investigated the perceptions of general and special education teachers assigned to co-taught classrooms. The goal of the study was to understand perceptions of general and special education teachers who were assigned to work in co-taught classrooms. Based on their responses, the outcomes could help create collaborative partnerships, obtain administrative support for co-teaching, determine problems teachers have in using co-teaching models for their classrooms, and manage the lack of common planning time to create lessons and assessments for the co-taught classroom.

The Local Problem

High school teachers' perceptions of co-teaching in an urban high school were examined in this study. Barnside School [pseudonym] district has been implementing co-teaching approaches since 2012. In a standard classroom with 30 students, up to eight may be classified with specific or mild learning disabilities, such as hearing, physical cognitive, or emotional impairments. The Barnside High School goal identified in the 2012 School Improvement Plan (SIP) was to improve outcomes for all learners and ensure they have access to the same curriculum taught by a highly qualified teacher. As a

part of the SIP, the high school sought to place all students regardless of the presence or absence of a disability in a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) classroom taught by both general education and special education teachers using co-teaching approaches. After implementing co-teaching at the high school, both general education and special education teachers expressed concerns and dissatisfaction with the lack of consistency in the instructional methods of co-teaching (Special Education Supervisor, Personal Communication, April 20, 2018). These concerns included the need for professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and the availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons in co-taught classrooms (Special Education Supervisor; Personal Communication, April 20, 2018).

The impetus for inclusive education in Michigan resulted from the need to offer instructional services to students with special needs in general education classrooms. An instructional delivery system, co-teaching in inclusive settings in K-12 classrooms is gaining acceptance in many school districts (Beninghof, 2020; Gokbulut et al., 2020; Sakarneh & Nair, 2014), although the Michigan Department of Education (MDE, 2016) has no specific policies addressing co-teaching. Other states (e.g., Maryland, Kentucky, Nevada, Texas) issued policies that supported co-teaching as a viable method of providing instruction to students with special needs with their nondisabled peers, however Michigan has made no similar move (MDE, 2016). Many Michigan schools, including Barnside Public High School, implemented co-teaching in their classrooms as part of the school improvement plans to offer instruction to students with and without disabilities together in an inclusive setting.

Teachers in a co-teaching dyad in Michigan can discuss their experiences with co-teaching and provide insight for any challenges they may have in their shared classrooms. Researchers mentioned in their studies that more research is needed to increase the understanding regarding general, and special education teachers' perceptions of design, communication, monitoring, and benefits associated with co-teaching that are included in the co-teaching approaches used in their schools (Pugach & Winn, 2011; Yopp et al., 2014).

The instructional design of co-teaching is seen in the classrooms as a strategy to meet the needs of all learners (Nierengarten, 2013). Nierengarten (2013) cited that special education and general education teachers are confronted with increased demands on the implementation of co-teaching strategies in high school co-taught classroom settings. Co-teaching has become an innovative strategy in schools for addressing collaborative instruction in an inclusion setting and remains as a means of improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities (Friend et al., 2010; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Kohler-Evans, 2015). Districts use different models of co-teaching nationwide as an instructional practice to increase students' academic performance and promote the blending of special and general education (Beninghof, 2020). According to IDEA (U. S. Department of Education, 2004) and No Child Left Behind NCLB (U. S. Department of Education, 2002), students with disabilities should have equal access to the same curriculum in the classrooms as their peers and have the benefit of being taught by highly qualified teachers (Simon & Black, 2011; Walsh, 2012).

The Rationale

The rationale behind this qualitative case study is to understand the experiences of co-teaching in terms of professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and the availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons in co-taught classrooms. Understanding how both general and special education teachers feel about their co-teaching experiences can generate collaboration and communication among members of a team to meet the needs of all learners. General education students could benefit by receiving individual help and modifications through the collaboration between both teachers (Tschida et al., 2015). The study generates collaboration and communication among all members of a team to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, the research serves as a document that may be used as a planning tool to assist school administrators in ensuring that the components of co-teaching approaches are addressed with all stakeholders as well as inform superintendents and special education directors as they monitor system effectiveness.

Definition of Terms

The following terms defined specifically for this study:

Common planning time: Common planning time is a regularly scheduled time during the school day when co-teachers meet to develop lesson plans, prepare classroom materials, create student assessments, and meet with parents (Hunter et al., 2014).

Co-teaching: Two teachers, one certified in a subject area and the other certified as a special education teacher, work collaboratively to deliver instruction to students with

and without disabilities in a general education setting (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017; Sileo, 2011).

Collaboration: Collaboration is the engagement of two individuals who are equal in status who are working toward a common purpose, specifically giving education to all students with and without disabilities in a general education classroom (Friend & Cook, 2017).

Inclusion: According to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, inclusive education is a philosophy that supports: "The right of all students to attend schools with their peers and to receive appropriate and quality programming" (Education and Early Childhood Development, 2016, para. 1).

Individual Education Program (IEP): "A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with §§300.320 through 300.324" (U. S. Department of Education, 2017, para 1)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): "to the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (Copenhaver, 2006, p. 1, para. 2).

School resource coordinating team: A school-based problem-solving team that addresses school issues by working collaboratively with all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, parents, and community members (Bronson, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This research is important to school administrators, general and special education teachers, and school resources coordinating teams in implementing the co-teaching model as an instructional approach to benefit the diverse learner. Additionally, the study provides knowledge for school administrators in understanding and managing the lack of common planning time to create lessons and assessments for the co-taught classroom. By understanding the teachers' perceptions of co-teaching, administrators can adjust to professional development and policy issues regarding pairing teachers to instruct students with and without disabilities.

According to Solis et al (2012), research results can be used to ensure that decision making is aligned with evidence-based practice in a school setting. Walsh (2012) supported the concept that co-teaching strategies and tools could be used to promote system-wide efforts to increase the academic performance of students in general and special education. A qualitative case study using perceptions of general and special education teachers who are working collaboratively in inclusive educational settings could provide added insight into professional development that could enhance the co-teaching dyad and improve student outcomes.

The team responsible for developing IEPs can use the research results. They can decide based on the study findings if their students can benefit from being in co-taught classrooms or resource rooms with a special education teacher. Understanding some of the problems associated with co-teaching is important to assure that the classroom milieu provides an impetus for effective education. Administrators are expected to work with

teachers to provide students with special needs and students in general education access to the same curriculum and same learning circumstances. If there are problems in the classroom, the administrator is responsible for adjusting the learning environment more effectively.

Research Questions

The overarching research goal for this study was to understand perceptions of co-teaching from special education and general education teachers in Barnside High School. The possible solution for each inquiry of the research question generated findings for the study. Three subquestions were used to discuss this overarching question:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences with the co-teaching model?

Subquestion 1a: How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of planning time?

Subquestion 1b: How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of administrative support?

Subquestion 1c: How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of professional development?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do high school special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model employed?

Subquestion 2a: How do high school special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of planning time?

Subquestion 2b: How do high school special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of administrative support?

Subquestion 2c: How do high school special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of professional development?

By using perceptions of general and special education teachers who are working collaboratively in an inclusive educational setting, this study could give added insight into professional development that could enhance the co-teaching dyad and improve student outcomes (Gokbulut et al., 2020). Walsh (2012) supported the concept that co-teaching strategies and tools promote system-wide efforts to increase the academic performance of students in general and special education.

Review of Literature

Various databases were used to find articles relevant to the topics included in this review of the literature. The process involved systematically gathering data that can be used to identify specific issues or concerns regarding co-teaching. Searches for refereed journal articles used electronic databases including Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, Educational Full Text, ProQuest Central, Dissertations and Theses, Dissertations & Theses at Walden University, A SAGE full-text database, Educational Resource Information Center (Eric), eBooks on EBSCOhost, Health Sciences: A SAGE full-text

collection, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, and the Teacher Reference Center. In addition, resources from the local library to obtain articles for this research. The searches used keywords or phrases, including *co-teaching*, *inclusion*, *diverse learners*, *collaboration*, *special education*, *general education*, *history of co-teaching*, *co-teaching models*, *parity*, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, *least restrictive environment (LRE)*, and *cooperative learning*.

Conceptual Framework

The primary concept that supports cooperative learning refers to the sociocultural theoretical framework of Vygotsky. The framework focuses on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they act and interact with shared experiences. Vygotsky's model of educational development emphasizes the influence adults have regarding the cultural and educational development of children (Ormrod, 2011; Vygotsky, 1980). The model describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The framework illustrates an understanding of the social construction of knowledge and how it changes. Knowledge is constructed because of interaction and shared efforts to make sense of new information over time (McLeskey et al., 2014).

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy in which learners interact with each other to solve problems, complete tasks, or achieve goals. Johnson et al.'s (2014) conceptual framework promote the interaction of working together to carry out shared goals within cooperative situations to maximize each other's learning. Although the influence of cooperative learning accentuates this study, the theory of social

interdependence illustrates the focus for the instructional practice of co-teaching.

Cooperative learning approaches give a platform for the social construction of knowledge, as well as the promotion of independent practices.

The framework of Johnson and Johnsons' (2009) cooperative learning theory undergirds this study that focuses on social interdependence. The Johnsons' five items that support co-teaching learning methods are positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, group processing, and interpersonal and small group skills engage students to interact with the content and give a foundation for cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Johnson et al. 2014).

The social interdependence theory gives the basis on which to define cooperative learning is comparable to the cooperative learning theory. The social interdependence theory proposed by Koffka considered groups as a unit with the interdependence of the members could vary (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The premise of social interdependence theory is that the type of interdependence structured in a situation is decided by the interaction among the individuals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Moreover, for interdependence to exist, more than one person must be involved, and the people in the group must influence each other, with a change in the state of one causes a change in the state of the others (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

The conditions found by social interdependence theory are positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Positive interdependence tends to result in collaborators engaging in promotive interaction, while negative interdependence can

result in oppositional interaction, with no interdependence resulting from an absence of interaction.

The conceptual framework from which the research questions were developed focused on how general and special education teachers in an inclusive co-teaching setting perceive design, collaboration, monitoring, limitations, challenges, and assignment to a co-taught classroom (Johnson et al., 2014). Five elements ease the cooperative process of learning to engage and give effective instruction during co-teaching. The elements can be extended as a learning method to evoke collaboration in the classroom. The social interdependence theory is explained using five key elements:

- Individual accountability raises concern to a specific group or individual that is affected by the skills and outcomes of each student and a whole group (Johnson et al., 2014). The element allows teachers to structure individual accountability.
- Johnson et al. (2014) suggested that the positive interdependence element results when placing students in small group learning, where everyone relies on each other. Johnson et al. (2014) mentioned that students are to work together collaboratively on mutual goals as a team under the directions of the teacher to prove the qualities of shared resources and assigned roles.
- Face-to-face interaction is an important student-directed process that is comparable to co-teaching that helps students appreciate planning and time. The method allows students to promote each other's learning by sharing, helping, and encouraging efforts to learn (Johnson et al., 2014).

- Group processing refers to the assessment and use of the skills and actions of each group and allowing time to reflect. According to Johnson et al., (2014), ample time must be given to students for feedback and discussion among the members to keep effective relationships. In co-teaching, teachers work with small groups of students to give intervention strategies. Both general and special education teachers check the process and give feedback to the groups and the classes (Solis, 2012).
- Interpersonal and small group skills that give every student the opportunity to be part of the learning process are referred to as social skills. Johnson and Johnson (2009) and Johnson et al. (2014) said that groups could not function effectively if students lack the needed social skills. However, if the students lack these skills, teachers incorporate the skills with academic skills.

History of Co-Teaching

Co-teaching was introduced as an educational concept over two decades ago to give special education support to students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Co-teaching is used to meet federal mandates of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and supports all students in an inclusive environment (Friend et al., 2010). The instructional practice gives strategies for students with and without special needs and students at risk in the general education curriculum by scaffolding their learning experiences, using differentiated instruction, and giving individualized teaching (Beninghof, 2020; Graziano & Navarette, 2012; Solis et al., 2012). NCLB facilitated the advancement of teaching by setting up mandates to help students with learning

disabilities and students from diverse cultures (Friends et al., 2010). The collaborative strategy of co-teaching has become an acceptable instructional delivery method used nationwide by school administrators and teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners in general education classroom settings (Neifeald, & Nissim, 2019; Ploessl & Rock, 2014). Using co-teachers in general education classrooms give opportunities for administrators to develop flexible schedules and give targeted instructions using a variety of strategies.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016), special education students are spending more time in general education settings. Research of the United States Department of Education (2012) mentioned that more than 90% of students aged 6 to 21 were educated in regular classrooms for at least some part of the school day. Table 1 presents the change from 1989 to 2013 in the percentage of students with disabilities in general education settings by the percentage of time spent in these settings. To illustrate the growth of students with special needs presence in general education classrooms found that 31.7% of the students with disabilities spent 80% or more of their school day in general education settings in 1989. In 2013, 61.8% of the students with disabilities were spending 80% or more of their instructional time in general education settings.

Table 1

Percentage of Students with Disabilities by the Percentage of Time Spent in General Education Settings from 1989 to 2013

Year	<u>Regular School, Time Spent in General Education Class</u>			Separate School or Residential Facility
	Less than 40%	40 to 79%	80% or more	
1989	24.9	37.5	31.7	5.5
1994	22.4	28.5	44.8	5.1
1997	20.4	28.8	46.8	3.6
1999	20.3	29.8	45.9	3.6
2001	19.2	28.5	48.2	3.6
2004	17.9	26.5	51.5	3.6
2007	15.4	22.4	56.8	3.4
2010	14.2	20.0	60.5	3.4
2011	14.0	19.8	61.1	3.3
2012	13.9	19.7	61.2	3.3
2013	13.8	19.4	61.8	3.2

Note: Adapted from Digest of Education Statistics, Table 204.60: Percentage distribution of students 6 to 21 years old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, by educational environment: Selected years 1989 through 2013 (NCES, 2016).

The historical background of co-teaching can be traced from the second half of the 20th century during the progressive education movement. The legislation eased the advancement of co-teaching by setting up laws to benefit students with learning disabilities and students of diverse cultures (Friends et al., 2010). A general thread in the history of teacher education and special education has been the preparation of classroom

teachers for inclusion. The role of special education teachers in inclusive settings has been substantially influenced by legislative mandates included in the NCLB Act (2004).

