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Head Start Teachers' Descriptions of Inclusion

Lawanda Katrina Lovett-Cunningham
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Lawanda Lovett-Cunningham

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Dr. Karen Clark, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Beate Baltes, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Head Start Teachers' Descriptions of Inclusion

by

Lawanda Lovett-Cunningham

MA, Walden University, 2009

MA, Luther Rice Seminary & University, 2005

BS, Morris Brown College, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

A Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, teachers were struggling to provide appropriate services to students with special needs (SWSN) in inclusive settings. The purpose of this study was to explore Head Start teacher descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. McKenzie and Zascavage's model of inclusion formed the conceptual framework that guided this study. The research questions for this study addressed teacher descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies. A basic qualitative design was used to capture the insights of 12 purposefully selected Head Start inclusion teachers through semistructured interviews. Themes were identified through open coding. The trustworthiness of the study was established through member checking, rich and detailed descriptions, and researcher reflexivity. The findings revealed that Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN, and they need time and resource support to prioritize learning needs of this special population and additional training to improve instructional strategies. This study has implications for positive social change through the identification of strategies to overcome the challenges faced by Head Start teachers in inclusive classrooms and the identification of resources and training needs to improve the quality of services provided by Head Start teachers for the benefit of SWSN.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I love you all more than you will ever know. This journey was not easy but was made possible through your love and support. To my husband, Larmar, and my children, Alaura and Zion, you all are a blessing and I am so grateful to have you in my life. Along the way, you all constantly made sacrifices and choices that supported our family. Larmar, you were persistent in reminding me that this too shall pass and motivated me every step of the way. Thank you so much for your faith to see this to the end before I could. Thank you for listening to me complain, cry, and problem solve. I will forever be grateful for your love and sleepless nights. Alaura and Zion, I hope that I am an inspiration to you both to remain lifelong learners and pillars in your community.

I would also like to thank and dedicate this work to my mother, Emma, and father, James, for always pushing me to stay in school, to be the best version of myself, and to never ever stop learning. My brothers, Eddie and Jason, thank you for being the best uncles and brothers. You two have helped mold me into the woman that I am today. To the family members that I lost along this journey, thank you for believing in me. A short list but worthy of mentioning include my mother-in-law Augusta, my great aunt Mary, and my Aunt Ruby. All of you pushed me to keep going and all of you departed the world along the way. I am grateful that your spirits of excellence remain in my heart. Finally, my nana Emma. Thank you for being my biggest cheerleader. You always believed in me and let me know that I was something special. Little did you know that your love would be the catalyst for my life. To God be the Glory.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The topic of this study is inclusive services for students with special needs (SWSN) in Head Start settings. This study was necessary because congressmen mandated inclusion in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) to the maximum extent appropriate: SWSN are educated with students who are nondisabled. Head Start is one of the largest providers of inclusive services in the United States for children from age three to age five (Muccio et al., 2014). However, Head Start programs continue to encounter problems with the implementation of successful inclusion practices (Muccio et al., 2014).

The service delivery model of inclusion influences the educational setting of SWSN (Giangreco & Suter, 2015) and, thus, was material to the topic of this proposed study. An essential component of the service delivery model of inclusion is that all students are taught in general education classrooms unless their academic or social needs cannot be adequately met in a general education setting (Giangreco & Suter, 2015). Teachers who work in inclusive classrooms require adequate resources, ongoing professional development, and ongoing service evaluations (Giangreco & Suter, 2015).

Teachers' perceptions of the service delivery model of inclusion play a critical role in the academic, behavioral, and social development of both SWSN and their peers in inclusive classrooms (Kent & Giles, 2016). During a lead teachers' meeting in a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, one teacher stated that the implementation of an inclusive education environment was difficult and there was evidence that students experience minimum benefits, (Teacher, personal communication, August 14, 2019). The

teacher (personal communication, August 14, 2019) indicated that limited resources for teaching SWSN was a concern of Head Start teachers. Teachers with negative perceptions toward inclusion often encounter difficulties in providing effective instruction to SWSN (Gupta, 2020). These difficulties have been reported in the local Head Start in Southeast Georgia by teachers who struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN (Disability Coordinator, personal communication, November 26, 2018).

Head Start is the largest provider of inclusive services for young children in the United States (Muccio et al., 2014). With the understanding that not all teachers embrace positive perceptions towards the inclusion of SWSN, a potential social change and implication of this study was the advancement of knowledge for future enhancement efforts of the service delivery model of inclusion. Another potential social change of this proposed study was the identification of training needs to improve the quality of services provided by Head Start teachers for the benefit of SWSN.

This chapter begins with the background of inclusion and Head Start. The background is followed by the problem statement, the purpose, the research questions (RQs), the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, and the definitions of key terms. I then discuss the assumptions, the scope and delimitations, the limitations, and the significance of the study. This chapter ends with a summary of key points and a transition to Chapter 2.

Background

In a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, Head Start teachers were hesitant to participate in the service delivery model of inclusion (Disability Coordinator, personal

communication, November 26, 2018). Head Start teachers' perceptions of the service delivery model of inclusion impact the instruction provided to SWSN (Chambers, 2017). These perceptions were influenced by training at the preservice level, in-service level, and professional development offered by individual school districts (Chambers, 2017). This study explored Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSNs.

O'Neill (2016) defined inclusion as the practice of educating SWSN in the same classroom with general education students. Specifically, within an inclusive classroom, a student is in the general education class that the student would attend if he or she did not have a disability (Shoulders & Krei, 2016). The way students receive services were restructured under inclusion so that students were educated in the regular education classroom instead of receiving services in a pull-out model (Shoulders & Krei, 2016).

Head Start teachers are required to provide an education to all students based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards (Buettner et al., 2016). The professional development available to Head Start teachers impacts the learning and performance of SWSN educated in Head Start inclusion classrooms (Ewing et al., 2018). In addition, professional development influences the perceptions of Head Start teachers about inclusion (Ewing et al., 2018). Every year, local and national Head Start staff receive a week of training that complies with federal government Head Start Performance Standards, 45 CFR – Part 1306 (ACF, 2018a). The goal of in-service training is to improve knowledge of inclusion services required by Head Start regulations and policies (ACF, 2018b). Monthly in-service training is

provided by center managers or administrative staff during the school year on topics that enhance comprehensive child development services (Teacher, personal communication, August 14, 2019).

Other than in-service training, Head Start teachers receive no other training on the inclusion of SWSN in the Head Start classrooms (Teacher, personal communication, August 14, 2019). Specifically, teachers receive limited training on including SWSN (Fogle et al., 2019). Training about how to teach SWSN who were exhibiting difficult behaviors, classroom management and maintaining student engagement were needed (Teacher, personal communication, August 14, 2019). Research affirms that a lack of teacher training relative to SWSN is an obstacle for Head Start teachers (Ryndak et al., 2014) and, also, is a national concern (Brock et al., 2017).

Muccio et al. (2014) examined the perspectives and practices of Head Start teachers and concluded that the teachers lacked the necessary skills for the successful inclusion of SWSN in classrooms. In addition, Muccio et al. identified the lack of funding for training as the primary basis for the deficit in the necessary skills of Head Start teachers. Muccio et al. highlighted that appropriate training of Head Start teachers would be beneficial to meet the needs of SWSN. The availability of funding for the training of Head Start teachers has contributed to the national issue of Head Start teachers lacking the necessary skills to service SWSN.

Mischo (2015) examined whether preschool teachers were adequately prepared for the provision of inclusive education strategies. Mischo indicated that teachers lacked the necessary preservice and in-service training before being placed in inclusive

education classrooms. Jacoby and Lesaux (2017) also questioned that Head Start teachers lacked the necessary skills for the development and refinement of interventions for SWSN. In addition, MacLeod and Nápoles (2015) highlighted that teachers lacked the necessary skills to deliver the coursework needed for the academic achievement of SWSN. Shoulders and Krei (2016) noted that Head Start teachers lacked skills in providing one-to-one support, teamwork, parental resistance, training, and resources, which were all items that affect the learning environment of students. Shoulders and Krei concluded that Head Start teachers need inclusion training at the preservice level and professional development offerings by local school districts.

Researchers have indicated that Head Start teachers need additional training regarding student academic and developmental screening and assessments, as well as how these screenings and assessments were conducted, reviewed, interpreted, discussed with parents, and acted upon (Musyoka & Clark, 2017). Parents of Head Start SWSN also identified their dissatisfaction with teachers' inadequate instructional strategies and services delivery when responding to an exit survey (ACF, 2018b). In accordance, parents felt that Head Start teachers did not have the adequate training to provide the services needed for children with special needs.

The preparation and development of Head Start teachers is not sufficient relative to teaching preschoolers in an inclusive setting (Han, 2014). Han (2014) reported that Head Start teachers are not effective in providing preschool students with appropriate social skills, sophisticated use of language, and ability to perform higher level cognitive tasks, all of which are needed for preschool students to be successful in kindergarten

(Han, 2014). Whitaker et al. (2017) examined Head Start teachers' abilities to provide high quality experiences to serve SWSN and results indicated the skills of Head Start teachers are often diminished by inappropriate workforce development. Specifically, Whitaker et al. reported that the lack of appropriate training results in teachers' lacking in a sense of purpose and identity, hence, a coherent system of care and education delivery was improbable.

Through the examination of the literature, the lack of adequate teacher training of Head Start preschool teachers was reported (Han, 2014; Shoulders & Krei, 2016; Whitaker et al., 2017). There was a gap in practice in how teachers understand their roles and the barriers to providing inclusive services to SWSN. This study sought to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSNs. As a result of this study, an understanding of the Head Start teachers' descriptions on their role may assist in bridging the gap in practice.

Problem Statement

The problem that prompted this study was that Head Start teachers struggle to provide appropriate services to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms. In a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, teachers struggled to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms due, in part, to inconsistent classroom instruction, competing priorities between federal and state requirements, and inadequate preservice training (Disability Coordinator, personal communication, November 26, 2018). The inadequacy of preservice training for effective instruction of SWSN

(Shoulders & Krei, 2016) and a lack of trained Head Start faculty relative to inclusion strategies for SWSN (Han, 2014) were concerns of Head Start teachers. Walter and Lippard (2017) examined Head Start teacher preservice training across a decade and identified that the lack of Head Start teacher training negatively affected their confidence about teaching via inclusion. Musyoka and Clark (2017) concluded that the Head Start children who had suspected disabilities or diagnosed disabilities displayed poorer outcomes in kindergarten compared to children who were not labeled, nor suspected, of having a disability. Nevertheless, educational training of Head Start teachers affects the teaching provided to all Head Start students, as well as their perceptions on inclusion (Epler, 2017).

The teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms was compounded by their lack of understanding of the K-12 special education system and their roles within the system (Disability Coordinator, personal communication). This lack of role clarity was supported by the research of Ronoh et al. (2015) and may lead to barriers in providing required services to SWSNs. There was a gap in practice in how teachers understand their roles and the barriers to providing inclusive services to SWSNs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The research paradigm was a Montessori philosophical approach of a basic qualitative study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Montessori's vision essentially

aims for a complete transformation of virtually all modern assumptions about teaching, learning, and childhood (Maghfiroh, 2017). Selecting a Montessori philosophical approach allowed me to seek understanding of the world in which Head Start teachers work, how they describe their roles in inclusion classrooms, and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The intent was to explore teacher descriptions of their roles within inclusion classrooms and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN.

Research Questions

The accountability of Head Start teachers for educating SWSN has been emphasized by the Office of Head Start (OHS; Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, 2007). The research questions guiding this study were:

Research Question 1: How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN?

Research Question 2: How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). While this model was developed within a Montessori setting, the components of the model were generalizable to all early childhood settings. The model was developed to support inclusive 21st century classrooms. McKenzie and Zascavage (2012) identified six fundamental components of an appropriate education for SWSN. The components of an appropriate education were:

(a) discrimination learning, (b) factual learning, (c) rule learning, (d) procedural learning, (e) conceptual learning, and (f) critical thinking. Teachers of inclusive classrooms were challenged to assimilate SWSN into general education classrooms without separation and to incorporate appropriate instructional approaches for all. I used this model to explore fundamental components of a teacher's role in an appropriate education for SWSN. I focused on four of the components of the model of inclusion to guide my study: factual learning, rule learning, procedural learning, and critical thinking (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). Although important, discrimination learning and conceptual learning were not significant in answering the research questions for this study and, therefore, were not used for guidance.

Factual learning refers to the retention of information and knowledge (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). Teaching strategies and materials for promoting factual learning by SWSN typically focus on experiential learning by using manipulatives and hands-on approaches to learning. The use of tangible materials provides an appealing context for engaging SWSN in activities that deliver course content and customized feedback (Gahwaji, 2016). This approach was particularly appropriate for SWSN because student learning was guided from concrete objects to abstract thought.

Rule learning of social mores and academic processes were essential to the successful integration of SWSN into general education classrooms. According to Ratner and Efimova (2016), rule learning improves SWSN's ability to accept academic and behavioral rules. Rule learning involves academic rules and social rules; the model of inclusion provides for explicit instruction to accomplish rule learning. Multisensory

methods and materials were employed to isolate each concept as the child directly experience respect for property and personal space. The model of inclusion strengthens social and academic classroom rules by reinforcing skills that enhance concentration, develop self-discipline, promote order, and encourage respect for others, as well as for the environment (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012).

Procedural learning involves sequencing and the execution of steps for explicit instructions and the completion of tasks that follow a specific order (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). This is different from factual learning in that factual learning is based on specific content, whereas procedural learning is about learning steps in a process. Based on a study conducted by Kinzer et al. (2016), the current educational landscape is replacing resources with procedural learning resources (procedural worksheets, academic seat time, and so forth) to address standards. When SWSN enter inclusive classrooms, they learn the standards and processes of the classroom (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012).

Of the four fundamental components of a teacher's role in an appropriate education for SWSN, critical thinking involves higher order thinking, such as, reasoning, conjecture, and problem solving where the specific strategy is not known (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). Critical thinking provides an opportunity for SWSN to develop independence, which in turn can lead to innovation that supports the concept that there is more than one way to solve a problem (Garcia et al., 2019). McKenzie and Zascavage (2012) underscored that critical thinking in an inclusive classroom transfer to real-world situations for SWSN.

Use of the model of inclusion allowed me to gain an increased understanding of Head Start teachers' role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN and the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. I also used the model of inclusion to develop and to write my interview questions to ensure that my methodology aligned with my framework and matched my research questions. A more thorough explanation of the logical connection between elements of the Montessori model framework and this study is discussed in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

A basic qualitative design was used to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described a basic qualitative study design as a commonly found approach where: (a) "...researchers who conduct these studies.... simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 11), (b) there is no bounded system, (c) there is no development of a theory from the results, (d) there is a just identification of recurring patterns or themes, and (e) where one interview is usually enough to understand participants' responses. In addition, a basic qualitative design is: (a) practical and flexible, which helps practitioners address problems in the field, (b) a scholarly, systematic method of inquiry that can be applied to address the problem to make it amenable to scientific study, (c) typically constructivist and assumes the researcher is inquiring into or interpreting participants' perceptions and experiences in relationship to a practical problem, (d) wide-reaching in which all disciplines should be

able to use it, and (e) appropriate when the experience the researcher seeks to understand is not intense, requiring a single deep interview of each participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly, a basic qualitative design provided the most beneficial method of exploring how Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN and how Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

The key concept investigated in this study was that Head Start teachers struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. A sample size of 12 Head Start teachers was sought as participants through a purposeful sampling approach. Purposeful sampling requires researchers to intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Semistructured in-depth interviews were used as the sole data collection source. Data from the interviews of the Head Start teachers was recorded and transcribed. Coding is the process of organizing material into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment to develop a general sense of it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I used open coding to identify patterns, categories, and themes within the collected data. The methodology of the study is fully described in Chapter 3.

Operational Definitions

The following provides definitions of attributes and variables relevant to the study.

Head Start Program: The Head Start Program is a program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood

education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families (ACF, 2015).

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice of educating SWSN in the same classroom as general education students (O'Neill, 2016).

Individualized education plan (IEP): The IEP is a written plan of a child's current educational performance level and the individualized plan of instructing that child which includes the goals, services being rendered, the staff responsible for carrying out those services, the standards and timelines for evaluating the student progress, and the amount of time and to what degree to which the student will interact with their peers (Heward, 2006).

Least restrictive environment (LRE): The LRE is the educational setting that is close to resembling the student's regular education school program, meets the child's special educational needs, and must be determined for each child on an individual basis (Heward, 2006).

Service delivery model of inclusion: Service delivery mode of inclusion places all students in general education classrooms unless their academic and/or social needs cannot be adequately met, which the services require: (a) putting the student first, (b) teachers choosing inclusion classroom participation, (c) school based inclusive models, (e) adequate resources, (f) ongoing professional development, and (g) ongoing service evaluation (Giangreco & Suter, 2015).

Students with special needs (SWSN): SWSN are preschoolers who do not fit in the standard behavior models, have preserved and damaged abilities resulting from

substantial limited physical or mental impairment, and show certain difficulties in dealing with educative tasks (Milanović & Milanović, 2014).

Assumptions

There are components of the study that are believed but cannot be demonstrated to be true (Alam & Ismail, 2015). Assumptions are essential in explaining and framing the study (Hays et al., 2016). An assumption of this study was that the teachers interviewed would provide honest feedback when providing responses to interview questions and during opportunities for clarification of responses when necessary. Another underlying assumption of this study was that the experiences provided by the teachers interviewed were representative of the experiences of teachers in the Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, so that the findings of this study would be useful in explaining the Head Start inclusion classes program wide.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was the Head Start classes in one school district in Southeast Georgia. This study was delimited to Head Start teachers who work with SWSN in inclusive classrooms at a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. Participants described their roles and the barriers to implement inclusive education of SWSN. This focus was chosen because Head Start teachers' descriptions on the service delivery model of inclusion have not been solicited by the local Head Start administration and these descriptions might provide important insights about the strengths and weaknesses of inclusive programs.

All Head Start teachers and administrators who did not work with SWSN in

inclusion classrooms were excluded. Conceptual frameworks most related to the area of study of this research that were studied were the theory of education, which Fullan (2011a) proposed that guidelines on systemic change for educators and leaders were necessary elements, and the professional change model, which Ely (1978) suggested and evolved from the theory of change. Although the intention of this study was to develop a detailed understanding of how Head Start teachers describe their roles and the barriers they encounter in inclusive settings, the transferability of the findings may be limited due to the small number of participants and to the specific context of the region of the local Head Start program.

Limitations

Limitations of a study influence the interpretation of the findings. One limitation of this study was that it presents only descriptions of Head Start teachers teaching SWSN by inclusion in Southeast Georgia. A second limitation of this study was the small sample size, which only consists of 10-12 Head Start teachers. Small sample sizes in qualitative research may not provide the optimal level of saturation and, thus, the assurance that further data collection and/or analysis were unnecessary (Saunders et al., 2018). A third limitation of this study was my own bias of the service delivery model of inclusion based on my experience as a former Head Start teacher who worked with SWSN. From my experience, my primary bias was that SWSN do not receive the individual attention to excel academically within an inclusive classroom. To address and overcome the limitations of this study, I exercised respondent validation once the data was analyzed and reflexivity as continuous process that reflected on data collection and data analysis.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) asserted that researchers check their findings with participant members to enhance the accuracy of the study to validate the findings in qualitative research. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) asserted that respondent validation in which the researcher solicits feedback from the participants was a common strategy for internal validity or credibility. Also, Merriam and Tisdell asserted that reflexivity, which involves reviewing interview transcripts to check for any biased interactions, was also a reasonable measure for internal validity or credibility.

Significance

The significance of this study was determined relative to Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and barriers to teach SWSN in inclusive settings. The collected data provided valuable information to future Head Start programming. SWSN should receive an education in Head Start based on a service delivery model of inclusion that meets their individual needs. Therefore, Head Start teachers must deliver effective instructional strategies to SWSN in accordance with the Head Start model (Giangreco & Suter, 2015).

Positive social change may result from the study findings. Administrators can learn how teachers describe their roles and advance new training programs based on the suggestions of the participants. The key to effective and successful inclusion was teacher training, which equips the teacher with knowledge (Chan et al., 2013). Increasing the knowledge of Head Start teachers on inclusive practices may enhance their overall participation in teaching within the Head Start inclusion service delivery model.