Before the first passage of Individuals with Disabilities, Education Act (IDEA) the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 discussed the preparation of both special education and general education teachers to work with all students in the least restrictive environment (Chapman, 2015; McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) was replaced by the IDEA Act of 1990 which was amended in 1997 and reauthorized in 2004 set up the legal framework for the provision of inclusive education as part of the LRE mandate that states that all students with disabilities are guaranteed an education in an LRE environment. Although the term inclusion is not in the law, inclusive practice comes from the federal law governing special education (IDEA, 2004) found under the least restrictive environment (LRE). Under LRE, before more restrictive options are considered, the general education classroom is the first place to be considered for placing a student with a disability (McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine, 2014). Federal legislation has inspired policy changes in the educational system, demanding schools and districts to provide all students the opportunity to be engaged in the learning process with successful outcomes. Friend et al. (2010) alluded that co-teaching has emerged as a way to ensure that students with special needs have access to the same curriculum as general education students while still receiving the specialized instruction to which they are entitled. Morin (2020) believes the least restrictive environment is the most desirable placement for a student to achieve learning. Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 and amended IDEA through Public Law 114.95; the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 (Klein, 2016; Lee, 2020). In the law, Congress states:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Researchers McFarland et al., 2017; McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, et al., 2014; Solis et al., 2012) study indicated approximately 62% of students with disabilities spend 80% or more of their school day in the general education setting; therefore, personnel must decide what support is necessary to ensure that students are educated in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible.

Co-Teaching as Cooperative Learning

The inclusion of students with disabilities has created a controversy among many educators and school districts across the country (Friend et al., 2010; Friend et al., 2015; Solis et al., 2012). Since the passing of the legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), teachers and school divisions began seeking inclusive education to help ensure that all students could have access to the general education curriculum. Co-teaching has become a common strategy in high schools for discussing diverse learning (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Most effective inclusive schools have shifted away from traditional

roles and responsibilities and have developed flexible schedules to give targeted instruction using a variety of approaches such as co-teaching (McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner et al., 2014). The number of students with disabilities who are being served in general education classes is expected to increase, needing general and special education teachers to adjust where and how students are serviced. Therefore, to meet the challenge of educating students with disabilities, general education classroom teachers are meeting the needs of all students by incorporating co-teaching techniques in their instruction.

Many co-teaching design models are used to provide students with special needs opportunities to be educated in the same classrooms with their nondisabled peers (Solis et al., 2012). The design of co-teaching involves having a special education teacher working collaboratively with a general education teacher to instruct a curricular subject, such as mathematics or science (Friend et al., 2010; Friend, Embury, & Clarke, 2015; Solis et al., 2012). The two teachers are expected to work cooperatively and plan lessons collaboratively. Solis et al. (2012) compared six syntheses of research literature or meta-analysis on co-teaching that were conducted from 1990 through 2010. They concluded that although the general education teacher provided the majority of the teaching, with the special education teacher acting as a support in the classroom, the reviewed synthesis rarely looked at the effectiveness of the model on student achievement. Another model of co-teaching has the special education teacher and general education teacher alternating delivery of instruction (Friend et al. 2010; Friend et al., 2015; Solis et al., 2012).

As a school-wide collaboration practice, the pedagogy of co-teaching is the basis for discussion of the strategies that undergird co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995). Co-

teaching strategies bring together two teachers of equal status to create a learning environment with shared planning, instruction, and making informed decisions about the success of the lessons (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Cook & Friend, 1995; Crow & Smith, 2005). The research of McLeskey et al. (2014) said that schools are to use a variety of strategies to ensure that students with and without disabilities learn by giving explicit instruction to whole and small groups as appropriate.

Strategies to improve co-teaching experiences for both teachers and students have been detailed in the literature on co-teaching. For example, six commonly used strategies in co-teaching are: (a) one teaches, one observes, (b) team teaching, (c) alternative teaching, (d) parallel teaching, (e) station teaching, and (f) one teaches, one drifts (Conderman & Hedin, 2014; Sileo, 2011). General and special education teachers used these strategies to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The roles and strategies of co-teaching found in the delivery of instructions are based on the academic needs and performance of the learner (Friend et al., 2010).

One Teaches, One Supports

Sileo (2011) identified the strategy to be used during the lesson to decide which student needs extra support and encouragement. The structure allows one teacher to have the primary responsibility for planning and teaching, while the other teacher moves around the classroom helping individual students or the lesson being taught (Friend et al., 2010; Sileo, 2011; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin 2013). This is one of the most popular strategies that is used in co-teaching situations until both general and special education teachers develop a collaborative relationship. The general and special education teachers

can apply this approach if they need to collect student data, observe student behavior or write individualized education program (IEP) goals for students in preparation for meetings (Sileo, 2011).

Team Teaching

Sileo (2011) described the structure of team teaching to be used in any academic subject to help teachers support each other. Both teachers are equally responsible for planning, teaching, and assessing the content in a coordinated fashion (Villa et al., 2013). The structure capitalizes on the teaching strengths of two teachers. This structure helps the teachers support each other and to ensure all steps are accurately addressed (Sileo, 2011). For co-teachers to successfully team-teach together, both the general education and the special education teacher must know the content (Perez, 2012).

Alternative Teaching

Alternative teaching permits one teacher to instruct the whole group and the other to teach a small group of students. The design is defined as a format to provide students with more intense and individual instruction in a specific academic area (Sileo, 2011). The strategy allows the teacher to offer scaffold lessons to small groups of students to meet their learning deficiencies and to promote student learning (Villa et al., 2013). Conversely, if need to be retaught to a larger part of the class, then one teacher can focus on that group while the other teacher gives enrichment activities to a smaller group of students (Perez, 2012).

Parallel Teaching

Sileo (2011) described parallel teaching as a format that enables teachers to work with similar numbers of students to provide individual support or different groups in separate parts of the classroom to present the same information. Therefore, by using the parallel teaching strategy, it can lower the student-teacher ratio and be able to focus on a small group of students (Perez, 2012). However, both, general and special education teachers work together to plan the lesson and then place the students into two groups so that each teacher handles one half of the class (Perez, 2012). The design allows co-teachers to monitor, organize the lesson content, and identify strategies needed for different groups and individual students (Villa et al., 2013).

Station Teaching

The station teaching strategy is used when teachers divide the students into groups of three or more stations. The students rotate to various teacher-led, and the independent workstation where new instruction is reviewed, and practice is provided. During this opportunity, students may work at all stations during the rotation. According to Walsh (2012), this approach is often used in elementary and middle schools. The approach can be used to lower the teacher-student ratio and address a wide range of abilities by individualizing instruction for students (Perez, 2012). Researchers Friend et al., (2010), Perez (2012), and Sileo (2011) acknowledge the structure to be effective as teachers divide the responsibility of instruction to meet the needs of students in a smaller setting. However, if more than two stations are created, students can work with the teachers at two of the stations and then work independently or in small groups at the other centers.

Station teaching also allows the teachers to group students based on ability level, learning style or by results of student assessments (Perez, 2012).

One Teaches, One Drifts

Conderman and Hedin (2014) described this strategy as the least used among the six strategies. One teacher (generally the regular education teacher) provides instruction. The second teacher drifts around the room to help students who are having trouble grasping the instruction.

Barriers to Co-Teaching

Solis et al. (2012) conducted a synthesis of 146 studies on co-teaching and found some benefits, as well as barriers, that co-teaching offers students with special needs. Barriers to successful co-teaching included a lack of administrative support, little or no common planning and scheduling time, insufficient training, and inadequate matching of general and special education teachers are concerned that affect the relationship with co-teaching (Brown, Howerter, & Morgan, 2013; Friend et al., 2010; Pugach & Winn, 2011). According to Fixsen et al., (2010) district levels provide support and integrated policy structure that are aligned to state standards and removes barriers and misconceptions surrounding the effective implementation of the co-teaching model. This research explored how co-teachers manage the planning, teaching, and assess lessons around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in classrooms to meet the same learning aims and academic needs of all students.

Lack of Co-Planning Time

Problems associated with the model between general and special education teachers in co-taught classrooms can result from a lack of planning time. Co-teaching needs more planning time than that of a solo-taught course (Solis et al., 2012). The synthesis indicated that teachers consistently reported the need for structured planning time for all personnel involved in co-taught instruction. Furthermore, the findings concluded that success in co-teaching is largely dependent on the availability of resources, including professional development prior to starting co-teaching, support from administration, and time for planning and communicating with the general education and special education teacher (Carter, Prater, Jackson, & Marchant, 2009; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Kamens, Susko, & Elliot, 2013; Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007; Solis et al., 2012). Research findings showed that team members could function well if there is enough time to collaborate on the design, implementation, and evaluation of instruction (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014). Solis et al. (2012) indicated that teachers who took part in co-teaching identified planning time as an essential factor for success.

Planning and scheduling are barriers for many school administrators and are factors that make it difficult to schedule meetings. According to Murawski (2012), "co-planning is both the most important and the most difficult part of co-teaching" (p. 8). Finding time to co-plan is one of the most common barriers to effective co-teaching, but without it, teachers teach without differentiation strategies (Murawski, 2012). Researchers showed that although scheduling is difficult, co-teachers must have time to

collaborate with one another (Carter, Prater, Jackson & Marchant, 2009; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Kamens, Susko & Elliot, 2013; Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007). Teachers reported that planning often comes on their time and not during a scheduled planning period (Shin, Lee, & McKenna, 2016). Several researchers indicated that elementary teachers felt unsuccessful and unprepared due to lack of co-preparation or sharing with co-teacher (Collier, Keener, Bargerhuff, Hanby, & Birkholtz, 2008; Griffin, Jones & Kilgore 2006; Shin et al., 2016). Both general education and special education teachers pointed out that conflicting schedules contributed to problems with classroom management in middle and high schools when co-teaching.

Need for Administrative Support

Research on the qualities of inclusive schools suggests that support from school and district administrators, as well as teacher participation in school decision-making, are important in designing, implementing, and sustaining effective inclusive schools (McLeskey Waldron, Spooner, et al., 2014). Administrative support is needed to build capacity with the community and staff to ensure the school's vision of co-teaching is included (Frey & Kaff, 2014). The culture and climate of the school must be positive and set clear expectations for all stakeholders with common commitments and values. Administrators show their support by creating a schedule that offers co-teachers adequate time to collaborate and co-plan. Co-teachers who are not given time to work together struggle to meet the needs of all students (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007).

Offering professional development training for general and special education teachers is a barrier many administrators faced. The opportunity for ongoing professional learning is how teachers stay attuned to the newest innovations in the field, improve their practice, and prepare for changing roles (McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014). To ensure the school is properly trained, administrators need to offer opportunities for professional development, both in-district and outside of the district (Kamens et al., 2013). Once a district policy is put in place to support the co-teaching staff, school administrators are responsible for developing high-quality professional development activities that are consistent with the district goals and the school plans (Starratt, 2005). Researchers (Embury & Kroeger, 2012; King-Sears, Brawand, Jenkins, & Preston-Smith, 2014) found that the general education and special education teachers have not been exposed to professional development for different co-teaching strategies and are not given enough time for co-planning. As a result, the general education teacher becomes the lead teacher, and the special education teacher works in a subordinate role as a paraprofessional. Harbort et al. (2007) found that in a co-taught secondary classroom, the special education teacher assumed a supportive role, not distributing the co-teaching responsibilities of instruction, grading, and discipline evenhandedly. Moreover, Solis et al. (2012) conducted a study on co-teaching concluded that success in co-teaching is largely dependent on the availability of resources, including professional development prior to starting co-teaching, support from administration, and time for planning and communicating for the general education and special education teachers.

Review of the Broader Problem

Co-teaching is a popular strategy used in many schools; however, it often suffers from a poor-quality implementation of common planning time, administrative support, and need for professional development. The practice of co-teaching has become a strategy in schools and districts for creating a learning environment that integrates students with and without disabilities into traditional classrooms. While the literature provides the strategies and theories associated with co-teaching, little research has investigated the teachers' perceptions of co-teaching and given insight into how co-teaching was introduced and implemented in their schools. The outcome of co-teaching for students with learning disabilities found that the students demonstrated academic progress at a pace comparable to that of the general education population (Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Sakarneh & Nair, 2014). Co-teaching designs are used to provide students with disabilities opportunities to be educated in the same classrooms with their nondisabled peers (Solis et al., 2012). Effective practices, barriers, and challenges of co-teaching were examined through peer-reviewed research articles. The review concluded with support and training to overcome the challenges of co-teaching along with the recommendation of future studies.

The lack of consistency with implementing the instructional methods of co-teaching is an issue nationwide; therefore, several state boards of education (e.g., Maryland, Kentucky, Nevada, Texas) are supporting the use of the practice in their schools to ensure that students with special needs are included in general education classrooms in the least restrictive environment (Goldberg, 2010). For example, the state

of Kentucky has developed a statewide initiative called "Co-Teaching for Gap Closure" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015). The purpose of their initiative was to close the achievement gaps between students with and without disabilities in classrooms by including co-teaching as a strategic part built into the program for preservice teachers. According to the Kentucky Board of Education (2015), this initiative is needed to support inclusive schools with instructional methods to provide academic success for all students, including with and without learning disabilities.

Maryland Department of Education (2011) developed a co-teaching framework to give specific components of co-teaching to enhance instructional delivery and provide greater access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities. The co-teaching structure was intended to promote meaningful learning experiences by implementing evidence-based co-teaching practices that could result in improved student achievement. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) defined co-teaching as a "collaborative partnership between a generalist and a specialist who have shared accountability and ownership for planning and delivering instruction, and assessment for the success of all students in the general education curriculum resulting in a systemic change that is sustainable" (para. 2).

Implications

McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner et al. (2014) suggested that professional development should be developed to improve co-teacher practices in inclusive schools. Administrators could help cut barriers to co-teaching by rearranging school schedules so that teachers could participate in professional development offered at intermediate school

districts or workshops provided by colleges of education. Administrators appear to support inclusion and encourage both general and special education teachers to attend training on co-teaching, although most teachers have difficulty in finding professional development programs that focus on co-teaching and common planning time.

Summary

The case study was organized into four sections, including (a) the problem, (b) the local problem, (c) importance of the study problem, and (d) the conceptual framework. This section specifically focused on introducing the research by describing the overall problem, identifying the study's purpose, and providing a review of the broader problem. The section then posed relevant research questions to investigate and examine the best solution to the problem. The section identified the literature review, significance of the study and implications, and provided the operational definition of terms associated with the problem.

Section 2 is devoted to discussing the research methodology for the project study. The section started by providing an overview of the study design, target population, study's locale, chosen sampling procedure, and justification for the type of evaluation tool selected. Furthermore, the section identified and described data collection instruments and data analyses strategies. The outcomes of the section were summarized about the problem. This section provides the findings from the data collected from the surveys of general and special education teachers.

The third section specifically focuses on the project that will be a professional development program that will be conducted for three full days before school starts in

September. The professional development program will include components, timelines, activities, trainer manual, and target audience. The materials that will be used during the professional development meeting and an evaluation plan will determine the teachers' perceptions of the outcomes. A scholarly rationale will be presented that supports the use of professional development with teachers interested in co-teaching.

The fourth and final section of this study offers a discussion of the findings, as well as inferences from the project that presents the strengths and limitations of the problem and areas of further research. The section presents added definitions of the problems as well as offered alternative solutions. A reflective analysis was presented that is specific to the research and development of the project. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological implications that describes the impact of positive social change, prior to a brief conclusion that describes the essence of the study. The appendices section of the project incorporates the consent forms, the approval and signed research letter, and a sample of the survey questionnaire.

Section 2: The Methodology

This section outlines the research methods used in this case study to support the local problem and address the research questions. The section provides information on the research design, target population, study's locale, sampling procedure, and justification for the type of evaluation tool selected. The section also identifies and describes the procedures for collecting and analyzing data. The outcomes of analyses used to discuss the research questions are summarized with a discussion of themes and patterns found in the interview data. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the experiences of co-teaching in terms of professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and the availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons in co-taught classrooms.

Research Design and Approach

A case study approach was used in the present study. The study examined high school teachers' experiences with co-teaching students in general and special education. This type of research design is used when providing a rich description of a case with defined boundaries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Yin (2017) indicated that "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). Case studies are used when the variables associated with the phenomenon and context cannot be differentiated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A case must have defined boundaries (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A boundary can be a case, a program, a group, an institution, or some other phenomenon. In the present study, the

case was co-teaching in a high school, with the teachers who are co-teaching agreeing to be interviewed as part of the study. The 12 teachers (six general and six special education) were expected to provide comprehensive details regarding their experiences with co-teaching. These experiences can form a basis for analyzing data to examine combined experiences of providing instruction to students with and without disabilities in the same classroom.

Case study research is appropriate when the investigator assumes the regular and special education teachers can contribute to understanding how instruction is provided to students with and without disabilities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that the teachers' experiences regarding co-teaching are combined, reduced, and compared to explore commonalities and differences in participants' responses to the semistructured interviews used to collect the data.

The Rationale for the Research Approach

When planning the present study, other types of qualitative research designs were reviewed to determine which type was most appropriate. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is variable, with five different types available for researchers (i.e., narrative research, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study). The research approaches that were considered, but not selected include narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology.

Narrative research is used to tell stories about individuals that provide details of their personal experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants in these types of research projects discuss their life events, with their stories following a typical sequence

that included a beginning, middle, and end. In addition, participants in telling their stories provide explanations on their perceptions of the world in which they live. This research design incorporates data to create stories about people's lives and experiences. This type of qualitative research design also is known as autobiographical, life history, oral history, and biography (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the participant(s) in these types of studies may not have co-taught with another high school teacher in the present research, the narrative design was not considered appropriate.

When attempting to develop a specific theory using data from participants, the researcher can use a grounded theory research approach. Grounded theory research designs are used to answer questions about a phenomenon (e.g., co-teaching in a high school) that differs from previous instructional delivery methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data in a grounded theory approach uses multiple stages of data collection to make comparisons and differences in the topic over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the purpose of this research was to examine the lived experiences of participants and not develop a grounded theory on the topic, this research approach was not used.

Ethnography uses participants who share a common culture to investigate a problem. Human society and culture are the primary focus of ethnographic research designs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethnographic researchers spend time interacting with the people in the group being studied. Cultural research requires the investigator to be personally involved with group activities that are part of the culture, be integrated into the group, and collect data for long periods. Researchers present the ethnographic findings by describing in detail the culture while establishing their understanding of the phenomenon

being studied. Although all high school teachers share a common culture associated with educating young people, the purpose of this study is not to represent the culture of the group but examine the phenomenon of co-teaching high school students with and without disabilities in the same classroom. A phenomenological research design is appropriate when the investigator wants to use in-depth semistructured interviews to examine the lived experiences of individuals who have been involved in the same situation (Moustakas, 1994). This type of research design uses data from interviews using semistructured research questions with individuals who have had the same type of lived experiences to determine patterns and themes within their experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case studies are a research approach that can investigate a variety of phenomena in-depth, including problems, programs, events, situations, activities, or processes. Case studies are used to describe single or multiple cases. A criterion of case studies is the need to triangulate data using multiple sources, such as interviews, artifacts to support the information provided by the participants, and school or medical records (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Examining the lived experiences associated with co-teaching high school students with and without disabilities in the same classroom is the focus of the present study. With this goal in mind, a case study approach using semistructured interviews is considered appropriate for this study.

Participants

Twelve high school teachers (six general educations and six special education) who are currently teaching or have taught in a co-teaching setting were asked to

participate in this study. The teachers did not have to be a co-teaching dyad in the same classroom. The teachers who volunteered to participate in the interviews were either general education who were certified in their content area or certified to teach special education. The teachers who participated in the study had at least one academic year of co-teaching experience, even if they were not assigned to a co-teaching classroom currently. The only exclusionary criteria established for this study was that teachers had to be over 18 years of age.

Case studies use small groups of participants to obtain the necessary data for the study. The primary concern for qualitative studies is reaching saturation, where no new information is obtained by adding additional participants (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) conducted a series of experiments to determine the point at which saturation is reached. Using a sample of 60 participants, the findings indicated that responses to questions asked in interviews became redundant with 12 interviews. After this number, new information was not forthcoming. Based on the results of their experiments, Guest et al. (2006) concluded that saturation generally is reached with 12 participants. Additionally, Hennink et al. (2016) suggested that code saturation could be reached at nine interviews. Moreover, Malterud et al. (2016) emphasized that sample size in qualitative studies should be guided by “information power,” that it is not only sample size that is important, but also the number of interviews held with each participant and the length of time of each of them.

I contacted the superintendent of a small public-school district located in a suburb close to a large metropolitan city to determine interest in having their high school

teachers participate in a study for co-teaching. I explained the purpose of the study and that teacher who had co-taught could volunteer to participate in the study. After the superintendent approved my study, I contacted the principal of the high school. He gave me a list of teachers who had or were currently co-teaching. I contacted each of the teachers on the list via email to introduce myself and explain the purpose of the study and what their participation entailed in terms of time. I provided my email and telephone number and asked those who were interested in participating to contact me. A copy of the introductory email can be found in the Appendices.

Prior to being interviewed, the participants were asked to read the informed consent form that detailed their participation in the study, provided assurances of confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of being in the study. They were assured that all responses to the interview questions would be confidential and that no individual or the school district would be identifiable in the final study. After answering any questions that the teachers had regarding their participation, the participants were asked to sign and return the informed consent form. In addition, they were given a copy of the informed consent form for their records.

Role of the Researcher

At the present time, I am an assistant principal at a K-8 school in a large urban school district. As assistant principal, I am responsible for supervising teachers and students in the sixth through eighth grades. As part of my responsibilities, I manage the curriculum for both general and special education. I am in charge of student discipline,

academic outcomes, and teacher evaluations. My role as an administrator is to be accountable for all phases of learning in the school.

The teachers in my study work at a local public school outside of my district. Throughout my career, I have not worked with any of the teachers in any other educational capacity. I did not know any of the teachers included in the study. As I was not associated with the school in any way, the teachers were free to participate in the study without concerns regarding coercion.

I bracketed my personal biases that could affect how I interpret what participants reveal in their interview responses. Bracketing is defined as the process that a researcher uses to identify his/her ideas about the study (Fischer, 2009). Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) suggested that bracketing is difficult as the investigator is required to ignore his/her biases that could influence his/her interpretation of the experiences being examined. Chan et al. (2013) asserted that an investigator can bracket his/her feelings using four strategies, including (a) assessing the investigator's personality, (b) recognizing potential biases on the topic, (c) maintaining a reflexive notebook to control biases, and (d) encouraging participants to be open in answering the interview questions. A notebook was used to record field notes in which I also wrote my biases regarding co-teaching. The notebook was used when interviewing the teachers and completing the data analysis. By remaining aware of my feelings about co-teaching, I am able to remain objective during the interviews and data analysis. I did not do anything that could cause harm or distress to the participants in my research. I also allowed the teachers to answer the interview questions completely to obtain information regarding their lived

experiences in co-teaching both students with and without disabilities in the same classroom.

Semistructured Interviews

The present study used semistructured, face-to-face interviews to collect data from the participants in this research. The study was discussed with the participants before providing them the consent form. Upon receipt of the signed consent form, each participant was given a \$10.00 Starbucks gift card for their participation in the interview. To assure the accuracy of the responses to the questions, the interviews were audio-recorded. The teachers spent about 30 to 45 minutes responding to the interview questions.

The interview questions were developed from the review of the literature on co-teaching, specifically professional development to prepare to teach in a co-taught classroom, administrative support, and common planning time. The questions were used to obtain data to answer the research questions developed for the study. The interview questions were reviewed by a panel of educators for appropriateness. The panel included a special education director, a high school principal, and a teacher who had worked in a co-teaching position. They were given a copy of the proposal and asked to review the interview questions. After reviewing the questions, they were asked to comment on the question wording, the alignment of the questions to the research problem being studied and make suggestions for any changes that were relevant to the research.

Semistructured interview questions were appropriate for use in this type of study. To assure consistency in the interviews, the same questions were asked of each

participant and they were allowed to go beyond the question to provide additional information they felt was relevant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further assurance of consistency was to ask the questions in the same order (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, these types of interview questions are flexible with participants encouraged to provide additional comments on the topic of the interview question. The interviewer could respond to the discussion and integrate new ideas about the phenomenon being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An interview protocol was developed to assure consistency across all interviews. Probes were used to obtain additional in-depth information regarding their experiences associated with co-teaching in a classroom that provides instruction to students with and without disabilities. This case study research described and interpreted meanings of central themes in sharing a classroom with another certified teacher (Anyan, 2013; Kvale, 1996).

Data Collection

After the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the superintendent of the school district where the data were collected approved the study, I asked the director of human resources to provide a list of all high school teachers who were either co-teaching or have co-taught at least one course. This list included the teacher's name and email address. I used e-mail to contact the teachers and provide an explanation of the purpose of the study and how the teacher would be involved in the research. If teachers were interested in participating, they were asked to provide their telephone numbers so I could contact them. Interested teachers were contacted by telephone to discuss the study in greater detail and obtain confirmation of their

willingness to participate. The teachers were given a time range to schedule an appointment that best fits their availability. An appointment was made with the participant at a place and time that was acceptable to both parties.

An empty classroom was secured at the local high school to meet with the teachers individually at the scheduled time after school. The interviews were conducted and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes for each of the 12 participants. At the face-to-face meeting, teachers were asked to read the informed consent and address any concerns they had regarding their participation in the study. After signing and returning the informed consent, the participants were asked to retain a second copy for their records. The short demographic survey was completed by the participants before starting the interview.

Prior to starting the interviews, teachers granted permission to audio record their interviews to ensure the accuracy of their responses. The transcribed audiotapes were reviewed for corrections and typographical errors. I also maintained a field log to record additional information regarding the interview, such as body language, the attitude of the participant, and any other information that could be pertinent to the data collection. This information was included when the interview data were analyzed.

I communicated to each participant that I would send transcripts of their interviews for member checking. I sent the interview transcripts to the teachers and asked them to verify the accuracy of their responses and to add or delete to the interview for clarity. The teachers were asked to return the corrected transcripts within five working days. If no changes were needed, the teachers did not have to return the transcript. After all, transcripts were returned, the data analysis was started.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using inductive reasoning, a “bottom-up” approach, that focused on generating meanings from interviews, and field notes to identify patterns in the interview responses. The inductive analysis was appropriate for this study because of my interest in understanding high school teacher’s perceptions of co-teaching. The final product is shaped by the data that were collected and the analyses that were used to develop patterns and themes to address the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The data analyses started with the continuous reading of the transcripts, with a focus on the interview questions. Lean coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldana, 2016) was used, starting with five key phrases; the process of co-teaching, professional development, administrative support, common planning time, and student outcomes. These key phrases were present in the literature on co-teaching. The transcripts were read and reread, with additional key phrases identified. After completing the coding, no more than 25 key phrases were identified (Saldana, 2016).

The responses from the interview questions were open-ended and required qualitative analysis. For each question, Nvivo software was used to create a visual representation to demonstrate the themes of co-teaching. The data were analyzed to identify common themes in the qualitative research questions. Word frequency query was used to match each theme that was found in the responses from the interviews. Coding charts were used to illuminate the themes that appeared in the data from each question. The data from the interview transcripts were used to pull together and categorize the events, then group them into themes to explain teachers’ perceptions of co-teaching.

Nodes were used to represent themes that appeared in the responses that were collected. Coding was used to look for common themes that emerged from responses in the same questions from the participants. The key phrases that emerged from the Nvivo analysis were reviewed and combined to reduce the number of potential categories to five or six that formed the basis for themes in the data. The themes were read and re-read to ensure they were addressing the research questions and purpose of the study.

Trustworthiness

Quantitative research uses reliability and validity to assure the findings are accurate, with trustworthiness used as the corresponding method in qualitative research. Qualitative research uses four criteria to provide assurances of the trustworthiness of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1981):

- Credibility (in preference to internal validity),
- Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability),
- Dependability (in preference to reliability), and
- Confirmability (in preference to objectivity; p. 64)

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) asserted that the reader of the research is responsible for determining if qualitative research has trustworthiness. The reader must decide which parts are applicable to his or her milieu. In a case study, trustworthiness provides support that the study findings are pertinent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The trustworthiness of the qualitative research process followed specific guidelines to assure the accuracy of the findings of this study.