This study was also significant in that the results may advance practice and policy

development within instructional programming and delivery of services for SWSN at the site. Appropriate, relevant training and support for Head Start teachers that provide the teachers with knowledge and confidence may potentially be created from the results. To appropriately implement the education of SWSN, educators need to obtain the knowledge and confidence required to teach SWSN in the classroom (Katz et al., 2012).

Knowledgeable and confident general education inclusion teachers can enhance the service delivery model of inclusion in educating SWSN in Head Start programs.

Lastly, a potential contribution of this study was that the results may lead to positive social change in the delivery of inclusive education. This positive social change will also help to understand Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles in providing inclusive education services and what they perceive as barriers to the implementation of the service delivery model of inclusion.

Summary

A problem exists in a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia concerning Head Start teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. A basic qualitative design was used to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms was the proposed conceptual framework for this study to identify the ideas within the problem that justify the research being conducted and, also, to explain the main ideas studied. I also used the model of inclusion to develop and to write my interview questions to ensure that my methodology aligned with my framework and matched my research questions.

Chapter 2 of this proposal includes the literature review which provides relevant and current published knowledge on the topic. Chapter 3 of this proposal includes the methodology, all ethical considerations, and my role as the researcher. Chapter 3 also includes how participants were selected, how data was collected and analyzed, how trustworthiness was established, and how ethical procedures were followed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study explored the roles and barriers of Head Start teachers relative to teaching SWSN in an inclusive environment. Their descriptions may be significant regarding education services for SWSN because Head Start programs provide services to more than 15% of the preschool children served under the IDEA, which makes the program the largest provider of services for preschool aged SWSN in the United States (Muccio et al., 2014). In this study, I explored how Head Start teachers describe their roles in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN and their descriptions of barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

The next sections of this chapter describe the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, and the literature review related to key variables and concepts. The literature reviewed was related to Head Start teachers and appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. The literature was reviewed and organized into three sections: (a) legislation on inclusion in Head Start classrooms, (b) teacher roles in providing for preschool SWSN, and (c) barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review commenced using a keyword search strategy and several academic databases, such as, Ebrary, EBSCOHost, ProQuest, and Walden University's library, scholarly, peer-reviewed journals and books. In addition, Google Book Search,

Safari Tech Books Online, and various online sites were utilized to locate articles and books that relate to the research topic. The article search strategy focused on retrieving publications concerning Head Start teachers and appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. Literature was retrieved from the identified resources through a series of advanced searches using *Head Start and special education, appropriate services for SWSN, legislation affecting inclusion of preschool SWSN in early child care classrooms, teachers' role in early childcare for preschool SWSN, barriers for inclusive teaching strategies* as key words with delimiters to include “date range,” “subject area,” and “document type” (article, book, abstract, full-text, and so forth).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms. The model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms is defined as a classroom that values all students and is individualized to meet the needs of each student (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). While this model was developed within a Montessori setting, the components of the model are generalizable to all early childhood settings. The model was developed to support inclusive 21st century classrooms. Students actively build their own understanding of the world and of discipline, or the ability to control and direct their focus and actions (Maghfiroh, 2017). The model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms advocates that students learn in their own manner and at their own speed; the learning environment should consider all students' needs (Bahmaee et al., 2016). In reference to teaching SWSN, the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms asserts that the goal of teaching is to instruct meaningful activities that allow

the student's optimal development (intellectual, physical, emotional, and social) to unfold (Marshall, 2017). As a result, the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms relates to this proposed examination of Head Start teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms.

The model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms explains an existing program specifically designed to teach academic skills, life skills, and social skills to SWNN (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). Hence, the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms was appropriate to be utilized as this study's conceptual framework. A conceptual framework provides a method to organize experiences and to structure personal goals (Green, 2014). In this study, experiences relative to providing appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms was an essential element that was analyzed within the conceptual framework. Thomas (2017) affirmed that the question of conceptual framework was not so much a question of finding the best fit for the data as it was providing an adequate account of a phenomenon that reflexively takes up the position of the researcher, as well as the participant's ability to articulate experiences. Accordingly, the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms when employed as the conceptual framework assists in facilitating an examination of the Head Start teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms.

The model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms focused on teachers to serve as leaders who observe students to understand the emergence of student sensitivity and the influence on individual instruction (Maghfiroh, 2017). Marshall (2017) applied the conceptual framework of the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms in her

study on inclusive education to SWSN. Marshall concluded that two important aspects of inclusion in early childhood classrooms are the learning materials and the self-directed nature of student's engagement with the learning material. Furthermore, Marshall concluded that the elements of: (a) scope and sequence, (b) curriculum, (c) pacing, and (d) types of learning integrate with the learning material and the self-directed nature of students to promote effective instruction. Likewise, Bahmaee et al. (2016) applied the conceptual framework of the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms in their study on principle elements of curriculum in the early childhood pattern of inclusion. Bahmaee et al. concluded that the classroom environment should allow the student to develop competence individually and to develop by his own speed. Maghfiroh (2017) applied the conceptual framework of the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms in his study on the concept of inclusion in early childhood education. Maghfiroh concluded that education and teaching must be adjusted to the student's development and that education must be diverted from teacher-central to student-central. When appropriately applying the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms, teachers realize that any struggle to provide services affect their effort to facilitate learning to SWSN (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Head Start was founded by President Lyndon Johnson and adopted into law as part of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 under the oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services within the Administration for Children and Families (Beggs, 2018). Legislation required that SWSN comprise at least 10% of funded Head Start

enrollment who are eligible for services under IDEA (Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act (2007). Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA; 2004) ensures that students are educated in the LRE (IDEIA, 2004). IDEIA (2004) mandates that SWSN must only be placed in separate classes or schools when the nature or severity of their disability is such that they cannot receive an appropriate level of education in a general education classroom, which includes Head Start classrooms. In addition, IDEIA (2004) mandated that students placed in their LRE are integrated into classrooms with their normal developing peers to address social, cultural, and economic limitations experienced by preschoolers with special needs when appropriate for the individual student.

Currently, Head Start programs serve nearly one million children in centers throughout the nation and focus on educating SWSN with their typically developing and chronologically same age peers in unison with comprehensive family services (Administration for Children and Families, 2018a). Of the funded, cumulative enrollment, 12% of Head Start was made up of SWSN, defined as children having special plans under the IDEA (Administration for Children and Families, 2018b). Head Start served a greater percentage of SWSN than found in the overall population (Administration for Children and Families, 2018b). Accordingly, the provision of services to SWSN through the service delivery model of inclusion is vital to Head Start.

Several studies have been conducted to assess the problem of Head Start teachers struggling to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. Musyoka and Clark (2017) conducted a study to examine SWSN in Head Start programs,

investigating the most important IEP goals for SWSN and the services students were receiving. The results of Musyoka and Clark's study highlighted that the IEP goals focused on three main areas: (a) improving school readiness, (b) improving communication (both sign communication and speech communication), and (c) improving preacademic performance in targeted areas. Arduin (2015) examined Head Start teachers' teaching in inclusive environments and found that there was a lack of skills. In a more detailed study, Muccio et al. (2014) examined the facilitators and barriers of successfully including SWSN in Head Start classrooms by identifying the perspectives and practices of instructional professionals. Muccio et al. noted that participants identified a lack of professional development to successfully include SWSN. In addition, Muccio et al. noted that classroom quality varied significantly among different classrooms as a result of limited training for teachers. Lastly, Muccio et al. suggested that the instructional professionals are key to successfully including SWSN in Head Start settings and that additional professional development should focus on effective instructional practices to support SWSN at a high-quality level.

Houtrow et al. (2014) examined the prevalence of childhood disability in the United States and the underlying conditions contributing to childhood disabilities. Houtrow et al. determined that childhood disability is increasing with emotional, behavioral, and neurological disabilities now being more prevalent than physical impairments. Houtrow et al. also identified a need for further examination of the underlying factors inhibiting Head Start teachers in attaining adequate skills to effectively meet the needs of SWSN. Phillips and Lowenstein (2011) examined the ethos of early

childhood education classroom within the United States. Phillips and Lowenstein suggested that this was likely the outcome of the difficulty of working full time as the mother of a child with special needs, perceptions that these children are best cared for by their own parents, and a scarcity of inclusive early childhood education settings. Also, Phillips and Lowenstein highlighted that SWSN benefited more from Head Start teachers that had positive experiences with teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Legislation on Inclusion in Head Start Classrooms

The passage of legislation can enact practices that promote equality inside and outside classrooms. As such, legislative laws at both the federal and state level influence teaching SWSN in general education classrooms. Governance (Henward et al., 2019b), learning environment (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017), and competing priorities (Buettner et al., 2016) are items that are influenced by legislation that effects inclusion in Head Start classrooms. These three items are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

Governance Over Policies and Procedures Federal and State Level

On the federal and state level, legislative laws governing SWSN have been examined. Kotler (2014) examined the distrust and disclosure in the special education law through the emergence of federal and state level political trends that collectively undermine the educational goals of legislation. Kotler revealed that although IDEA mandated SWSN receiving a free, appropriate, public education disagreements regarding the concept of appropriateness have been an ongoing source of conflict between parents and educators. Beggs (2018) examined policies introduced under President Lyndon Johnson that shaped the expansion of the federal government in education. The result of

the examination was that policies in Head Start increased the federal governance over education (Beggs, 2018). Henward et al. (2019b) performed research on how Head Start teachers negotiate and incorporate federal and state level policies to alter curricular models. Henward et al. determined that Head Start teachers can implement creative curriculum within their classrooms despite being bound by federal policy. Furthermore, remaking, reweaving, and indigenizing curriculum by Head Start teachers may be required to adequately educate SWSN (Henward et al., 2019b). Likewise, Shapiro and Weiland (2019) investigated the unique challenges that Head Start programs encounter with estimating the causal effects of SWSN in the governance over policies and procedures at the federal and state level. Overall, the results of Shapiro and Weiland's study suggest that the estimated causal effects of SWSN may be more beneficial in Head Start for the governance over policies and procedures at the federal and state level.

Ronoh et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of programs being governed by the federal government, such as, evaluate how well the United States' education system serves SWSN. The results of the evaluation concluded that the special education system: (a) has given SWSN much greater access to public education, (b) established an infrastructure for educating SWSN, (c) helped with the earlier identification of disabilities, and (d) promoted including SWSN alongside their nondisabled peers (Ronoh et al., 2015). In contrast, the results of the evaluation also concluded that many problems remain in the special education system to include: (a) the over and under identification of certain subgroups of students, (b) delays in identifying and serving students, and (c) bureaucratic, regulatory, and financial barriers that

complicate the program for all involved (Ronoh et al., 2015).