Credibility

Credibility is an important consideration in verifying the trustworthiness of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined credibility as the extent to which study outcomes reflect reality. Credibility is associated with consistency and evidence that appropriate procedures were used to conduct the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Credibility for this study was determined through the use of member checking. Member checking was used to assure the researcher has interpreted the interviews accurately and to ensure internal validity. The member checks strategy allows the informant to serve as a check throughout the analysis process. Researchers (Creswell, 2012; 2014, Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) described that member check as a process that takes data and explanations to teachers who were interviewed to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of responses obtained from the interviews. Providing assurances that the interpretation of the study reflected what the teachers meant in their interview responses, and presenting the findings objectively (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To maintain the credibility of this study, I maintained field notes and made entries regularly to confirm my research-related decisions, along with rationale for these decisions. A reflexive journal was used to maintain a record of my thoughts and observations while conducting the interviews.

Transferability

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the definition of transferability is being able to apply the outcomes of the present study to other settings or situations, Transferability is similar to external validity, although qualitative researchers have not

reached consensus on this definition (Beck, 1994). Transferability is also described as generalizability, but qualitative research typically is not generalized to other populations (Waters, 2015). The themes that emerged from the data analysis were expanded and related to similar teaching dyads in other schools, but the students, school structure, and teachers were different from teachers in the present study. Because the analysis of data and interpretation of themes in case studies could not be objective, the generalizability of the study outcomes is limited. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that the reader, and not the investigator, determines the transferability of the findings to other milieus. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that the investigator would not be aware of the situations or settings to which the reader might apply the study outcomes.

Dependability

When the research process is able to conduct the study in the way that it planned is the definition of dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1992). According to Polit and Beck (2016), when findings appear to represent the respondents' answers to the interview questions, dependability is affirmed. Study outcomes were not reflective of my biases toward team teaching. I established an audit trail that detailed the timing of the research events and procedures that were involved in the collection of analysis of the interview responses.

Confirmability

Validity is used in a quantitative study, with confirmability a similar process that is used in qualitative research. Confirmability is determined by the reader who interprets the study findings and is not influenced by the researcher's biases (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). To assure confirmability, the researcher must be objective and unbiased in the final report (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To assure the trustworthiness of this case study, I developed a research protocol for conducting the interviews in a consistent manner. An informed consent was used to inform the participants of what to expect as a participant in a research project. The informed consent indicated that a tape recorder would be used for the interviews to provide assurances of the accuracy of interview responses. The informed consent also offered assertions that all information obtained during the interviews would be confidential and that no individual or school would be identifiable in the final report.

During the interview process, I maintained field notes in a journal. As part of the field notes, I noted body language, facial expressions, and other information that could be pertinent to the results. The field notes were part of the audit trail that helped maintain a record of all research activities related to the study outcomes. This journal also acted as a calendar to keep track of the dates, times, and places where the interviews were held.

Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, approval (IRB 2019.03.1411:18:15-051¹00) to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University. I asked teachers to volunteer to be included in the study if they met the inclusion criteria. The informed consent form included a statement that indicated the participant could refuse to answer any question to which they did not feel comfortable responding. They also were told that they could stop answering questions at any time without prejudice.

Care was taken to use language that did not reflect bias of any person or group (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Pseudonyms were used when transcribing the interviews and writing the findings to ensure that ethical treatment is used for all participants. To further assure that the confidentiality of the teachers was maintained, I did not share the transcripts with any other people. However, if asked, my chair and committee, as well as the IRB at Walden University, can access the interview transcripts upon request. The signed informed consent forms, paper copies of interview transcripts and the USB drive upon which the transcripts will be saved for 5-years in a secure file cabinet located in my home. At the end of 5-years, copies of the signed informed consent forms and transcripts of the interviews will be destroyed using a cross-cut shredder. The USB drive that had the interview data will be erased using a program that digitally shreds the files, eliminating any possible retrieval of the interview data.

Evidence of Quality

Evidence of quality procedures was presented to assure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Triangulation of interviews, field notes, and teacher's demographic survey were methods used as data analysis of teachers' perceptions on co-teaching in high school. The data collection of teachers' interviews combined with field notes and the demographic survey provided a theme or pattern to support the findings. I maintained field notes and made entries regularly to confirm my research-related decisions, along with rationale for these decisions. A reflective journal was used to maintain a record of my thoughts and observations while conducting the interviews.

Member checking was used to ensure the accuracy of the data. Researchers (Creswell, 2012; 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) described that member check as a process that takes data and explanations to teachers who were interviewed to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of responses obtained from the interviews. Member checking took place with each participant after the initial and follow-up interviews. Member checking was used to assure the researcher has interpreted the interviews accurately and to ensure internal validity. Both general education and special education participants were provided a copy of the research findings for them to determine and review the accuracy of their data. The participants were also granted the opportunity to discuss those findings with me. The participants affirmed that the data were accurately captured without bias.

Limitations

The following limitations are acknowledged for this study. The study used a small sample size (12 teachers including six general educations and six special education). The sample size is appropriate in a case study but may not reflect perceptions of co-teachers in all school districts. The study was also limited to one state, Michigan. The findings might not be relevant in school districts in other states, although school administrators may find the findings important for developing co-teaching programs. The third limitation is the use of self-report without a way to verify the responses from the teachers. Teachers may respond using socially desirable comments regarding co-teaching. To control for these types of responses, the interviewer had to ask similar questions to obtain a rich description of their co-teaching practices and experiences.

Data Analysis Results

I used case study qualitative method to provide developing themes that captured the teachers' responses to the three research questions used for this project study and presented in Section 1. The purpose of this research study was to understand the perceptions of general and special education high school teachers who were assigned to work in co-taught classrooms. Sixteen candidates were contacted to determine interest in participating in the study. Of this number, 12 agreed to be interviewed regarding their experiences with co-teaching. An interview protocol was developed to assure consistency across all interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted over a period of one month. The one-on-one semistructured interviews lasted from 30 to 45 minutes, with each of the 12 participants. Once the data collection process was completed, the interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for member checking. Before having the interviews transcribed, I erased the names. I replaced them with an alphanumeric code that indicated if the teacher was special or general education and a sequential number from 1 to 6 (e.g., SE1, GE1, etc.). After reading and rereading the interview transcripts, I began the coding process. Teachers' replies to the interview questions were coded and used to develop thematic categories to answer the research questions. A thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in the data, with five themes explaining co-teaching (Nowell et al., 2017).

Coding

After transcribing the responses from the interviews, I began reading and rereading the transcripts to understand the teachers' responses. I started the lean coding

phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018) using four key phrases: professional development, administrative support, common planning time, and benefits and challenges of co-teaching. Based on the review of literature, these phrases were related to co-teaching. During the reading and rereading of the transcripts, additional phrases related to co-teaching were identified, resulting in a total of 15 phrases (Saldana, 2016). The following 16 codes were created from the research questions and transcriptions: scheduling, time, during lunch, after school, weekends, teacher meetings, support, preparation, planning, learning strategies, workload, stigma, student, performance, and professional development. The 16 codes were combined and refined into four key phrases. The key phrases were combined to eliminate redundancies and reduce the number of key phrases to ones that were associated with the research questions. The coding continued until four key phrases were found that could be used to address the research questions. The four key phrases then became the themes that emerged from the data. The four themes that emerged from the data were: (a) common planning time, (b) lack of administrative support, (c) lack of professional development training for general and special education teachers, as well as (d) challenges and benefits of co-teaching. I also listed the codes and themes and how they relate (see Table 2). The themes that emerged from the interview responses were as follows: lack of common planning time, administrative support, professional development training, and challenges and benefits of co-teaching.

Table 2*Alignment of Codes and Thematic Categories*

Codes	Theme	RQs
Scheduling Time During lunch After school Weekends Teacher meetings	1. Common Planning Time (RQ1)	RQ1. How do high school general and special education teachers describe their experiences with the co-teaching model? How do high school general and special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of planning time?
Support Scheduling Preparation Planning	2. Lack of administrative support (RQ1)	How do high school general and special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of administrative support?
Professional development Learn strategies from special education teachers	3. Lack of professional development training for general and special education teachers (RQ1)	How do high school general and special education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of professional development?
Workload Students Stigma Performance	4. Challenges and benefits of co-teaching. (RQ2)	RQ2. How do general and special education high school teachers describe the challenges and benefits associated with co-teaching?

Common Planning Time

Co-teachers need regular meetings to ensure that instruction is being planned and provide time to do reflective thinking. In the present study, teachers reported they met in halls between classes, over lunch once or twice a week, after teacher meetings, and

occasionally on the weekends. At times, general and special education teachers had time to meet and plan their lessons (e.g., who would be the lead teacher, use small groups, etc.). The lack of planning time was mentioned by teachers stating, the lack of common planning time was stressful for both general and special education teachers. In high school, the need for planning time is essential, especially when determining the roles of each of the teachers in the classroom. Many teachers indicated they had to use their lunch hours or meet after faculty meetings to have any planning time. According to SE4, “The disadvantages of the collaborative model is lack of planning time for both teachers, and approaches are not done with consistency across the nation in schools and districts.” The special education and general education teachers should work collaboratively to plan together to educate the whole child. According to SE12, “I think some of the disadvantages are that we do not have a lot of planning time together, although we have lunch together. We find ourselves working over the weekend. Our schedules are so cumbersome.”

Common planning time aligns with the need for preparation prior to implementation. Therefore, co-planning should be scheduled regularly for co-teachers to allow them to meet and establish long-term goals and objectives for their students. The six general and six special education teachers' responses indicated two key points: no common planning time and having to plan on the fly. According to GE5, “planning is more of an on-the-fly situation. When we have a weekly staff meeting, we get an opportunity to talk for about 10 minutes, which is not enough time for her high-risk students.” These issues cause frustration as the teachers need to meet and decide which

teacher would lead, how the class would be structured, and how to assess the learning. SE12 explained, “Because I have so many students on my caseload, the administrators didn’t schedule us any planning time.” Classroom responsibilities should be divided into areas of comfort, professional expertise, and access to the learning platform. A successful co-teaching partnership is rooted in the understanding that setting aside time for planning and reflection is a priority. If co-teachers did not have adequate planning time, the quality of their practice could be affected. Both general and special education teachers expressed a preference for a minimum of a weekly co-planning period. Teachers are able to support one another by complimenting each other’s strengths and weaknesses, building camaraderie, and dividing the workload in the classroom. SE12 stated: “the co-planning process encourages both teachers to bounce ideas off each other in order to deliver the strongest, most creative lessons”.

Arranging a common planning time could be difficult. When circumstances prevent teachers from using common planning time, their classroom instruction can become differentiated. Nevertheless, many teachers stated that planning time is informal, on the fly, during their lunch periods, over the telephone, or after school. Although planning together does not occur consistently between teachers, they both prefer a regular time for planning where they can comfortably attend and give full attention to providing the best instruction for all students.

Lack of Administrative Support

In the study, many general and special education teachers discussed the lack of administrator support in helping them achieve success in co-teaching. The general

consensus was that administrators could help close the gaps in teacher knowledge and experiences related to co-teaching by scheduling common planning time for co-teachers, allowing teachers input into their co-teaching partners, and providing professional development to improve strategies for co-teaching. GE3 added, “The biggest reason for not incorporating more co-teaching models and strategies is lack of funds within the schools or districts to pay for training, choosing co-teacher partners and implementing the models with fidelity.” Having the funds to properly train the staff and getting teachers to participate in co-teaching is another reason not to incorporate co-teaching in schools and districts. Most teachers do not mind implementing co-teaching but wish they had the training and time to plan with the special education teacher. Administrators need to provide professional development workshops for both general and special education teachers, as well as proper training with strategies to meet the needs of all learners. The lack of knowledge on co-teaching together and not providing proper training for both teachers in a co-teaching setting is a disadvantage of this instructional method. Co-taught classroom partners should be agreed upon in contrast to being assigned by the administrator. SE12 stated:

Co-teaching and collaboration are also challenging because it requires educators to stretch out of their comfort zones and embrace an initiative that they have no say in. Most teachers are forced into co-teaching and find themselves paired with another adult in the classroom without any training in the people skills part of the process.

The teachers indicated that they had no voice in selecting a co-teaching partner, and little consideration was made to pair teachers with similar teaching styles. Choosing co-teaching partners is the responsibility of the administrator and is important for all students to be successful. Four general education and three special education teachers believed that co-teaching relationships should be on a volunteer basis, rather than being assigned. SE4 indicated that she “sometimes got a [general education] teacher who did not want to participate in a co-taught environment. That teacher wanted to separate the students and place us in a corner or have me pull them out of the classroom.” GE2 stated:

I believe my biggest limitation in implementing co-teaching models in classrooms is when two teachers are placed together to work, and there is no aligned pedagogy for teaching between the two. Although both are certified, we have a tendency to want our own space.

Lack of administrative support was considered to be a limitation by three general education and two special education teachers. This limitation was mentioned in several comments, including lack of common planning time, insufficient funding, decisions on selection of partner/co-teacher dyads, and need for professional development/training for being a co-teacher. The teachers thought that the administrator had control over these factors that were limiting the success of co-teaching. GE2, GE5, GE10, SE4, SE8, and SE12 indicated that administrators should ask for volunteers and then ask them with whom they wanted as their co-teaching partner. In many cases, the principal selects partners often without determining if the two teachers have similar teaching styles or would form a cohesive team. GE5 indicated that she “believed that co-teaching

relationships should be created on a volunteer basis rather than having co-teaching partners assigned. If this is done voluntarily, it will motivate co-teaching dyads to build relationships and reach a collaborative teaching environment.

Some special education teachers were happy to be assigned to co-teach as that relieved them of being in a resource room. Although the administration was responsible for providing common planning time, little consideration was given to making sure that co-teachers had similar prep times. Teachers thought that the administration should have provided professional development for learning about co-teaching. As this type of program was not available in their school district, administrators should have teachers attend professional development at other schools or at the intermediate school district. Arranging common planning time is difficult, so when circumstances prevent teachers from using common planning time, their classroom instruction can become differentiated. SE9 stated, "I happened to be paired with the general ed. teachers who are a lot like me: procrastinators with very 'go with the flow' personalities. We usually planned the day together the week before, and sometimes things change as the week went along. So, our planning time is on the fly and most definitely informal." Administration should ask teachers if they want to co-teach instead of scheduling them to work with another teacher regardless of their preference.