Burke and Sandman (2015) examined parent involvement with including SWSN in classrooms by identifying changes suggested by parents for the next IDEA reauthorization. The findings of Burke and Sandman were in alignment with the IDEA reauthorization to include: (a) support (applied behavior analysis and the regulation of student and teacher ratios) added to IDEA, (b) existing provisions (transition, the LRE, and the eligibility criteria for learning disabilities) to have greater specificity, and (c) the maintenance or increase of stipulations (the paperwork provision and the federal funding). The ideas of the parents should be taken into consideration and assessed to determine the effect on teachers' experiences with teaching in inclusive classrooms before the next changes occur under IDEA, which the suggestions could be groundbreaking in how services are provided to SWSN.

LRE Federal and State Level

The LRE has had several interpretations within the literature. The IDEIA (2004) defines the LRE as the environment where, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. McLeskey et al. (2012) investigated changes in the national placement trends for SWSN from 1990-1991 through 2007-2008. McLeskey et al. indicated that: (a)

a significant increase in placements in general education settings, (b) a substantial decrease in more restrictive placements, (c) placement practices for students changed substantially more than placements for elementary students, and (d) SWSN accounted for much of the overall change in placement practices, whereas students with emotional or behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities experienced smaller changes in less restrictive placements. Ryndak et al. (2014) examined the issue of the interpretation of LRE and involvement and progress in the general curriculum in ways that perpetuate segregation, rather than increase students' access to meaningful curriculum in inclusive educational contexts. Ryndak et al. concluded that federal policies and monitoring procedures for ensuring that states educate SWSN in the LRE has perpetuated a continuum of services that sanctions segregated settings for students with significant disabilities, of which the LRE principle is inadequate, especially given current policies whereby states are not required to decrease the number of SWSN who receive educational services in the most restrictive settings. Secondly, Ryndak et al. concluded that the policies and procedural interpretation of involvement and progress in the general curriculum have an unintended, detrimental effect on students with significant disabilities. Lastly, both general and special education policy were founded to substantially affect the educational placement of SWSN, as well as their involvement and progress in the general curriculum (Ryndak et al., 2014). According to Ryndak's et al. study, the policy and procedures for LRE are proven to be nonsufficient when relating to SWSN.

Bicehouse and Faieta's (2017) study focused on the foundations of special education over the past 40 years. Bicehouse and Faieta concluded that the movement towards a LRE at both the federal and state level has been slow. Specifically, SWSN have often been left behind in the advancement of educational practices (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). In addition, if special education is going to continue to move forward, the successful implementation must continue to rest upon the belief that inclusive education for all is a noble and moral obligation (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). Garcia et al. (2019) investigated the least restrictive classroom with the implementation of technology. The resulting finding from the study was that using technology in least restrictive classrooms can spark the motivation of students to obtain a better understanding of the subjects taught (Garcia et al., 2019). Also, Garcia et al. determined that technology encourages creative thinking and innovation in least restrictive classrooms. Pages et al. (2020) examined the impact of the LRE in Head Start over the life cycle skill information for students. Pages et al. determined that the LRE in Head Start had no impact over the life cycle skill information for students.

Competing Priorities Federal and State Level

Head Start as the largest provider of services for SWSN in the nation often competes with the priorities of other programs. Sugrue and Lightfoot (2017) examined the potential threat from state-funded prekindergarten on Head Start and the partnership between an urban school district and its local Head Start program to provide enhanced services to Head Start eligible children in the district's early childhood education programs. Sugrue and Lightfoot's findings highlighted that both prekindergarten and

Head Start in general presumed to be unreceptive to the idea of collaboration due to the threat of limited funding. However, teaching through a state adopted curriculum that focuses on the skills needed to prepare children for kindergarten achieves positive cognitive outcomes and that providing the comprehensive health, nutrition, and other social services of Head Start forges collaboration between the two programs (Sugrue & Lightfoot, 2017). Nelson et al. (2013) investigated state and federal policies in regard to a tiered approach to screening and referral for developmental and health concerns to characterize children who need services, but do not meet criteria for special education. The results of the investigation indicated that more than one-quarter of low-income children not in special education may need targeted interventions, particularly mental health services (Nelson et al., 2013). This intermediate-risk group represents a key federal and state policy gap for the health and education of children that screening and intervention guidelines should be established (Nelson et al., 2013). Buettner et al. (2016) examined potential challenges to the institutions of education that offer early childhood teacher education programs as the enrollment of early childhood students increases. Buettner et al. highlighted the challenges that no federal standard exists for the educational requirements of early childhood teachers in all settings, that states vary widely in their expectations, and that tremendous variability in the level of teacher education still exists.

Mead and Mitchel (2016) conducted an analysis of federal level professional development of early childhood educators through the process of reforming Head Start for the 21st century. Mead and Mitchell determined that the revised standards for Head

Start elevate the importance of professional development component of Head Start by providing more details about what quality early education programs look like by emphasizing research based practices in four core areas to include: (a) teaching and the learning environment, (b) curriculum, (c) child screening and assessment and (d) parent involvement. In addition, Mead and Mitchell highlighted that the new Head Start standards shift the focus of professional development away from the one-shot workshops to ongoing coaching. Magnuson and Shager (2010) examined the progress of federal and state level programs in meeting the early educational needs of qualifying children. Magnuson and Shager concluded that: (a) federal and state investments in providing compensatory preschool programs, such as Head Start or state prekindergarten, and means-tested child care assistance have increased dramatically over the past two decades, (b) only a portion of the qualifying children are served, (c) high quality early education improves qualifying children's school readiness and other long-term developmental outcomes, and (d) states face considerable challenges in ensuring that children have access to quality early care and education experiences. Burner (2018) examined educational research and policy for the issue of educational change. Burner concluded the needs of educational organizations: (a) trust in the professional development of teachers, (b) collaboration of teachers and students, (c) support during transformations, (d) inclusion of parents in change initiatives, and (e) and justifying change and ensuring shared understanding of all stakeholders.

The Teacher's Role in Providing for Preschool SWSN

Just as legislation on inclusion is important to Head Start classrooms that include SWSN, the teacher's role in providing for preschool SWSN is also important. The teacher's role in curriculum, instruction, and management impacts all students in the teacher's classroom (DiMaria, 2012), as well as the teacher's role in general education (Souto-Manning, 2017), including SWSN (Lee et al., 2017), and quality of care (Whitaker et al., 2017) impact all students in the teacher's classroom. A review of literature on the teacher's role in providing for preschool SWSN is captured in the paragraphs that follow.

Curriculum

The teacher's role in early childcare curriculum plays a major role in how preschoolers with special needs are educated. McArthur and Faragher (2014) investigated the importance of the teacher's role in supporting families with SWSN within the curriculum and instruction of early childcare classrooms. The results from McArthur and Faragher's research revealed that parents expressed concern with the teacher's role in a range of issues relating to their SWSN and their admission to classroom programs and that the SWSN had positive changes, which favorably impacted the entire family. In addition, McArthur and Faragher's research revealed that support provided the parents hope and stimulated positive interactions with their SWSN at home and in family relationships. Jenkins et al. (2018) investigated the teacher's role in the school readiness and performance of students who stayed at the same Head Start center for an additional year using the same curriculum in comparison to students who switched to another Head

Start center. Based on the results of the Jenkins et al. study, the teacher's role on the outcomes for students who remained at their Head Start center and used the same curriculum for an additional year did not differ in comparison to students who switched to another Head Start center. Krewson (2016) examined the teacher's role in the current practices in the curricular of instructions relating to disciplinary proceedings involving SWSN. Krewson acknowledged that teachers have a positive role in incorporating a manifestation determination process into the conduct systems. A manifestation determination is a process, required by the IDEA, which is conducted when considering the exclusion of a student with a disability (Krewson, 2016). This is an appealing outcome for institutions that focus on the development of the whole student.

Crossouard and Sabella (2018) examined the teacher's role in classroom curriculum for student centered teaching and learning. Crossouard and Sabella determined that the reduction in instructional time for teachers has adversely affected the curriculum taught by teachers and student-centered discourse and that the effectiveness of the curriculums taught is influenced by the qualifications of teachers. Nguyen et al. (2018) examined the benefit of randomly assigned content-specific curriculum for Head Start students. The study findings of Nguyen et al. indicated that Head Start students benefit from content-specific curriculum. Horn et al. (2019) examined the teacher's role in the use of an alternative approach that uses early childhood authentic assessment to determine a young child's eligibility for special services with the purpose of determining the technical adequacy of authentic assessment measures. Horn et al. concluded that the teacher's role affects the use of authentic assessments to determine children eligible for

IDEA services has the potential to improve Head Start services for children. Heilmann et al. (2018) examined the teacher's role in curriculum as a predictor of long-term academic outcomes for Head Start students. Heilmann et al. determined a direct correlation between the teacher's role in curriculum and knowledge retention of Head Start students, which curriculum may predict long-term academic outcomes.

Instruction

The teacher's role in early childcare instruction, like the curriculum, plays a major role in how preschoolers with special needs are educated. Kauffman and Badar (2014) evaluated the teacher's role with respect to the problems of education in inclusive SWSN programs. Kauffman and Badar acknowledged a need for improvements the teacher's role in instructional methods of teachers to address the unique learning needs of all SWSN students: choose appropriate accommodations, provide adaptations to curriculum and instructional strategies, integrate students into general education lessons, when appropriate, and inclusion of one-to-one instruction. Albritton et al. (2017) performed a study on the proportion of SWSN in Head Start and determined that a significant portion of SWSN require additional instruction. Gerde et al. (2019) explored curricular materials used in Head Start classrooms and discovered that most curricula ignored SWSN as the preponderance of programs are developed for general education populations. Fisher and Rogan (2012) examined the teacher's role in shared learning opportunities offered to students with severe and moderate disabilities. Fisher and Rogan determined that teachers' roles should be structured to contribute to the curriculum. Teachers of SWSN have identified needs for time and support. Kook and Greenfield (2020) investigated

variation in teachers' roles and the effect on the quality of instructional interactions in Head Start classrooms across teacher-directed activities. Kook and Greenfield concluded that the quality of instructional interactions in Head Start classrooms depended on the effect of the teacher's role in the students' learning environment within the classroom. Romano and Woods (2017) examined the teacher's role in collaborative coaching on Head Start teacher instructions to students. Romano and Woods found that, as teachers' roles in collaborative coaching increased, Head Start teachers use of responsive strategies increased and teachers' ability to communicate with students improved. Halder and Sacks (2017) investigated the challenges in the teacher's role to implement IEPs in the United States. Halder and Sacks identified: (a) quality of services, (b) shortage in qualified teachers, (c) unsatisfactory educator-family relationships and (d) cultural insensitivity as challenges.