Lack of Professional Development Training

The general and special education teachers indicated that they had not attended any professional development programs in their school districts regarding co-teaching. While some of the general education teachers had participated in professional

development programs on strategies for working with special education students, most had read research on co-teaching in their teacher journals. Professional development training opportunities are important in implementing co-teaching with fidelity. SE6 suggested that “Lack of funding allotment is the biggest setback for not incorporating co-teaching. The implementation must be done with fidelity and proper training.

None of the general or special education teachers have attended professional development for co-teaching that was sponsored by the school. Six special education teachers had attended professional development for special education laws either at the intermediate school district or at other locations. Most teachers attend district professional development, but none of the sessions have focused on co-teaching. SE5 stated that “I did inquire about providing school-wide training for general education teachers to have special training on educating the students with learning disabilities in a co-taught classroom. It was suggested that the special education department would provide brief training and background information to us during one of our staff meetings at the beginning of the school year.” One general education teacher indicated she/he was self-motivated and watched videos to learn about educating students with learning disabilities. The special education teachers shared some of their strategies and techniques for working with students who have difficulty learning. According to GE2, “I have not attended any professional development training to acquire new strategies. However, the special education teacher shared her knowledge with me to benefit the students.” GE11 indicated that “my co-teacher partner does keep me up with strategies.

She shares with me how to differentiate my instruction to align to the student IEP goals as we work with all students in the classroom.”

The special education teachers indicated that they attend professional development to keep up with changes in the special education law. SE 6 indicated that “I do attend PD’s to keep updated on the special education law. Although my school doesn’t offer much training on co-teaching, I find myself using other resources, such as online training and reading of strategies and techniques on the approaches.” GE10 stated “Strategies/techniques are talked about during selected staff meetings. During that time, information regarding what we should be doing is shared, but no formal training on models and approaches for working with students in an inclusive setting is provided.”

Participants are expected to be self-directed in the selection of professional development programs. The teachers indicated they were not prepared to engage in co-teaching partnerships because they needed professional development to learn about similarities and differences in co-teaching models. According to SE6, “Some of the limitations that I have been confronted with during my years of teaching is finding the right partner to co-teach with. For me it was important for both of us to determine our personal teaching style on planning, classroom management, and discipline.”

Challenges and Benefits of Co-Teaching

The teachers indicated that co-teaching works if the general and special education teachers have similar teaching styles, are provided with common planning time, and have a common goal of helping all children, not just general education or just special education. The teachers indicated they were not prepared to engage in co-teaching

partnerships because they needed professional development to learn about similarities and differences in co-teaching models. According to SE6, “Some of the limitations that I have been confronted with during my years of teaching is finding the right partner to co-teach with. For me it was important for both of us to determine our personal teaching style on planning, classroom management, and discipline.” SE4 indicated that the limitations that I have been confronted with are sometimes getting a teacher that does not want to participate in a co-taught environment. The teacher wants to separate the students and place us in a corner or have me pull them out of the classroom. Building capacity with all learners and finding compatibility with co-teaching partners is a common concern of teachers.

General education teachers often were frustrated with their special education co-teachers because of a lack of content knowledge on their assigned courses. Both general and special education teachers believed that co-teaching could be benefitted by providing mandatory professional development training for general and special education teachers. SE7 indicated that more exposure is needed to make the benefits of co-teaching more attainable with professional development. SE7 stated, “I think it is a good tool if it is done right/implemented right. I think that general education teachers don’t fully understand the model.” For example, the special education teacher could not help teach in a French or higher-level mathematics class. They were able to work with the special education students in reading the assignment but were unable to help the students with the actual lesson. Special education teachers also were frustrated with co-teaching as they often indicated that the general education teacher treated them like paraprofessionals

instead of peers. GE9 stated, “My concern is that most general education teachers have an issue with letting someone else in the classroom. You know, giving up power.” If general education teachers have issues, administrators should provide support and professional development to address the teacher’s concerns. They may be more amenable to co-teaching with additional support. In many cases, the general education teacher taught, and the special education teacher assisted, leading to the feelings of being a subordinate instead of an equal.

In contrast to the challenges of co-teaching, teachers indicated there were some rewards. For example, special education teachers thought that students with special needs benefited from not being pulled out of class to go to the resource room for help. According to GE3, co-teaching provides more opportunities for one-on-one interaction between students and teachers, leading to stronger relationships. Another benefit is students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum as required by law. SE4 indicated that co-teaching removes the stigma of being pulled out of the classroom by the special education teacher. An important reward of co-teaching is that students with special needs are able to avoid the stigma of being pulled out to attend the resource room for extra help. The designation of general or special education is not imposed on these students. They can get help from the special education teacher that does not draw attention to them. Another benefit of having two teachers in the classroom include shared responsibility for instruction and classroom management. Using the co-teaching models allows teachers more time to meet students’ needs, time to provide better interventions to students because of the small group, and classroom management is

enhanced, and it helps special education students succeed in mainstream classrooms. GE2 indicated that “Having two teachers allow more one-to-one time with the student; the special education teacher assists with building the confidence of his or her students.” General education teachers reported that some of their borderline students were able to make academic progress with the special education teacher's help. General education teachers also discussed that they had learned strategies that special education teachers found to be effective in working with borderline students. Some general and special education teachers reported that working together had allowed them to form lasting relationships with the co-teaching partners.

Interpretation of Findings

As the call for greater inclusion of students with special needs into general education classes at the high school level, co-teaching has become an instructional delivery method that has become more accepted. The responses from the teachers who were either co-teaching at the present time or had co-taught in the past. The general education teachers appeared to favor a model where the special education teacher acted in a subordinate role, working with the students who were having difficulty grasping a topic but not providing instruction as the lead teacher. This model was used often when math or foreign language was the subject matter being taught. The teachers discussed the lack of common planning time for their co-taught classes. The teachers either met during lunch, after teacher meetings or in their free time after school or weekends. They felt that common planning time was needed to assure consistency in instruction and knowing who was responsible for which parts of instruction. None of the teachers had completed

specific training for co-teaching. The general education teachers typically were not aware of the strategies and methods of special education teachers to help their students understand difficult concepts. They thought that all students benefited from being in a co-taught classroom that mixed special education students with general education students. Students with special needs were spared the stigma of having to leave a class for sessions with special education teachers. The general education students had more exposure to the students with special needs, learning to be more accepting of them.

The challenges that arose from co-teaching included lack of support from administration. For example, teachers were not included in the decisions regarding the pairing of co-teachers into a class. The respondents discussed conflicts that often arose from special education teachers feeling they were paraprofessionals and not certified teachers. They also described problems with a lack of funding and the need for training that teachers thought was needed to assure that co-teaching was implemented with fidelity. While the teachers were generally positive, the outcomes indicated a need for dialogue between administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers regarding the challenges and benefits of co-teaching. A professional development program to fill this need is being suggested in the next section.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction of the Project

This study project is a professional development program that can be used to increase general and special education teachers' knowledge of the concepts and theories that underlie co-teaching. The topics included in the professional development programs will also address the concerns raised by the interviewed participants. These topics comprise different approaches for implementing co-teaching and challenges associated with common planning time, among others.

This section addresses the rationale, review of literature, and project implications. The purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and target audience are included in the rationale. For the professional development (PD)/training sessions, I describe outlined timeline components, activities, and trainer notes that will be presented in 3-full-day training sessions. I provide an hour-by-hour detailed agenda for each day's training session, including the materials, such as PowerPoint slides and handouts. The presentation training will be presented at the high school where the study was conducted during the summer. All teachers and staff will be invited to attend the program, regardless of whether they are currently involved in co-teaching.

Based on the study findings, both general and special education teachers indicated that professional development training was needed prior to assignment to co-taught general education classrooms that had students with special needs fully included. In the study, the general and special education teachers indicated they were placed in a co-taught classroom without training or having a voice in their teaching partner. The

professional development program presented will allow the teachers opportunities to voice their concerns about these topics as well as other challenges and barriers that they have encountered when co-teaching.

Two outcomes of the project suggested that teachers (a) lack common planning time and (b) need professional development to help understand strategies and approaches for successful instruction in co-taught classrooms. The professional development program will help prepare teachers for co-teaching. The professional development will be held over 3 days. The program will focus on theory, research, and application that can benefit participants who are currently teaching in a co-taught classroom or co-teaching in the future. The building administrative team will be invited to the professional development program to listen to the teachers' concerns regarding common planning time and provide information on how teachers are paired into co-teaching teams.

Description and Goals

This project's primary goals are to understand the barriers and challenges of co-teaching based on the interview responses from general and special education high school teachers who participated in the study. Additionally, research-based professional development training will provide teachers and the administrative team with learning strategies to maximize academic outcomes for all learners in co-taught classroom settings (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). The findings concluded that with support and training, barriers and challenges associated with co-teaching could be minimized, and students, regardless of disability status, provided opportunities to succeed. Outcomes contingent on these

goals' practical implementations could result in positive perceptions regarding all students' full inclusion in general education classes.

The research of Jurkowski and Müller (2018) indicated that schools often fail co-teaching models because the teachers are assigned to a co-taught classroom without proper staff development. A positive approach to the success of co-teaching is to ensure administrator support for ongoing training that encourages open exchanges of ideas and strategies that can work with all students. Cooperative, collaborative planning, and scheduling for both general and special education teachers are essential for co-teaching to be successful.

Rationale

The professional development program for this project was selected after reviewing the findings of the study. The participants addressed concerns about needing additional training on the implementation of co-teaching approaches, co-planning, and understanding teachers' perceptions related to challenges and barriers of co-teaching. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), professional development provides teachers time to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice. Additionally, professional development provides opportunities and support for educators to continue to grow and improve within their field, including co-teaching, which is necessary for improved implementation (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015). The teachers' responses from my study focused on a lack of training for teachers and the administrative, co-planning, and implementation of co-teaching approaches. The goal of the administrative team is to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and co-

plan. The local school principal, assistant principals, curriculum, and instructional specialists will be asked to serve as mentors and facilitators during a half-day of the 3-day workshop and throughout the school year. Friend et al. (2010) highlighted ways administrators could help close the gaps in teacher knowledge and co-teaching experiences. Schachter (2015) emphasized that professional development can present information regarding methods and instruction that professionals can use to improve practice.

Review of Literature

Professional development was selected to provide teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff background on effective co-teaching in a high school setting. Gleaned from the present study results, all participants agreed that additional training regarding co-teaching to prepare for working in a classroom collaboratively with two teachers. Therefore, for this study, I developed a 3-day professional development as a roadmap for implementing co-teaching. Many educators and schools consider professional development as a template to engage everyone for consistency. The literature search process included accessing online libraries, which included the databases EBSCO host and Education Research Libraries. The literature ranged from 2015 to 2020. I used the following search terms: *professional development, leadership, co-teaching training, co-planning, collaboration, co-teaching approaches, teacher training, and administrators' role in collaboration.*

Professional Development

Policymakers and administrators make cognizant decisions as school funding continues to be an issue about what professional development models have been proven effective (Simos & Smith, 2017). Professional development for teachers has shifted in the last decade from delivering and evaluating training to focusing more on authentic teacher learning that engages teachers in collaboration and supports learning from each other (Al-Mahdi & Al-Wadi 2015; Pokhrel & Behera 2016). The pathway for providing teachers with skilled professional development involving effective training should be ongoing to allow instructional growth for both general and special education teachers to be successful (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015). Educators and school leaders who participate in professional development serve as role models, demonstrating that they value learning and believe it is important (Mizell, 2010).

Effective professional development requires considerable time, well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both that give additional knowledge and skills to use research-based practices (Guskey & Yoon 2009). Mangope and Mukhopadhyay (2015) explained professional development as “systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices, of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and the learning outcomes of students” (p. 61). Professional development could provide educators with additional knowledge and instructional strategies to improve their teaching (Mizell, 2010). Teachers reported their frustration with professional development, which often did not match their needs and lacked sufficient support in implementing practices (Wood et al., 2016). Showers et al. (1987)

stated that professional development aims to increase knowledge levels to sustain and support new practice until it becomes embedded in daily practice. Bennett and Broman (2019) mentioned designing professional development that puts teachers at the focus of discussion rather than the skills they are learning can encourage staff to spend time with one another in a supportive, focused environment. Moreover, Thomas-Brown and Sepetys' co-teaching professional development (CoPD) theory suggested that the professional development and support should not be a separate and outside practice, but rather an ongoing and built-in part of the co-teaching practice (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015). This theory implied that it is more beneficial to address co-teaching issues as they are happening rather than to address them later. Training should be ongoing and of sufficient duration to allow participants to process and incorporate the information, ideas, and practices, as well as work through implementation and possible issues in their classroom (Faraclas, 2018; Villegas, 2019). Participants are expected to be involved in determining the content of professional development programs. Their involvement in the choice and design of professional development programs could increase the program's effectiveness (Geldenuys & Oosthuizen, 2015).

The importance of implementing professional development and support for co-teachers showed that the professional development and ongoing support was a necessary tool for co-teachers to improve their practices and perceptions of the co-taught classroom (Lindeman & Magiera, 2014; Thomas-Brown & Sepetys, 2011; Tzivinikou, 2015). To develop the effectiveness of professional development training, organizers should consider the ways adults learn (Croft et al., 2010; Knowles, 1998). According to Holland

(2019), adults are more motivated to learn when building new knowledge based on prior experiences. Knowles (1998) presented his andragogy theory that indicated adults learn differently than children. According to his theory, five elements need to be considered when planning professional development for teachers or other professionals. The five elements are: (a) explaining why the content of professional development is important; (b) helping teachers understand how to manage the information being presented; (c) showing how the content is aligned with the experiences associated with co-teaching; (d) teachers and other professionals have to be ready and motivated to learn; and (e) the facilitator needs to help teachers understand the importance of active participation in the program (Knowles, 1998). Knowles developed the andragogical approach as a process model for designing and implementing the 3-day professional development project. The following assumptions underlie Knowles' andragogical model that adults learn best when self-directing their learning (Knowles, 2015):

- Adults need to know why something is important to know or do.
- Adults want the freedom to learn in their way.
- Adults are aware that learning is experiential.
- Adults know when the time is right for them to learn.
- Adults want the learning process to be positive and encouraging.

Knowles' et al. (2015) andragogical approach is learner-centered and runs counter to classroom methods that are based on pedagogical practices. The professional development for this study is a one-time 3-day workshop. The professional development

program should be interactive and use activities that engage teachers, administration, and support staff based upon the teacher responses.

Administration Support

School leaders are considered influential in establishing the vision and climate for inclusive school settings that are built on collaboration, collegial interactions, and fostering relationships for successful implementation of team teaching (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay 2015; Theoharis & Causton, 2014). The study's findings indicated that administrators need to provide professional development workshops for both general and special education teachers that include appropriate training for using strategies to meet all learners' needs. Many teachers indicated that a lack of administrative support was one of the challenges to the success of co-teaching. Administrators have to provide funding for professional development to help teachers understand the different modeling. According to Vangrieken et al. (2017), school administrators need to support teachers' who are co-teaching and work collaboratively towards helping all students learn. Researchers (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Conderman, 2011; Walsh, 2012) indicated that administrative support could be a determining factor in creating successful co-teaching teams. Therefore, if the administration provides training, materials, and support, co-teaching can be successful.

On the contrary, if the administration fails to support common planning time or support for the team, the probability of having a positive impact on student learning is less likely. Research also indicated that teams function poorly when the administration does not support providing research-based needs for teams (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007;

Conderman, 2011; Walsh, 2012). Nevertheless, administrators need to understand what co-teaching is and what it is not. Mentoring and coaching their staff productively and positively can produce successful results (Fitzell, 2018).

According to Waldron and McLeskey, 2010; Yoo, 2016), ongoing professional development connected to school initiatives and focused on building strong collaborative relationships among teachers makes a difference in increasing teacher efficacy that is valued and actively supported by administrators. Researchers (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015) emphasized that professional development programs that focus on transformative pedagogies encourage teachers to be reflective practitioners and encourage life-long learning.

Developing Co-Teaching Teams

Co-teaching is a specialized instructional delivery system that requires collaboration and cooperation between general and special education teachers assigned to a single classroom. Co-teaching requires two teachers to share instructional responsibilities and decision making when providing instruction to a classroom that includes students with and without learning disabilities. However, some teachers do not support co-teaching and can have a negative effect on the successful outcomes for both the teachers and their students (Chitiyo, 2017). According to Taylor (2016), teachers who are assigned to work together and have not established a trustworthy, compassionate, genuine, and productive relationship are in danger of setting everyone up for a risky and challenging experience. Co-teaching functions best when each teacher finds their own

personal style and knows their own strengths and challenges before committing to the co-teaching classroom (Murawski & Lochner, 2017).

The study's teachers believed that having pedagogical and subject matter, co-partner selection, and ongoing training were important factors needed for co-teaching to be successful. Some teachers perceived co-teaching as a type of forced partnership. Many teachers do not get to choose their partners. Instead, they are assigned to co-teach, with no say in choosing a partner. They explained from a business perception, people who go into business together generally share the same values/views and business philosophy. Therefore, the same philosophy should apply to co-teaching. Business partners deliberately choose another person who shares their sentiments. The teachers believed that administrators should ask for volunteers and then ask them whom they wanted as their co-teaching partner.

A concern voiced by the teachers was the mismatching of general and special education teachers. For example, a general education teacher providing instruction in algebra or geometry should be paired with a special education teacher who has knowledge in this area. Another instance is when a general education teacher teaches French, the special education co-teacher needs to have some knowledge regarding teaching a foreign language. Care in selecting co-teachers must be taken to match skills and teaching philosophy for students to learn optimally.

Scheduling and Planning

The co-planning framework includes practical steps involved in long-term planning to meet state standards and goals for the student's course work (Pratt, Imbody,

Wolf, & Patterson, 2017). The participants in my study mentioned that their meetings are usually held before or after school or during lunch and are used to determine instructional roles, discipline, etc. Daily planning occurs naturally in an interdependent co-teaching relationship at the beginning or end of class to review the session. According to Pratt et al. (2017), the framework becomes possible when co-teachers share a philosophy of student learning and a commitment to collaboration.

A successful co-teaching partnership is rooted in the understanding that planning and reflecting together is a priority; without it, special education teachers often assume the role of assistant teacher rather than an equal partner that includes both as a team (Pratt et al., 2017; Sinclair et al., 2019; Young, Fain, & Citro, (2020). Researchers, (Beninghof, 2020; Fitzell, 2018; Friend & Cook, 2016) indicated that once teams are established, the planning phases become more prescribed, covering strengths, preferences, student expectations, planning process, teaching approaches, the six methods of co-teaching, and role responsibilities.

Co-teaching includes professionals planning and delivering instruction using six approaches and variations, with selection based on student needs and instructional intent (Friend & Cook, 2010). Planning to co-teach is effective when the discussion begins before the end of the school year, allowing co-partners to process the ideas while away from school (Wilson, 2016). The teachers interviewed for this project expressed that collaboration among teachers could be possible at the high school level if common planning time were available from one to three times per week. The planning periods should be embedded in the master schedule. Participants of the study echoed that in-depth

planning is not consistent and does not occur as often as the teachers would like, but they both prefer a regular time for planning where they can comfortably attend and give full attention. Most general and special education teachers have two different lunch schedules and no common planning period together, making it challenging to plan. Collaborative planning should begin as soon as educators agree to become co-teachers (Young et al., 2020).

Approaches for Implementing Co-Teaching

Teaching has become more complex, and educators must be intentional about how individual student learning needs are met (Ricci & Fingon, 2017). Co-teaching is an approach that offers instructional delivery methods to serve students with and without disabilities using two teachers in an inclusive setting; while ensuring students get access to the same academic materials as their peers (Potts & Howards, 2011; Samuels, 2015). Co-teaching is an effective support model in special education settings, and its effectiveness has gained popularity in inclusive settings (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019; Premier & Parr, 2019). Mackey et al. (2018) echoed that co-teaching must be used to increase student learning and class participation in mind. Ruben et al. (2016) supported the use of co-teaching and explained its various models, such as parallel and the one-lead-one support model and noted that professional development is needed to educate teachers on the various models. Regardless of the classroom model, having actively engaged teachers working together throughout the instructional cycle is essential. Each teacher's roles must be clearly defined so that both are secure in their place in the co-teaching duo (Cassel, 2019).

Co-Teaching Approaches

A variety of co-teaching instructional models described by several researchers takes the form of one of six accepted models, including (a) one teach/one observe, (b) one teach/one assist, (c) alternative teaching, (d) parallel teaching, (e) station teaching, and (f) team teaching (Cassel, 2019; Cook & Friend, 2004; Friend, 1993; Friend & Cook, 2016; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008; Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001; Murawski & Lee Swanson, 2001).

One Teach/One Observe

In this approach, one teacher does the primary instruction while the co-teacher observes. The model allows one teacher to take a step back from his/her everyday teaching role to collect important data on what is happening in the class from a different perspective, without stepping in and supporting. To maintain equal leadership in the classroom, the same teacher should not observe too frequently. Teachers should alternate who leads and observes (Friend et al., 2010; Sileo, 2011; Villa et al., 2013).

One Teach, One Assist

Similar to the one teaches, one observes, this model allows one teacher to lead the instruction while the other circulates among the students offering individual assistance (Conderman & Hedin, 2014). Typically, the general education teacher would lead the instruction, while the special education teacher does the assisting. This model works best in technical or context laden classes, such as higher-level math or foreign language.

Alternative Teaching

The alternative teaching model has one teacher working with the majority of students in the class, while the other (typically the special education teacher) works with a small group for remediation, enrichment, assessment, pre-teaching, or another purpose. Both teachers act as lead teachers simultaneously by teaching separate groups (Friend & Cook, 2016). Friend and Burrello (2005) noted that it is important that the students receiving this support are not the same every time, or even at the same ability level, not to single out specific students who are performing at the lowest levels.

Parallel Teaching

The students are divided into two groups, one with the general education teacher and the other with the special education teacher: each with half the class group. The teacher may present the same material to foster instructional differentiation and increase student participation. According to Cook and Friend (2017), the parallel approach allows closer supervision and more interaction between students and teachers.

Station Teaching

Station Teaching is used when a smaller student-to-teacher ratio is desired. The instruction is divided into three nonsequential parts and students, where they rotate from station to station. Each co-teacher is stationed to a seating area, leaving one or more students working independently at the third station. The students get an opportunity to visit all stations once throughout the lesson. During this model, students with disabilities often benefit from this approach because of the teacher ratio and build a combination of students with learning disabilities with their peers (Cook & Friend, 2017).

Team Teaching

Students remain in one group, while the teachers co-instruct throughout the lesson. Students benefit most from this model when both teachers are in front of the room, guiding the instructions collaboratively. When there are multiple ways of reaching the same outcome, both teachers can simultaneously model their strategies so that students can see flexibility in thinking and decide which way makes the most sense for them (Friend & Burrello, 2005).

According to Cassel (2019), no one model is best; each model has its pros and cons. The teachers' roles are equally important because it demands the observer to collect data that might be useful in planning. Likable to Friend & Cook (2010), it is best to know each model thoroughly, so teachers can make the most informed decisions about using each model. Within these six approaches, teachers address the individualized education program (IEP) goals and objectives of students with disabilities while at the same time meeting the learning needs of other students in the class.

Project Description

The project that is the focus of this capstone is a professional development program that can prepare administrators and teachers to work in co-taught classrooms. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of administrators and teachers is important for co-teaching to be successful. A three-day session is considered appropriate to discuss all aspects of co-teaching and address both teachers' and administrators' concerns in implementing this program.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The professional development program will be conducted at the high school where the original study was conducted. All teachers and administrators will be invited to participate in the three-day program. I will serve as the primary facilitator of the project, which is planned to be interactive, allowing participants to complete individual and group activities to reinforce the presented topics.

The professional development training sessions will occur in the local school multi-room because of social distancing as required by COVID 19. Technology and internet access that will be needed during the program are available in this room. The facilitator will use PowerPoint slides and video clips to present information and provide examples of effective co-teaching. A video projector for the laptop computer will be needed to show the PowerPoint presentation and the video clips. Depending on the film clip, copyright permission to use the clip during the professional development will be obtained.

Each participant will be given a folder with handouts and space to put notes that are taken during the professional development. The participants will be asked to bring the folders with them at each session. While the participants will be expected to have writing utensils (pens, pencils) with them, the facilitator will have some on hand if a participant needs to borrow one. Coffee and water will be available during the day. Light snacks will be available during the morning and afternoon breaks. However, the participants will be expected to provide their own lunch during each day of the program.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

The multi-room will be closed during the specific training days; however, there is a possibility that the cafeteria workers may be in the back of the kitchen area with the shutters closed. To address this problem, I will request that the workers enter and exit the area using another entry located in the back of the room. Another potential barrier is the administrators' distraction being pulled out of the training to handle other building concerns. I will remind the audience before the training starts of the possible distractions coming over the intercom and the set bell that rings throughout the day. Some teachers may not want to spend three consecutive days attending a professional development program. Providing a stipend for each of the three days can encourage their attendance.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The superintendent and the school's principal must approve the professional development program plan. The PowerPoint presentation and 3-day agendas with a brief outline of the study's findings, facilitator notes, handouts, and implementation timeline will be discussed with the principal during the face-to-face meeting. Revisions to the presentation will be made based on the recommendation of the superintendent and principal. The contents of the presentation are designed to complement and support the vision of the school and district. Although the professional development implementation plan has been approved for August 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person professional development programs has been put on hold. With teaching being done virtually, co-teaching is not expected to be implemented at the start of the 2020 academic school year. When implemented, the professional development training will be held for

three consecutive days, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m., including two 15-minute breaks and a 1-hour lunch from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The projected timeline for the professional development plan includes the 3-day training sessions designed to introduce best practices for implementing co-teaching practices in high school. The sessions will include an introduction to co-teaching on Day 1, the effectiveness of co-planning on Day 2, and co-teaching strategies in an inclusive environment on Day 3 (See Appendix A). The Day 1 agenda components will include the introduction of co-teaching, selecting a co-teaching partner, benefits and challenges of co-teaching, turn and talk activities, small group engagement (scenarios), and wrap up/evaluation. The participants will have the opportunity to introduce themselves and participate in the icebreaker activity. The participants will complete the graphic organizer inputting what they know, what they learned, what evidence learned to support the topic, and what they are still wondering (KLEW). On Day 2, the session will include the effectiveness of co-planning, administrative support, collaborative planning and scheduling, small group engagement, and wrap up/evaluation. The participants will begin the morning, reflecting and reviewing the components from day 1. Day 3 presentation will include the implementation of co-teaching approaches, co-teaching strategies, small group engagement, and wrap up/evaluation. The building administrators and I will conduct a townhall-type meeting to engage in critical dialogue with teachers discussing any concerns or issues pertaining to co-teaching. Table 3 offers an outlined overview of the professional development timetable daily agenda.

Table 3*Daily Professional Development Timetable Overview of Daily Agenda*

Time	Activity	Location
8:30 - 8:45	Registration/Sign in	Multi-Center Room
8:45 - 9:00	Ice/Breaker/Overview	Multi-Center Room
9:00 - 10:00	PowerPoint Presentation	Multi-Center Room
10:00 - 10:30	Activity	Multi-Center Room
10:30 - 10:45	Break (<i>parking lot questions</i>)	Multi-Center Room
10:45 - 11:30	PowerPoint Presentation	Multi-Center Room
11:30 - 12:00	Activity	Multi-Center Room
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch	Off Campus
1:00 - 1:45	PowerPoint Presentation	Multi-Center Room
1:45 - 2:00	Break (<i>parking lot questions</i>)	Multi-Center Room
2:00 - 2:30	Small Group Engagement Activity	Multi-Center Room
2:45 - 3:00	Wrap up/ (<i>Daily Evaluation</i>)	Multi-Center Room

To support teachers during the implementation of co-teaching, building administrators and instructional support staff will conduct follow-up visits throughout the school year.

Roles and Responsibilities of Facilitator and Others

My role as the project manager is to organize the 3-day professional development sessions. I will present the findings of my study to the building administrators, teachers, and instructional support staff. I will also discuss the goals and purpose of the professional development, as well as roles and responsibilities of the facilitator. The

building administrator will assist during the morning sessions on the first and third day, while teachers experienced in co-teaching will be asked to assist with the sessions. The administrative team will assist with the daily small group activities, turn- and talk sessions, and the co-teaching scenarios.