Management

The teacher's role in the management of early childhood programs has implications on the outcomes of SWSN. Jacoby and Lesaux, (2017) examined the teacher's role in the management of instructional mandates on the professional development of Head Start teachers. Jacoby and Lesaux suggested that Head Start teachers indicated that an increased role in the management of instructional mandates on professional development, such as instructional delivery skills, would improve their job performance through appropriate training. Walter and Lippard (2017) investigated Head Start teachers' role in the management of inclusion in classrooms. Walter and Lippard stated that the teacher's role in management of inclusion in classrooms may buffer

against influences of curricula and increased accountability. Johnson et al. (2017) examined how the teacher's role in the management of peer coaching effects instructional support. Johnson et al. determined that teachers enjoyed and learned from their role in the management of collaborative nature of peer coaching acceptable and that teachers believed their management role in peer coaching benefitted their instructional effectiveness. The teacher's role in peer coaching is to promote classroom quality while the role in meeting mandates is to assess the ability to promote classroom quality (Johnson et al., 2017). MacLeod and Nápoles (2015) examined how the teacher's role in the management of instructional strategies and student progress influenced overall teaching effectiveness. MacLeod and Nápoles highlighted that the teacher's role in the management of instructional strategies was the largest predictor for experienced teachers' ratings of overall effectiveness followed closely by student progress.

General Education

The teacher's role in general education, just as their role in management, has a profound effect on the outcomes of SWSN. Ajuwon et al. (2012) examined the role of future general educators regarding SWSN in the classrooms. The results from Ajuwon et al.'s examination were that teacher's role in the knowledge of how to accommodate SWSN and having a positive attitude when teaching those students was necessary for preservice teachers and, also, necessary in decreasing the anxiety of teachers that had previous interactions with SWSN. Souto-Manning (2017) examined the teacher's role in educational tools for negotiating education practices for teachers including SWSN in inclusive classrooms. Souto-Manning concluded that teaching with generative text sets

shift and expand the definition of literacy practices and addresses issues of including SWSN within the literacy curriculum. Yang and Rusli (2012) investigated the extent that teachers perceived their roles influencing practitioners (including early childhood special educators, general educators, preservice teachers, paraprofessionals, and teacher educators) in valuing 13 peer-mediated naturalistic strategies serving children with moderate to severe disabilities. Also, Yang and Rusli investigated to what extent the 13 peer-mediated naturalistic strategies are used in classrooms as measured by participants' observations of teaching practices. Yang and Rusli identified values, knowledge, pedagogies, and skills as necessary items to implement evidence-based practices in the classrooms for preservice and in-service teachers. Additionally, they found these strategies were not widely implemented to serve SWSN in the classrooms based. Busby et al. (2012) examined the teacher's role in preparing to teach students with autism. Busby et al. concluded that teachers felt more prepared to work with SWSN when superior training was received, and proper tools were provided to facilitate success.

Dunst et al. (2019) examined the teacher's role in the relationship between different types of professional development and Head Start teachers' use of inclusion practices. Dunst et al. determined that Head Start teachers that received different types of professional development reported more use of recommended practices compared to teachers that did not. Gomez et al. (2015) reviewed the teacher's role in the professional development and workforce supports available for those who are a part of the early childhood education teaching workforce in the United States. Gomez et al. identified several challenges to the professional development of early childhood education teachers

to include: (a) lack of data, (b) lack of an adequate research base, (c) lack of durable professional development systems, (d) lack of articulation, and (e) lack of reciprocity.

Grosemans et al. (2020) examined the teacher's role in the education, job fit, and work-related learning of recent graduates that work as Head Start teachers with the aim of determining if learning to include SWSN on the job complements what the teachers learned in higher education. Grosemans et al. concluded that learning on the job to include SWSN in Head Start classrooms complements what was learned during higher education.

Including SWSN

The teacher's role in including SWSN in early childhood programs is paramount to the educational achievement and development of SWSN. Hirsh and Hord (2010) examined the teacher's role in the necessity of teacher development relative to teaching SWSN in an inclusive classroom. Hirsh and Hord determined that teachers need additional professional development in order to capitalize on the unique qualities of their students. In addition, Hirsh and Hord determined that professional development should take place in settings that are comfortable for teachers and that allow teachers to provide input in the learning needs of students. Lee et al. (2017) investigated the teacher's role in the individualized education programs (IEP) for SWSN in Head Start. Lee et al. determined that inclusive IEP policies and access to special education supports are needed in Head Start for SWSN.

Golmic and Hansen (2012) examined the teacher's role in the attitudes of student teachers while completing their student teaching requirement. The results of Golmic and

Hansen's study were that designed, structured training provides experience that encourages student teachers to engage, teach, and support SWSN and that teachers who work with early childhood SWSN should also have access to the same or similar training. Waitoller and Kozleski (2013) examined the teacher's role in the tensions in school and university partnerships for inclusive education. In their study, Waitoller and Kozleski identified three obstacles in partnerships for inclusive education: (a) politically charged contexts of urban schools, (b) disparate conceptions about students' abilities and inclusive education, and (c) the few examples of exemplary inclusive education classrooms. To overcome these three obstacles, the findings of Waitoller and Kozleski's study suggested that university and school personnel need to be flexible to question their own understandings and assumptions about their work, about their students, and about the purpose of education.

Quality of Care

Just as the teacher's role in including SWSN in early childhood programs is paramount to the educational achievement and development of SWSN, so is the teacher's role in the quality of care. Whitaker et al. (2017) examined the teacher's role in the quality care provided by teachers in early childhood education and the characteristics that affect children's development. Whitaker et al. determined that although many teachers of the early childhood education workforce are dedicated and skilled, large numbers of them are poorly trained and compensated, which results in mediocre care. Also, Whitaker et al. determined that teachers' sensitive and stimulating interactions with young children and their ability to offer developmentally informed children's activities are essential

ingredients in a high-quality experience. In addition, Whitaker et al. highlighted that the early childhood education workforce is unevenly equipped to promote children's development.

Sandra et al. (2019) examined the teacher's role in the effect of stress on teacher preparation and quality of care. From the results of the study, Sandra et al. identified university training and professional development activities targeting stress and student teacher relationships as beneficial for improving teacher preparation and quality of care for preschool classrooms. Harding et al. (2019) performed research that examined the teacher's role on the impact of professional development in Head Start programs on teacher preparation and quality of care. Through their research, Harding et al. determined that professional development in Head Start has improved over nearly a decade and, due to the improvement, contributed to changes in policy. Professional development of Head Start teachers improves teacher preparation and the quality of care provided to SWSN (Harding et al., 2019).

Becker et al. (2017) investigated the teacher's role in the quality of relationships between teachers and students in Head Start classrooms. Becker et al. identified that higher levels of dispositional mindfulness among teachers were associated with higher quality relationships with students and that greater dispositional mindfulness lowered workplace stress. Falenchuk et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review of the teacher's role in the associations between teacher education and outcomes for the quality of care in Head Start. Falenchuk et al. determined that there is a weak association between teacher education and outcomes for the quality of care in Head Start. Thus, Falenchuk's et al.

found that education is not a key driver for quality-of-care outcomes. Pelatti et al. (2016) examined the teacher's role in the quality of care in publicly funded early childhood education and inclusive early childhood education classrooms. The results from Pelatti's, et al. study showed quantitative differences in the process quality, as well as all dimensions of instructional support between the two settings. In addition, Pelatti et al. revealed that teachers' education was a significant predictor of process quality. Han (2014) documented an exploration on the teacher's role in the content and quality of teacher preparation and best practice in early childhood settings. Han's body of evidence demonstrated that the quality of early childhood programs and services was linked to the quality of the professionals who staff them. Sabol et al. (2020) studied the teacher's role in the variations in Head Start classroom quality within Head Start centers to determine if the classrooms were equal in regard to accountability policies. Sabol et al. indicated that variation in classroom quality for both structural and process quality was attributable to differences in between classrooms within the center. Inclusion classrooms for SWSN are such classrooms that will vary in quality from regular education classrooms in Head Start (Sabol et al., 2020).

Austin et al. (2011) investigated the teacher's role in the variety of ways in which different QRIS identify and define key elements associated with supporting staff, both as individuals and as a group, to improve and sustain quality. Austin's et al. investigation determined that: (a) the staff qualifications of the QRIS varied by center, (b) the amount of the incentive and the required effort on the part of the participant ranges across QRISs, (c) the benchmark for compensation varied by QRIS, and (d) the QRISs placed minimum

focus on the work environment of early childhood practitioner. Ling (2017) conducted a study on the teacher's role in the characteristics of the quality of care of Head Start providers and the association among the characteristics. Ling determined that physical activity and good nutrition are two characteristics that benefit the quality of care of Head Start providers. Choi et al. (2018) performed a descriptive study on the teacher's role in the quality-of-care practice for students in Head Start programs. Choi et al. revealed that a significant portion of Head Start programs did not report that quality of care practices were being implemented. Furthermore, Choi et al. indicated that quality of care practices were not uniformly implemented across Head Start programs.

Barriers That Prevent Teachers From Using Inclusive Teaching Strategies

Barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies, just as legislation and teachers' roles, are important to Head Start classrooms that include SWSN. Barriers to using inclusive teaching strategies have been noted: (a) the learning environment (Gebhardt et al., 2015), (b) teachers' beliefs (Brock et al., 2017), (c) work performance (Jeon & Wells, 2018), (d) social and political items (Ewing et al., 2018), and (e) inclusive practice. They have an impact on inclusive teaching strategies.