Project Evaluation Plan

Assessing the effects of professional development is important in obtaining feedback from the participants on the topics that were presented (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Most evaluations for professional development provide information on items such as the knowledge of the speakers, the comfort of the room, and the food that was served. This type of evaluation does not indicate if the participants will apply the knowledge gained in their work in co-taught classrooms. According to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994), evaluation is “the systematic investigation of merit or worth” (p. 3).

The Kirkpatrick evaluation model established four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Kurt, 2016). At the reaction level, the participants’ reactions to the professional development program are evaluated. Questions on this level ask how well the content of the program was liked. The participants are evaluated on how much they learned from the program, using indicators that can be measured quantitatively. The third level assesses the behavior of the participants in applying what they learned or if they are applying the skills presented in the program. At the fourth level, the effect of the professional development program on the school. Table 4 presents the Kirkpatrick model.

Table 4*The Kirkpatrick Four Levels Evaluation Model*

Level	Description
Level 1: Reaction	The degree to which participants find the training favorable, engaging, and relevant to their jobs.
Level 2: Learning	The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in the training,
Level 3: Behavior	The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job.
Level 4: Results	The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package.

Note. Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 10.

The evaluation is conducted over time, generally 10 to 12 weeks. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The reaction and learning levels are completed following the initial presentation of the professional development program. This evaluation is used to assess the extent to which the participants liked the program and acquired new skills or learned strategies to use in co-taught classrooms from the information presented. To determine if the skills are being applied, behavior and results are assessed approximately 10 to 12 weeks following the program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Project Implications

Implications for Social Change

The innovative strategy of co-teaching is an instructional method implemented that addresses collaborative instruction and improves educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. Co-teaching offers instructional approaches to support students with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings by having

two teachers working collaboratively. Students receiving special education services no longer will be segregated and will be encouraged to interact with their general education population students. Their self-esteem and self-efficacy should improve, and their academic performance and behavior can be expected to increase.

Implications for Local Stakeholders

As inclusion becomes more important to parents and the community, providing education for students with special needs in general education classrooms will be the norm. Both general and special education teachers are expected to work collaboratively in providing education to all students. By participating in professional development that provides information on different models and strategies for co-teaching, the teaching partnership can become more collaborative and academic and social outcomes can improve for all students. Administrators need to understand the need for common planning time and be aware of pairing teachers by matching teaching styles and instructional strengths and weaknesses to create the best teaching dyad for students (Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010). Co-teaching is an instructional delivery method that is here to stay, with ongoing professional development available to assure best practices and innovative strategies are used with all students.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In implementing co-teaching with fidelity and creating a community of practice, a shift in perspective on teacher training and understanding the delivery models is needed at local school and district levels. Currently, co-teaching is the most popular model implemented in schools and is used to support students with disabilities in inclusive classroom settings (Cook et al., 2011). Many students without severe disabilities must receive services in an LRE setting with their peers daily and have access to the general education curriculum with accommodation according to their IEP. Therefore, for an inclusive classroom to be effective in the delivery of instruction and practice of co-teaching, both general and special education teachers need to collaborate daily. Cook and McDuffie-Landrum (2020) alluded that regardless of research supporting co-teaching as a practice, teachers can use the framework to integrate effective methods and use targeted interventions to provide all students with access to the general education curriculum. Professional development training for co-teaching can improve teachers' planning and performance and enhance classroom instruction (Faraclas, 2018).

Six general education and six special education teachers were interviewed regarding their perceptions of co-teaching in inclusive settings of students with and without disabilities. The study's findings indicated consistency in responses in the delivery of instructional methods, the process of co-teaching, and the need for training for teachers to be successful in the co-taught classroom of general and special education

teachers. A 3-day professional development training was developed to address co-teaching essentials based on the interview responses and peer-reviewed research.

In this final section of the project, the project strengths are discussed, and recommendations for remediation of limitations are presented. Alternate methods to address the problems associated with co-teaching are introduced. In addition, a discussion of scholarship, project development, self-analysis, leadership, and change are included. The project's potential for social change, implications for practice, and future research recommendations complete the project.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The underlying strengths that contributed to this project's success were the use of a qualitative approach that provided rich data from participants who were experienced with co-teaching. Through interviews, the general and special education teachers were able to elucidate their concerns regarding the use of co-teaching for students with and without disabilities. While the teachers generally revealed weaknesses in co-teaching in their district, a strength of this study was their ability to describe their experiences without concerns for reprisal from the district. A professional development program was created to help close the gaps in co-teaching and lack of administrative support through their comments.

Several limitations need to be acknowledged. The study was limited to a single urban school district in a large midwestern state. Co-teaching is gaining acceptance as a viable method to provide students with special needs access to the United States' general education curriculum. Conducting a study that uses multiple school districts may help

minimize this limitation. Another limitation was restricting the sample to high school teachers. A study, including teachers across all school levels, may provide additional strengths and weaknesses associated with co-teaching. Because of the coronavirus affecting the 2020-2021 school year, co-teaching may not be possible with most schools using virtual delivery methods for instruction. To ensure that co-teaching is used with fidelity when face-to-face instruction is reinstated, professional development for co-teaching should be required for all teachers. This training could be completed virtually to prepare teachers when schools return to normal instructional delivery.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem that was the focus of this project was to understand perceptions of co-teaching from special education and general education teachers. This study examined teachers' views on common planning time, strengths and weaknesses of co-teaching, lack of professional development, and administrator support. A qualitative research design was used for this study. An alternative way to conduct this study would be to use a quantitative research design, using a survey designed to obtain information on the topics that were the focus of this study. While this method would allow for the use of a larger sample, the data would be limited to the items on the survey that might not provide an understanding of teachers' perceptions of co-teaching.

The product developed from this study was a 3-day professional development workshop to provide teachers with training to co-teach. Instead of a 3-day concentrated workshop, which may be difficult for teachers to attend, on-going professional development using a virtual platform may be a better choice. The professional

development program could be uploaded to YouTube or be available on the school district's website for teachers to complete during off times. Teachers could review the professional development programs multiple times to ensure they understand the concepts associated with co-teaching. An assessment could be on-going after each session, with teachers demonstrating that they have incorporated the learning outcomes into their teaching.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Research on co-teaching has been the subject of scholarly research. It has established the viability of this form of instructional delivery to create inclusive classrooms that meet the needs of students with and without disabilities. However, most of the research had been completed at the elementary and middle school level. Little research was found that focused on co-teaching in high school from the perspective of the teachers. After establishing that co-teaching provides benefits to the students, the literature review concentrated on the models of co-teaching and their appropriateness in specific settings. This study's focus was on common planning time, administrative support, and the need for professional development to co-teach. This study's results are significant and need to be disseminated to inform other educational professionals about some of the benefits and barriers that can affect co-teaching. By writing a manuscript and submitting it to a refereed, educational journal, K-12 administrators and teachers can be made aware of the findings. Presenting results at local, state, and national conferences can also help let other educators understand how co-teaching at the high school level may

need additional support to meet its objective of creating inclusive classrooms that ensure all students receive the same curriculum.

This capstone project's culmination was the development of a professional development program to prepare teachers and administrators for co-teaching in a high school setting. Throughout my work in reviewing relevant literature, conducting face-to-face interviews, and synthesizing the responses from general and special education teachers who have experience in co-teaching, I was able to determine the content necessary in a professional development program.

After determining the needed curriculum, a timeline was developed to ensure that all pertinent topics were included while providing enough hands-on activities to help teachers and administrators assimilate the information being presented. After completing the professional development, an evaluation is needed to determine if participants were satisfied with the program and the importance of the data presented. An immediate evaluation will be completed to determine satisfaction with the environment, information, and presenters. To ensure that the teachers and administrators have assimilated the information and are using it in their classrooms, using the Kirkpatrick (2016) evaluation method will gauge the next steps. By assessing how teachers are using professional development information, the need for additional training can be determined.

Administrators can use the evaluation to understand where additional support is needed to ensure that teachers in co-taught classrooms have common planning time and a voice in their teaching partners. However, evaluation must be on-going, with training provided to

new teachers and refresher modules for veteran teachers (Neifeald, & Nissim, 2019; Ploessl & Rock, 2014).

The administrators in the school that were home to the study need to review this research results. As leaders in the school, they are responsible for helping general and special education teachers accept co-teaching as an instructional delivery method that will become the norm in their school. The leaders should support the professional development program created from the teachers' responses to interview questions regarding their co-teaching experiences. They have to ask general and special education teachers for input into the pairing of general and special education teachers in co-taught classrooms. Matching the teachers by teaching style, background, and schedule could provide better outcomes for the students. For example, pairing an algebra teacher with a special education teacher who has no math background could result in the special education teacher acting as a paraprofessional instead of a peer teacher with equal input into the course content. Providing funding for co-teaching is also an essential function of leaders in schools that offer co-teaching to promote inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

Throughout my journey to complete this project, I became aware of the importance of scholarship searching for information on my topic. To ensure the problem is addressed effectively, scholarly articles that included quantitative and qualitative components were used to provide platforms for research on co-teaching. I spent hours searching for educational databases, reading scholarly research articles, and learning to

synthesize the findings to create a literature review that shows the current state of co-teaching in K-12 public schools. I also found that I became more aware of the importance of asking the interview questions to elicit responses that would provide data needed to answer the research questions. Reading and coding the responses were exercises that increased my understanding of the research process. The final step in the process was creating a professional development program. Again, reviewing the literature on professional development, planning and creating agendas and timelines, and understanding the importance of evaluation ensures professional development's veracity became learning activities. It is my hope that this professional development program will be presented to the teachers, possibly virtually on three successive Saturdays or during the summer, can improve the attitudes of general and special education teachers toward being part of a co-taught classroom to improve learning outcomes for all students with and without disabilities.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Every Student Succeeds Act requires all students to be exposed to the same educational curriculum, with students with special needs included in general education classes to the greatest extent possible. To ensure that students with special needs are fully included, co-teaching has become an instructional delivery method with great promise. Two teachers, one general and one special education are paired to provide teaching for all students. However, many teachers do not want to team teach. They want complete control over the instruction and learning that occurs in their classrooms. This study is important because it provides teachers' co-teaching perspectives and provides recommendations for

what needs to be done to help teachers accept co-teaching as a normal way to educate all students. The study findings indicated that more administrative support in selecting co-teaching pairs, providing professional development, and common planning time is needed for teachers to become willing to co-teach.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This study's findings support that school leaders need to think about co-teaching in the same way that they consider other innovative programs that are implemented to improve academic and social outcomes for all students. Including students with special needs into general education, classrooms can reduce the stigma associated with being labeled special education in a high school setting. Having a second teacher in the classroom can help students with special needs, and low-performing general education students have another explanation of a confusing topic. School leaders need to make their support of co-teaching clear and encourage teachers to accept an assignment to be in a co-taught classroom.

Based on this study's outcomes, future research is needed to continue understanding how teachers feel about being in co-taught classrooms. The study needs to be replicated in another school district that has implemented co-teaching to determine if the findings are consistent.

Another recommendation for research is to hold the professional development program in a school district considering co-teaching as an instructional method. The teacher participants could be queried before the program and again after determining if attending the professional development program has helped improve their willingness to

be paired with another teacher in a co-taught classroom. Although the present study did not include students, additional research is needed to determine students' perceptions with and without disabilities on being included in a classroom with two teachers. A longitudinal research study is needed to determine the long-term effects of co-teaching. A qualitative research design could follow some students with special needs throughout their high school years to determine if co-teaching has helped them feel more accepted in the school.

Conclusion

The changes in the way children with disabilities are being included in general education classrooms has prompted many educators and policymakers to reevaluate the instructional approach to ensure students with disabilities are provided an opportunity to be successful in an inclusive classroom setting. Using co-teaching offers two teachers, one general and one special education teacher, an opportunity to develop a classroom culture of positive outcomes for all learners. Implementing co-teaching models has been the approach used in high schools to deliver instruction to meet compliance of policy and schools' mandates. However, until the three most problematic areas, common planning time, professional development, and administrative support, are resolved, co-teaching will remain undesired by teachers. By allowing teachers to have input into being assigned to a co-teaching class and then selecting compatible teachers, co-teaching can achieve the goals of providing effective instruction to all students. Although some educators are privileged to work in schools that support co-teaching, the implementation must be applied with tenacity and fidelity nationwide.

Job-embedded professional development is a relatively new approach for improving co-teaching practices between general and special educators that support teachers with instructional strategies. Professional development should be on-going and mandatory for schools and districts to have co-teaching classrooms of students with and without disabilities.

Changing the environment to include all children in the same classroom can begin to reduce the stigma that students with special needs are not equal to the general education students. As general education students interact with students with special needs, society can begin to become more accepting of individual differences that previously caused discord among them. Co-teaching is the first step in creating the social change needed to create inclusive classrooms for all students.

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Appendix A: Final Project

Purpose

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that schools and districts need to gain insights to understand co-teaching in terms of professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and the availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons in co-taught classrooms.

Professional Development Goals

The primary goals of this project are to understand the teachers' perception of co-teaching and to provide research based professional development on the implementation of Co-teaching approaches in an inclusive classroom setting. The 3-Day workshops are intended to showcase engaged learning that will be delivered through a professional development for teachers, principals, assistant principals, and instructional support staff. Best practices of co-teaching, resources, and suggestions will promote learner engagement and provide an opportunity for participants to reflect how they will use these strategies in their educational roles with students.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes may include but are not limited to the following:

- Increased effective instructional approaches of co-teaching
- Increased knowledge of implementation of co-planning
- Increased communication with collaborative teachers and administration
- Ongoing Professional Development

Target Audience

- High school general and special education collaborative teachers in content band and grade levels 9th – 12th
- All administrative and support staff, counselors, School Social Workers, and Psychologists
- Local and district high schools

Introduction to the Project

My study took place in a local high school in the suburban area of Western Wayne Michigan. The study indicated that administrators need to provide professional development workshops for both general and special education teachers that includes appropriate training for using strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Many teachers indicated that a lack of administrative support was one of the challenges to the success of co-teaching. This professional development is designed to address the information on different models and strategies for co-teaching and to prepare administrators to work collaboratively with teachers in planning and scheduling for co-taught classrooms and to understand all aspects of co-teaching and address the concerns in implementing this program.

Appendix B: Interview Question Guide and Protocol

The protocol for conducting the interviews:

- Inform the participants of the purpose and use for conducting the interview
- Inform the participants that the interview will be audio taped/recorded
- Assure the participants that all information discussed during the interview will be kept confidential

Interview Questions (General and Special education teachers)

RQ1: How do high school general and special education teachers describe their experiences with the co-teaching model?