Learning Environment

Barriers towards the learning environment prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Gebhardt et al. (2015) examined barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Gebhardt et al. identified the following: (a) overall, teachers have a positive attitude for including SWSN and advocate for including SWSN in regular education classes; (b) teachers rated the use of inclusive team teaching as

acceptable, (c) teachers were satisfied with the level of teamwork when planning for the educational needs of individual students and (d) experience with inclusion led to stronger implementation of inclusive practices.

Maghfiroh (2017) investigated the influence of Montessori teaching materials and methods as a barrier on inclusive learning environments. Maghfiroh concluded that effective inclusive learning environments in the 21st century classrooms must value all students. In addition, Maghfiroh concluded that the classroom must be individualized to meet the needs of each student and instructional approaches should include opportunities for self-discovery and peer collaboration. Allar et al. (2018) explored of the recommendations of Head Start teachers to improve the quality of their instruction, measured by an assessment observation instrument, to overcome barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Allar et al. concluded that small class sizes, increased spoken and written language-based activities, and greater peer collaboration and interaction can help teachers overcome barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Boyle and Varcoe (2013) examined the impact of a range of teacher barriers in association with training on primary preservice teachers' attitudes by examining total inclusion scores, positive affect, training and perceived competence and negative effect. Boyle and Varcoe found that studying an elective unit on inclusive education had a positive influence over barriers that affect preservice teachers' attitudes and that teaching experience had a significantly negative impact on preservice teachers' attitudes. Boyle and Varcoe also noted that training provided to preservice teachers was associated with increased positive attitudes and sentiments toward including

SWSN.

Teacher Beliefs

Barriers towards teacher beliefs can prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Jeong et al. (2014) examined the barriers faced by teachers concerning the education of SWSN in the United States by assessing teacher beliefs about including SWSN, their beliefs about the degree of accommodation, and their beliefs about inclusive teaching practices. Jeong et al. highlighted that including SWSN was actively advocated among teachers in the United States. Also, Jeong et al. study identified that teachers in the United States do not believe SWSN are isolated or that placing students in the LRE in general education classrooms is sufficient. Brock et al. (2017) examined teacher beliefs on practitioner training as a barrier in the implementation of educational practices to include SWSN. Teachers' beliefs on the inclusion of SWSN affect their willingness to participate in educational practices training (Brock et al., 2017).

Mihai et al. (2017) examined Head Start teacher beliefs that barriers affect SWSN early literacy. The results from the study indicated that Head Start teachers must improve their willingness to change, their approach to instruction, and their relationships within teaching teams in order to overcome barriers to positively influence early literacy for SWSN (Mihai et al., 2017). Miller et al. (2013) investigated the perspective of teachers about barriers that influenced special education policies and practices that affect their job preparation and duties. Miller et al. found that special education teachers viewed their university training as only minimally preparing them for work as a special education teacher. Special education teachers indicated that most of their teaching skills were learned

on the job and that certification programs to become special education teachers were not adequate preparation (Miller et al., 2013). O'Neill (2016) examined information about barriers to preservice teachers' preparation for inclusive classrooms based on a sample of preservice teachers at four intervals in the learning sequence: (a) precoursework, (b) preprofessional experience, (c) post-professional experience, and (d) post-coursework. O'Neill identified focused classroom and behavior management coursework preparation as difference makers in mitigating barriers that negatively affect the beginning teachers' sense of efficacy for the inclusion of SWSN. O'Neil further noted that experience is an important aspect of teacher efficacy.

Greenfield et al. (2016) examined preservice teachers' beliefs in barriers to teaching SWSN and professional preparation in a self-contained undergraduate learning disabilities method course. Greenfield et al. determined that overcoming barriers to teacher education programs and the context knowledge for teaching SWSN are fundamental in the preparation of preservice teachers to successfully teach in inclusive classrooms. Pit-ten-Cate et al. (2018) examined teacher beliefs of barriers that influence the competence and attitudes on inclusion. Pit-ten-Cate et al. determined that the barriers to competence and attitudes affect the extent to which teachers are willing and able to implement inclusive practice for SWSN. Yu (2019) conducted a study on teachers' beliefs on barriers to competence toward inclusion in Head Start classrooms. Through his study, Yu determined that by overcoming barriers, Head Start teachers build a foundation for students to benefit from inclusion.

Work Performance

Teachers who are challenged with identifying and using inclusive teaching strategies experience barriers to operating successful classrooms. Hwang and Evans (2011) examined the barriers in the gap between belief and practice towards including SWSN in classrooms. Hwang and Evans highlighted that teachers were positive when it came to including SWSN, but they did not seem to think they had enough time during the school day to meet the needs of the students in special education. In addition, Hwang and Evans noted teacher concerns with training, promoting collaboration, and maintaining positive attitudes. Jeon and Wells (2018) assessed the reasons for teacher turnover in Head Start to identify organizational-level factors that predict actual turnover. Jeon and Wells concluded that out of the factors of workplace satisfaction, classroom responsibilities, and on-going support, workplace satisfaction was the greatest predictor of teacher turnover. Hamre et al. (2017) examined the impact of professional development on the work performance of Head Start teachers. Hamre et al. suggested that the design and delivery of effective approaches of professional development are central to the support of the Head Start education workforce and that program level support is needed to implement effective professional development. Lee et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study to closely examine barriers to preschool teachers on including SWSN in their classrooms. Lee et al. revealed the following: (a) teacher acceptance of SWSN varied greatly depending on the nature of the special needs, (b) teachers did not indicate if a favorable view toward inclusion related to their knowledge of working with SWSN, and (c) teachers viewed being trained in special education with a higher acceptance of inclusion. Gokdere (2012) examined the effects of student teacher and teacher attitudes

toward inclusive education and how their anxiety levels may affect the implementation of services for students. Gokdere concluded that teachers who received special education training were aware of their attitudes and their behaviors and that teachers who had low interest in people with disabilities had a higher level of anxiety in working with such individuals. Additional findings from Gokdere's study were that both student teachers and teachers had low levels of confidence in teaching SWSN.

Swain et al. (2012) examined the change in preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes about inclusive practices. Swain et al. suggested that a special education course paired with an on-site field experience can significantly influence preservice teachers' attitudes toward including SWSN. Aydin and Kuzu (2013) performed research to ascertain the influence of attitudes of teachers towards mainstreaming education with special education and regular education students and the level of self-compassion that special education and regular education teachers have. Aydin and Kuzu found that teachers with middle or high levels of self-compassion had positive attitudes toward mainstreaming.

Cobb (2015) examined current North American research on the barriers experienced by school principals when envisioning and acting in ways that foster including SWSN within a school community. Cobb's examination revealed that principals take on seven roles in the performance of inclusive program delivery, staff collaboration, and parental engagement in special education. Cobb identified the seven roles as visionary, partner, coach, conflict resolver, advocate, interpreter, and organizer; to meet the demands of the seven roles, principals draw from various approaches to

leadership, such as transformative, distributive, and democratic leadership. Cobb also revealed that principals face a number of challenges, such as fostering collaboration where perspectives diverge, establishing a cohesive school vision of inclusion and differentiation of instruction, and reducing situations involving litigation and teacher attrition when striving to offer supportive special education programs.

Social and Political

Social and political barriers can prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Ewing et al. (2018) examined teachers' social attitudes and concluded that teacher social attitudes towards inclusion have a significant impact on how they manage their classroom learning environment. In addition, Ewing et al. found that the social attitudes of teachers reflect on the achievement of students. Chen and Phillips (2018) examined the influence of teacher-student relationships in Head Start with the purpose of determining the factors perceived to be beneficial or harmful to the relationship. They suggested that teacher self-efficacy is perceived to be beneficial to the teacher-student relationships in Head Start. Shoulders and Krei (2016) performed a study that examined teaching practices of SWSN in one primary school. The results of their study suggested that practices were varied and ranged from highly inclusive to highly exclusive and that some teachers worked in good faith to develop effective practices for including SWSN, while others displayed negative attitudes. Shoulders and Krei (2016) indicated that key barriers to operating successful inclusion programs included: (a) lack of funding, resources, and training, (b) parental resistance to inclusion, and (c) the commitment of teachers to the principles of inclusive education. Henward et al. (2019a) examined Head

Start teacher beliefs in the child-centeredness. Henward et al. highlight that Head Start teachers have different understandings of child-centeredness and believed that other alternatives should be offered in Head Start policy. Moen and Sheridan (2019) evaluated teacher attitudes for promoting partnership measures among a sample of Head Start educators. Moen and Sheridan determined that teachers' attitudes for promoting partnership measures among Head Start educators were positive.

Kahn and Lewis (2014) examined the current state of teacher preparedness as a barrier for building positive attitudes toward inclusive classrooms. Kahn and Lewis identified specific gaps in science teacher education and the institutional barriers that inhibited SWSN success.

Inclusive Practice

Beacham and Rouse (2012) explored the barriers encountered by student teachers of SWSN. Beacham and Rouse concluded that positive beliefs, reinforced through courses that support, reflect, and discuss aspects of instructional practices can minimize this barrier to instructional effectiveness. Supportive attitudes towards inclusion practices can be strengthened by partnerships with school specialists working closely to ensure positive results (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). Fogle et al. (2019) investigated the expectations of teachers who are parents to SWSN taught in inclusive classrooms. Fogle et al. concluded that parent-educators with SWSN have a belief that teachers who teach SWSN should be inclusion experts.

Marshall (2017) explored the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive classrooms in the Montessori educational system. Marshall concluded that teachers in inclusive

classrooms in the Montessori educational system often must overcome fear as a barrier when applying Montessori theories in new, innovative ways. Teachers are uncertain about applying Montessori philosophical principles to inclusive practices (Marshall, 2017). Crowson and Brandes (2014) examined preservice teachers' opposition toward the practice of educating SWSN. They found that social dominance orientation, close contact, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotyping, and self-efficacy predicted opposition to inclusion among preservice teachers. Li-Gring et al. (2020) conducted a pilot project to examine how mindful teacher attitudes might affect the integration of inclusive practices into Head Start programs. The results of the Li-Gring et al. study indicated that mindful strategies among Head Start teachers were favorable in integrating inclusive practices into Head Start classrooms.

Summary and Conclusions

The Head Start program is the largest provider of inclusive services for preschool age SWSN in the United States, representing more than 15% of the preschool children. Many research studies have been conducted about the influence of teacher beliefs and attitudes on the performance of SWSN in Head Start classrooms. The topics of this literature review included federal and state level legislation, teachers' role in providing for preschool SWSN, barriers that prevent teachers from using inclusive teaching strategies. Federal and state level legislation have raised concerns of distrust and transparency among special needs educators through the governance over policies and procedures federal and state level, the least restrictive environment federal and state level, and the competing priorities federal and state level. The teachers' role in early childcare

is often not clearly defined and, as a consequence, has varying effects on: (a) curriculum, (b) instruction, (c) management, (d) general education, inclusion of SWSN, and quality of care, which should provide for parent engagement with SWSN in early childcare classrooms. Likewise, barriers towards: (a) the learning environment, (b) teachers' beliefs, (c) work performance, (d) social and political influences, and (e) inclusive practices effect the outcomes of inclusive teaching strategies in educating SWSN.

In Chapter 3, I will present the research design, the role of the researcher, and the research methodology. I will discuss the approach that will be used to ensure the trustworthiness and ethical procedures of my research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this this basic qualitative study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. Many questions about including SWSN in Head Start classrooms persist and suggest the need for additional research focused on teachers' roles and barriers to inclusion (Bustamante et al., 2017; Muccio et al., 2014). In this chapter, I provide details about the choice of a research design, the process of identifying and procuring participants, and the approaches to data collection and analysis. I document: (a) the details of the research design and rationale, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) the research methodology, and (d) my approach to establish the trustworthiness and ethical procedures of this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The problem that prompted this study was that Head Start teachers struggle to provide appropriate services to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms. The purpose of this this basic qualitative study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The research questions guiding this proposed study were:

Research Question 1: How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN?

Research Question 2: How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN?

I used a basic qualitative research design for this study. Qualitative research is used to explore and to examine the human phenomenon through the views of others (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By using the basic qualitative research design, a researcher takes the perceptions or descriptions acquired and focuses on making meaning of the information gathered with a central goal of understanding how people make sense of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), a basic qualitative research provides a true explanation and understanding of human thoughts, actions, opinions, and interactions. Furthermore, qualitative research is an inductive process that provides the opportunity to understand the meaning that participants construct of experiences allows the researcher to build concepts based on the data gained from participants as they relate to the phenomenon (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

I chose the basic qualitative research design for this study because it allowed a more in-depth examination of the struggles of Head Start teachers to provide appropriate services to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms with a central goal of understanding how Head Start teachers make sense of their roles and the barriers of providing inclusive education to SWSN (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The sole intention of the basic qualitative research design is to develop an understanding of a phenomenon in the natural setting and to make meaning of the perceptions of participants through discovery, insight, and understanding (Lodico et al., 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because data can be solely collected from participants through the interview process, the basic qualitative design is a useful form of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Lodico et al. (2013) and Merriam and

Tisdell (2016), the overall goal of the design is to construct the meaning from those who have critical knowledge of the information related to the purpose of the study. Other forms of qualitative research, including case study, ethnographic research, grounded theory, and narrative analysis, did not align with this research.

An in-depth analysis of bounded systems, such as, events, organizations, or programs is typically performed in case study research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Cases study research requires specific focus on a case using multiple forms of data (Yin, 2015). Although this study will take place at a Head Start program, I did not seek to investigate any specific event within the program. Also, I completed an in-depth analysis of teacher interview responses, but only collected one form of data. Thus, the case study design was appropriate for this study. The narrative design uses biographical, linguistic, or psychological information to evaluate one or more individuals' stories to construct meaning (Gitomer, 2016). I did not use the narrative design because I did not investigate personal stories (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The grounded theory approach was not appropriate for this study because the approach requires an intent to develop a theory grounded in data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The ethnographic design was not used because the research design examines cultural groups over an extended period (Lodico et al., 2013). Based on the characteristics of the basic qualitative design, I concluded that the basic qualitative design was the methodology that would assist in constructing meaning from the interview data that was collected from Head Start teachers to answer my research questions.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is viewed as the instrument of data collection where the accuracy of research findings depends largely on the researcher's skills, experience, and rigor (Cook et al., 2011). Cook et al. (2011) stated that the qualitative researcher is trained in listening, interviewing, observing, and writing. It is possible for qualitative researchers to influence or bias the interpretation of the results because of direct interaction with data resources (Cook et al., 2011). My role as the researcher for this study was to leverage my skills and experience to not influence or bias the interpretation of the results.

To prevent bias from entering my study, I remained aware that personal experiences and personal characteristics can influence or bias the interpretation of results to ensure that data are collected with accuracy. In addition, I intentionally tried to establish an appropriate researcher-participant working relationship. Validity is increased as personal bias is controlled by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The controlling of personal bias requires intentional efforts to set aside all bias and personal beliefs that ultimately lead to the inability to influence the participants' opinions or perceptions on the problem (Chan et al., 2013). The intentional efforts that I made to establish an appropriate researcher-participant working relationship included: (a) expressing before interviews to the participants the importance of honesty and that their experiences would be used to benefit research, (b) assuring participants that all interviews will be confidential and participant identifies will be kept confidential to protect their identity, (c) assuring the participants that the data obtained from the interviews will be objectively assessed, (d) assuring the participants that the results of the study will be

interpreted objectively and independently from personal experience and bias, and (e) limiting interaction with participants outside of the scope of the study.

As the researcher for this proposal, I have over 20 years of experience working with SWSN at Head Start programs. In addition, I have served in positions as a teacher, family service worker, family service worker coordinator, and center manager. While I have significant experience working within the Head Start education programs, I had no affiliation with the Head Start program that was used as the site of this study. Past working relationships with administrators, teachers, parents, and SWSN in Head Start programs did not influence my interpretation of the results.

Methodology

The setting for this basic qualitative study was a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. The continuity and composition of inclusive classrooms cause Head Start teachers to struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN (Ansari & Purtell, 2018; Burkett et al., 2020). Teachers often struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN because they do not understand program changes or new implementation procedures (Gupta & Rous, 2016); Jeon & Wells, 2018). Likewise, Head Start teachers at this program struggled to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. In this section, a detailed description of the methodology used in this study to explore Head Start teacher's descriptions of their roles and barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education of SWSN is provided. Furthermore, the research plan for the recruitment of participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis plan are also provided with detailed processes identified.

Participant Selection

The participants in this study included 10-12 teachers from a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. The Head Start program is composed of four sites. The potential teacher participants were selected utilizing a purposeful sampling technique with a goal of teacher participation from each of the four sites. In the selection process, the criteria for participation will be the following: (a) current employment as a Head Start teacher and (b) one year of teaching experience in a Head Start program. Accordingly, the participants will be intentionally selected to contribute to the data about the central phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Before potential participant teachers were recruited, permission was gained from the Walden University IRB and the Head Start director (Appendix A). Potential participant teachers were invited by email communication. The work email addresses for the potential participant teachers were supplied by the Head Start director.

A sample size that is too large can create redundancy of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, it is important that the sample size is large enough to shed new light on the issue under investigation (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). Hence, this study sought the participation of at least 10-12 teachers from the four Head Start sites. The participation of each Head Start site was intended to enhance the trustworthiness of the results.

Appropriate approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University, the administrative authority of the Head Start program, and from participants selected for the study. Prior to providing approval, the Head Start director

received an email that introduced the research. Written permission was obtained from the Head Start director for the necessary approval to interview study participants. Once the Head Start director provided approval and the email addresses of Head Start teachers, I recruited participants. Potential participants were contacted through their work email addresses and invited to participate in this study. An informed consent form was sent with the invitation to explain the nature of the study and the expectations for volunteering to participate. Those who were interested in participating were asked to respond to the informed consent by sending an email from a personal email account indicating their agreement. The confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the data collection and in the written record.

Instrumentation

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and used an interview protocol and a Sony UX560 tape recorder to conduct semistructured interviews with guiding interview questions. The guiding interview questions for this study were developed from the literature review and consisted of eight questions for RQ1 and eight questions for RQ2, for a total of 16 questions. These 16 guiding interview questions connect to the conceptual framework of this study by focusing on answering RQ1 and RQ2.

An interview protocol (Appendix B) was used to ensure that participants were asked the same guiding interview questions in the same order during the semistructured interviews. The interview protocol for this study was a researcher-developed instrument designed after the model provided by Creswell and Creswell (2018). A Sony UX560 tape

recorder was used with the interview protocol to record participants' responses to the guiding interview questions during the semistructured interviews.

Procedures for Data Collection

Proper data collection procedures are essential in research studies to increase the level of credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this basic qualitative study, data was collected from one-to-one semistructured interviews using an interview protocol and a Sony UX560 tape recorder. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I used a video conferencing tool to conduct the one-to-one semistructured interviews. A rapport was developed with each Head Start teacher participant before the video conferencing of the semistructured interviews through the explanation of the consent conditions, voluntary nature, and data collection methods of the study. The video conferences for the semistructured interviews were prescheduled in order to mitigate work interruptions and to enable confidential conversations.

The semistructured interview protocol consisted of 16 guiding interview questions as provided in Appendix B. Using a Sony UX560 tape recorder, the data collected was information shared and obtained from Head Start teachers relative to their descriptions of their roles in providing inclusive education services for SWSN and the barriers that inhibit the implementing strategies for SWSN. Participants were notified when the tape recorder was turned on and off. I performed member checking upon completion of analyzing the semistructured data analysis to establish credibility of the data by capturing what the participants believe, experience, and perceive. Once the data was collected, data was transcribed by me and subsequently input into Microsoft Office 2013. The data was

organized in a columnar fashion for subsequent analysis. Within 24 hours after each semistructured interview, the data was secured by copying the recordings into a password protected folder on the hard drive of my research laptop and, after the recordings were copied, immediately deleted from the recorder. The data will remain secure on my research laptop for 5 years after the publishing of the study. After the required 5 years of storage, the data will be deleted.

Sample Guiding Interview Questions

The video conferencing process with participants ranged between an estimated 45 to 60 minutes per one-to-one semistructured interview. Before the one-to-one semistructured interviews, a consent form was emailed to each participant's work email address where each participant was asked to send a personal email indicating, "I agree." In addition, reminders for the upcoming semistructured interviews were emailed to the participants' personal email addresses one week prior to and one day prior to each scheduled interview.