RQ2. How do general and special education high school teachers describe the challenges and benefits associated with co-teaching?

- a. How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of planning time?
- b. How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of administrative support?
- c. How do high school general education teachers describe their experiences regarding the use of the co-teaching model in terms of professional development?

Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me today. As the consent stated, you are free to decide not to participate in this study and can withdraw at any time. I want to take

a moment to orient you to the zoom platform. I will be recording the interview using a zoom recorder for transcription purposes. You may adjust your sound video settings in the bottom left corner.

(Initiate the Zoom recording.)

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project on teacher's perception of co-teaching in high schools. In order to understand your experience as a general or special education teacher in a co-teaching classroom, this interview will include your perspective to understand the experiences of co-teaching in terms of professional development, administrative support for co-teaching, and the availability of common planning time for creating and delivering lessons in co-taught classrooms. I have a set of questions to guide our conversation. It is important that all of your experiences shared relate to the question asked through your experience as a co-teacher.

Do you have any questions about the purpose or structure of the interview?

(Researcher will begin by sharing contextual information gained from the participant's questionnaire for the purpose of introduction and check for accuracy.

A conversational style was used, leading into the guide questions and sub-questions.)

1. Describe your perception of Co-Teaching classroom.
2. What are your views of the various designs of co-teaching models you have used during your experience in a co-taught classroom?
3. Which design of co-teaching model do you prefer in a co-taught setting? Why did you choose the design?

4. What are some of the limitations of implementing co-teaching models in a co-taught setting?
5. List and explain some of the benefits and disadvantages of the collaborative models of co-teaching.
6. How often does in-depth planning occur between the general education and special education teachers, describe what happens. Is it more informal? On the fly? Formal? Describe the set times and specific issues that are discussed?
7. How often do you attend professional development training to acquire new methods or strategies to benefit the students and staff?
8. What do you contribute to be the most rewarding of co-teaching?
9. How do you think we can make the benefits of co-teaching attainable for more collaborative teaching situations at the high school level?
10. What is the biggest reason for not incorporating more of the Co-Teaching Models and strategies in your classroom?

(End Zoom recording)

Thank you so much for your participation. After this interview is transcribed, I will send you an email with the transcription document attached and a few questions that will let me know about the accuracy of the transcript.

Appendix C: Introduction to the Project

Professional Development Agenda Engaging and Empowering Educators on Implementing Co-Teaching Collaboration/Day 1

8:30 – 8:45

Registration/Meet and Greet

- Teachers will pick up name tags if pre-registered, if not they will write their names on a blank card. Teachers will be provided colored coded dot that represent their years of teaching and place on their name tag to be used for icebreaker activity (**Yellow** = 1–5; **Red** = 5–10; **Blue** = 11–15; **Orange** = 15 and over).
- Welcome from facilitator and building administration. The building administration will welcome the audience on day 1 and 3.
- The facilitator will discuss the purpose of the Professional Development/Training.

8:45 – 9:00

Ice Breaker

- Participants will stand in the colored coded area that represents the years of teaching experience. The groups will collaborate their co-teaching classroom experience of how students with disabilities were/are included in their classroom instruction.
- Teachers will record what benefits and challenges they were/are confronted (Graphic organizer)? One person from the group will speak out their findings.

9:00 – 10:00

PowerPoint/Introduction to Co-Teaching

- Complete the K-L-E-W Chart to assist in constructing evidence-based claims prior to the presentation (K=What do I **K**now) (L=What am I **L**earning) (E=What is my **E**vidence) (W=What am I **W**ondering)
- PowerPoint: Overview of Co-Teaching
- Discuss how co-teaching aligns with the school and district's mission.
- Collaborate what you know about Co-Teaching using a general education teacher and a special education teacher in a co-taught classroom setting.
- What does the research say about co-teaching?
- Participants will use the **K-L-E-W** chart (graphic organizer) to record what they learned and evidence to support about co-teaching.

10:00 – 10:30

Activity

The participants will be asked to read their response out loud in an open forum for discussion. I will display the information in the chart on the PPT slide and show on the projection screen for all participants to see.

10:30 – 10:45

15- minute break

10:45 – 11:30

PowerPoint/The Benefits of Co-Teaching

- Provide a visual of the positive outcomes of co-teaching and research data review.
- Engage the participants in a discussion about the outcomes as relates to their school/district presentation will be facilitated by the administration team and me.
- View video – “Special Education and Regular education Working Together”
- “Quick write” Participants will record on their **K-L-E-W** chart what they learned

11:30 – 12:00

Activity

Participants will view a video of effective and ineffective co-teaching. We will discuss the difference of the videos. The instructional support team and I will facilitate the questions from the teachers.

12:00 – 1:00

Break for Lunch

1:00 – 1:45

PowerPoint “Challenges of Co-Teaching”

- Provide a visual of the challenges of co-teaching and research data review.
- View Video “Challenges of Co-Teaching” Dr. Marilyn Friend
- “Quick write” Participants will record on their **K-L-E-W** chart what they learned

1:45 – 2:00

15-minute break

2:00 – 2:45

Small Group Engagement (SGE) Activity

The participants will engage in working in groups for this activity. The participants will be provided a scenario about co-teaching and asked to identify benefit and challenges along with an explanation of the scenario and provide a possible solution.

2:45 – 3:00

Wrap-up/Evaluation.

Questions, concerns, comments. This component is conducted by the facilitator, administration staff and instructional coaches. The participants will be asked to share and reflect features of the professional development that was most illuminating for them in the form of an evaluation.

Professional Development Agenda
Engaging and Empowering Educators on Implementing Co-Teaching
Collaboration/Day 2

8:30 – 8:45

Fireplace Conversation/Greet Time Teachers will pick up name tags if pre-registered. Participants will partake in continental breakfast (coffee, danish, tea, and fruit)

8:45 – 9:00

Ice Breaker

Participants will engage in review of day 1 session using the interactive game Kahoot. The winner will receive a door prize.

9:00 – 10:00

PowerPoint/Approaches to Co-teaching

- What is differentiated instruction?
- Collaborative Teacher Roles and Responsibilities
- Introduction to co-teaching models

10:00 – 10:30

Activity/Turn and Talk Discussion

The participants will view the video on differentiated instructions, teachers' roles, and responsibilities. The support team and I will facilitate the questions from the teachers.

10:30 – 10:45

15- minute break

10:45 – 11:30

PowerPoint/Co-teaching Models

- One Teach, One Observe
- One Teach, One Assist
- Station Teaching

11:30 – 12:00

Activity/Turn and Talk Activity

Participants will view videos and select one model of instruction they would implement. The support team and I will facilitate the responses from the teachers.

12:00 – 1:00

Break for Lunch

1:00 – 1:45

PowerPoint/Co-teaching Models (continue)

- Parallel Teaching
- Alternative Teaching
- Team Teaching

1:45 – 2:00

15-minute break Brain Break/Crossword Puzzle

The teachers will work with their table partners. The participants will recall what they learned about the co-teaching models to complete this activity/crossword puzzle.

2:00 – 2:45

Small Group Engagement (SGE) Activity

Participants will break into groups of five. Using the information learned from approaches to co-teaching, each team will have to create a mock classroom that replicates one of the six models. The participants not engaged in a group (audience) will identify the model and explain why they chose their choice. This activity assists in reinforcing information learned about co-teaching model approaches.

2:45 – 3:00

Questions/Wrap-up/Evaluation

This component is conducted by the facilitator and the administration staff. The participants will be asked to complete the survey for Day 2 Session.

Professional Development Agenda
Engaging and Empowering Educators on Implementing Co-Teaching
Collaboration/Day 3

8:30 – 8:45

Fireplace Conversation/Greet Time

Participants will partake in continental breakfast (coffee, danish, tea, and fruit)

8:45 – 9:00

Ice Breaker

Participants will engage in review of Days 1 and 2 session using the interactive game Kahoot. The winner will receive a door prize.

9:00 – 10:00

PowerPoint/Why Co-Plan

- What does research say?
- Why Co-plan
- Introduction to co-teaching models

10:00 – 10:30

Activity/Turn and Talk Discussion

The participants will view the video on differentiated instructions, teachers' roles, and responsibilities. The support team and I will facilitate the questions from the teachers.

10:30 – 10:45

15- minute break

10:45 – 11:30

Small Group Engagement: Time to Plan

- Collaborative lesson planning
- Assigning Classroom Tasks
- Observation and Administrative Feedback

The participants will be provided a collaborative lesson plan template

11:30 – 12:00

Activity/Turn and Talk Activity

12:00 – 1:00

Break for Lunch

1:00 – 1:45

Administrative Support

- Selecting co-partner
- Scheduling
- Planning Template

1:45 – 2:00

15-minute break

2:00 – 2:45

Small Group Activity

Teachers work in pairs and develop a lesson that includes roles and responsibilities of both teachers, general education, and special education. They will include the co-teaching approach that will be used. The template will be provided and used as a guide to co-planning. The co-teachers will provide feedback as it relates to their planning template.

2:45 – 3:00

Questions/Wrap-up/Evaluation

This component is conducted by the facilitator and the administration staff for a “Recap” of the high points and significance of the 3-day event. The participants will be asked to complete the survey for Day 3 Session.

K-L-E-W Graphic Organizer

TOPIC: _____

K What teachers think they know?	L What teachers learn through engaged activities and PD	E Evidence to support teacher learning.	W After all you have learned, what are you still wondering about?

Small Group Engagement Activity

Scenario - A...

Your principal has just announced that next year you will be co-teaching with a special education teacher in an inclusion classroom that includes 10 students with disabilities and 15 students without disabilities. What questions would you ask your administrator?

36

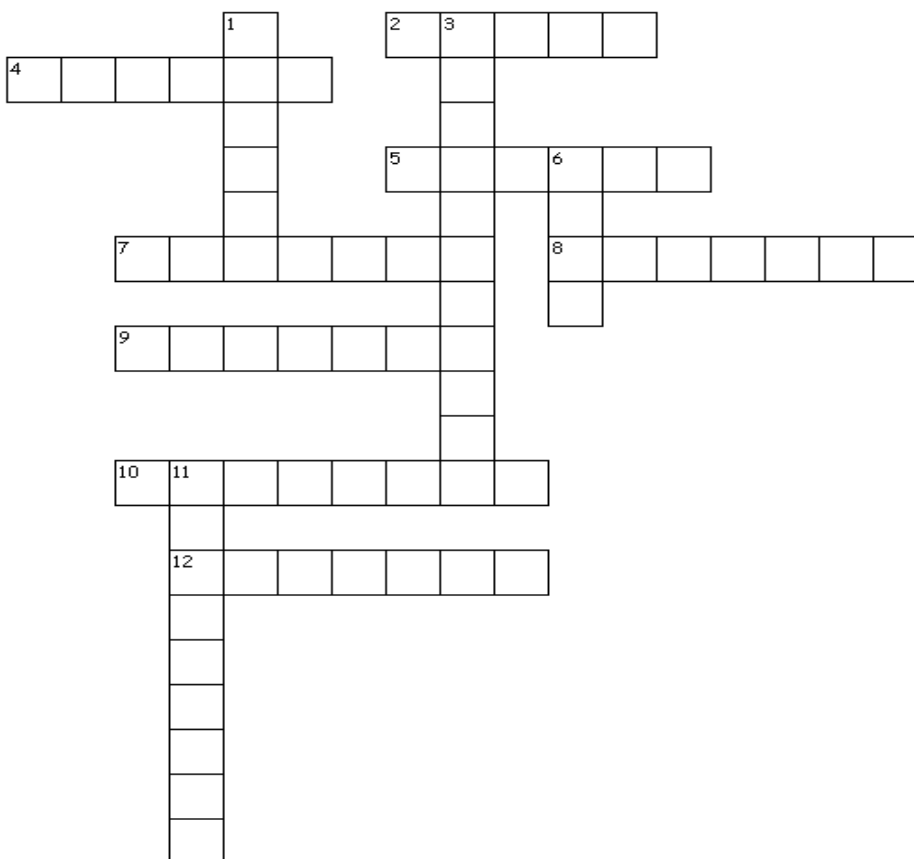
Small Group Engagement Activity

Scenario - B...

Your principal has just announced that you will be co-teaching with a general education teacher in a math inclusion classroom that includes 10 students with disabilities and 15 students without disabilities. You don't get along with the special education teacher. The special education teacher is not certified in math and is not comfortable teaching in an inclusion setting. How would you handle this situation?

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Brain Break/Let's Play



Across

2. The student-to-teacher _____ is lowered when using **Parallel Teaching**
4. During **Station Teaching** students _____ from station to station
5. How often should **One Teach, One Assist** be used
7. This model allows teachers to work with every student in the class
8. This model is known as "tag-team teaching"
9. Using teaming both teachers must have a strong _____ knowledge
10. Teachers teach the same information at the same time
12. During **One Teach, One Observe** student and _____ data should be collected

Down

1. This may be one challenge of using **Alternative Teaching**
3. Model where one teacher teaches whole group and the other teacher a small group
6. During **One Teach, One Observe** one teacher collects _____ while the other teacher handles instruction
11. In all models of co-teaching teachers should _____ roles

Co-Planning Template

Date	Target	Co-Teaching Approach	General Ed Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Considerations, Notes, and Action Plan
August 17-18 (2x per week)	I can define critical verbs.	Parallel (switch M-T with parallel activity below).		Pre-assess; determine individual benchmarks; lead group matching activity and ongoing practice based on student needs.	Special Education Teacher: develop flash cards
August 17-18 (2x per week)	I can identify the main idea of a text.	Parallel (switch M-T with parallel activity above).	Lead group practice followed by individual practice; immediate feedback; redo as necessary.		General Education Teacher: find and copy passages/ questions.
August 19	I can construct a 3 paragraph essay in response to a prompt.	Team Teaching	Introduce prompt; answer student questions as needed.	Introduce prompt; answer student questions as needed.	General Education Teacher: Create prompt. All: Assess using ECA rubric. Highlight present levels on rubric.
August 20	I can improve a specific area of my writing based on the writing benchmark and teacher	Stations			All: Google doc (list targets and directions, provides examples) Stations: Development.

Pratt, S.M., Imbody S.M., Wolf, L.D., & Patterson, A.L. (2017).