Data was collected utilizing guiding interview questions to conduct semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews serve the useful purpose of exploring many respondents more systematically and comprehensively to keep the interview focused on the desired line of action (Trochim et al., 2016). Appendix B provides a complete list of the guiding interview questions. However, a sample of the guiding interview questions for this study is as follows:

1. Tell me about how you present information to students?
2. What do you do to guide students to learn classroom and school rules?

3. Describe the challenges you have encountered when presenting new information?
4. Tell me about resources or training you would need to present new information to SWSNs?

During the semistructured interviews, I sought to enable participants to expand on responses by following up responses with open ended or clarification questions.

Furthermore, I sought to allow participants to respond to each question with individual honesty and without fear of bias entering into the study.

Interview Notes

Interview notes were taken during this study to capture the participants' responses. Whether handwritten notes, shorthand, a tape recorder, or a laptop computer was used, it is important that responses were recorded verbatim (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). I informed participants that interview notes will be taken during the semistructured interview to be used later to mitigate discrepancies in data collected. In accordance, the use of interview notes enhanced the accuracy of the participants' responses.

To capture notes during the semistructured interview, each participant was recorded using a Sony UX560 tape recorder. The Sony UX560 recorder recorded as a stand-alone recording device. All recordings were performed by me. Participants were instructed to notify me whenever information off the record was provided so that I could pause the record, which prevented the off the record conversation from being recorded.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis of the semistructured interviews of the 12 participants were performed after data were collected and processed. Data analysis began with transcribing notes in individual tables, as well as consolidating the transcribed notes in one table for a total of 13 tables. The notes were transcribed by me using Microsoft Word within 24 to 48 hours of each participant semistructured interview. Leedy and Ormrod's (2016) steps for effective data analysis in qualitative studies are: (a) organizing the data, (b) perusing the entire data set several times to get a sense of what it contains as a whole, (c) identifying general categories or themes, and (d) integrating and summarizing the data for the readers.

Accordingly, after transcribing the notes for the semistructured interviews, I used open coding in the performance of data analysis. Open coding is a process in which the researcher identifies categories and subcategories of data by segmenting information to reduce the amount of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were thematically coded across the interview questions with the intention of answering RQ1 and RQ2. The tables in were organized by site and by participant to promote effective data analysis.

Coding and Theme Development

Open coding is a strategy used by researchers to examine collected data and to abstract connections among them (Lodico et al., 2013). According to Creswell (2012), open coding is a strategy of organizing data into chunks of text and then assigning a word or phrase to the segment to develop a general sense of the information. To open code the

interview data, I searched for repeated words, phrases, and concepts that pertain to the framework and related literature.

Just as open coding was used to examine collected data, so were themes. Lodico et al. (2013) stated that a theme is the combination of several codes that describe the big idea and explains the learned information from the study. Creswell (2012) stated theme development consists of answering the research questions and forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon. I used thematic analysis to identify patterns among the codes. Thematic analysis is “a data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures important concepts” (Given, 2012). Thematic analysis was completed to organize the data into themes.

I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis strategy by employing the following steps: (a) I will familiarize myself with the collected data to gain general meaning from the participant’s responses by reading the transcripts several times, and I may make marginal notes such as questions or reminders; (b) I will generate initial codes by highlighting passages of the transcribed texts and linking them to common ideas and grouping them under initial thematic concepts; (c) I will organize participants’ statements and group them into subthemes using different a highlighter color for each participant; (d) I will review and rename the subthemes into final themes representing overarching research data ideas; (e) I will use the conceptual framework of the inclusion model for early childhood classrooms to organize the subthemes into final themes; and (f) I will produce a final report consisting of an overview of the participants’ collected perceptions.

I may find evidence of discrepant cases. Discrepant cases are those instances of data that do not fit in the determined themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). If discrepant cases were discovered, I identified them and addressed them in the data analysis with a detailed explanation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This detailed explanation either confirmed or extended the thematic analysis. This explanation may also provide more depth to the analysis.

Trustworthiness

This basic qualitative study achieved trustworthiness by using a set of techniques that will establish credibility, conformability, and transferability of the data. I established credibility by capturing what the participants believe, experience, and perceive through semistructured interviews. Member checking is the act of forwarding findings or summaries of findings to participants for their review to ensure that their responses were not prejudiced by the researcher's biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I emailed participants with a summary of my initial findings with instructions to review the findings and to provide comments, if applicable, within 5 business days from the email submission date. Confirmability was established through reflexivity as a continuous process reflecting on my data collection and data analysis and on my thoughts during the coding process. To establish and increase the potential for transferability, I included rich descriptions and specific details about the context of the participants' responses and transcript excerpts. In addition, I maintained field notes. Field notes attest to the trustworthiness of the research by ensuring that important information from the researcher's personal experiences in the study were incorporated into the process analysis

(Cyr, 2016). Overall, I coded and analyzed the data from the semistructured interviews and develop the emerging themes.

Ethical Procedures

The details of this study were submitted for review to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University to ensure that the ethical standards of Walden University and applicable federal regulations and guidelines were met. The IRB of Walden University approval for this study (approval 07-14-21-0077398) was obtained prior to data collection. In addition, a letter of cooperation, Appendix A, was obtained from the administrative authority of the Head Start program and informed consent from participants selected for the study. Participants of this study were required to agree with the informed consent by responding using a personal email account with the subject “CONSENT” with the words, “I agree.”

Care was taken in the data collection methods of this study to ensure that the teacher participants consent with an understanding there is no remuneration for participation. Furthermore, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they may withdraw any time without repercussion. The confidentiality of the participants was protected so that no participant was linked with the data and no identifiable information was presented. Each participant was assigned a number which only the researcher knew. To further protect the identity of the participants, no geographical information, such as, the actual location of the Head Start classroom were made public. In addition, data was kept secure by password protection and use of numbers in place of names.

Summary

This basic qualitative study examined how Head Start teachers describe their roles and barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education of SWSN. A basic qualitative research design was selected to allow a more in-depth examination of the struggles of Head Start teachers to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. In addition, the sole intention of the basic qualitative research design was to develop an understanding of a phenomenon in the natural setting and to make meaning of the perceptions of participants through discovery, insight, and understanding. The research questions guided the study to identify how Head Start teachers describe their roles in teaching SWSN in Head Start classrooms and barriers thereof. The participants for this study were 12 teachers of a Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. These 12 participants were selected from four local sites utilizing a purposeful sampling technique and, hence, enhancing the validity of the data analysis.

As the researcher for this study, I established an appropriate researcher-participant working relationship. By controlling my personal bias, validity was increased. Semistructured interviews using a video conferencing tool was the qualitative instruments for this study. Data was collected from participants by using guiding interview questions during the semistructured interviews of Head Start teachers. Data processing involved recording the notes from interview questions in separate tables. After the data were collected and processed, data analysis was performed. The results from the semistructured interviews were compared, contrasted, and analyzed to identify emerging themes.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. Sixteen guiding interview questions, consisting of eight questions for RQ1 and eight questions for RQ2, were developed from the literature review. These questions connected to the conceptual framework of this study by focusing on answering RQ1 and RQ2 and are discussed in detail in the results section of this chapter. In the next sections, I describe the setting, demographics, data collection, and data analysis. In addition, I discuss evidence of trustworthiness, present the results of the study, and conclude the chapter with a summary.

Setting

This study was conducted at a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. At the local Head Start program, Head Start teachers struggled to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. The struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms was due, in part, to inconsistent classroom instruction, competing priorities between federal and state requirements, and inadequate preservice training. Furthermore, the Head Start teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms was compounded by their lack of understanding of their roles within the system, which may have led to barriers to providing required services. This study presents the results of 12 interviews with Head Start teachers working at the four sites of the local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. The interviews capture

the Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN.

Data Collection

As specified in Chapter 3, data were collected data from one-to-one semi-structured interviews using an interview protocol and a Sony UX560 tape recorder. Video conferencing through Zoom was used to conduct the one-to-one semistructured interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The video conferences were prescheduled for the semistructured interviews to mitigate work interruptions and to enable confidential conversations. The consent conditions, voluntary nature, and data collection methods of the study were explained to each participant before the video conference for the purpose of developing a rapport.

The semistructured interview protocol consisted of 16 guiding interview questions, which are listed in Appendix B. A Sony UX560 was used to record and to collect data on information shared and obtained from Head Start teachers relative to their descriptions of their roles in providing inclusive education services for SWSN and the barriers that inhibit the implementing strategies for SWSN. Participants were notified whenever the tape record was turned on and off. Each participant was interviewed one time for about 45 minutes. There were no variations in the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3. While the COVID-19 pandemic caused some delays in scheduling and conducting interviews, I was able to adjust my research plan accordingly.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for the 12 semistructured interviews was completed using thematic coding. Leedy and Ormrod's (2016) steps for effective data analysis in qualitative studies are: (a) organizing the data, (b) perusing the entire data set several times to get a sense of what it contains as a whole, (c) identifying general categories or themes, and (d) integrating and summarizing the data for the readers. Accordingly, after transcribing the recorded structured interviews, I used in open coding in the performance of the data analysis. The open coding process is done by asking conditional questions relating to the material, which serves as foundation for further interpretation, and starts during fieldwork and designates the breaking down, examining, and labelling of the data with codes (Döringer, 2021). I read and reread the transcript for each interview and used the colored highlight function to identify words, phrases, and concepts to code the transcripts. I used the research questions as the basis for coding and identifying themes.

I searched for common words and frequently used phrases while reviewing the transcripts. In reviewing the transcripts, the following codes emerged and were used to describe Head Start teachers' role in providing preschool inclusive education services to SWSN:

1. Challenging.
2. Resourceful.
3. Students First/Engaged.

In addition, the following codes emerged and were used to describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN:

1. Communication.
2. Training.
3. Resources.

I thematically coded the data across the interview questions with the intention of answering RQ1 and RQ2. From these codes, two themes emerged:

1. Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN, but they overcome the challenges by prioritizing student learning needs and by being resourceful.
2. Head Start teachers extend their best effort to teach SWSN but need resources and training.

The codes and themes for RQ1 and RQ2 are identified in Table 1.

Table 1

Data Analysis Coding and Theme Identification

Research Question	Code	Themes
RQ1 - How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging • Resourceful • Prioritize student learning needs 	1. Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN but overcome the challenges by prioritizing student learning needs and by being resourceful.
RQ2 - How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Training • Resources 	2. Head Start teachers extend their best effort to teach SWSN but need resources and training.

Research Results

Sixteen guiding interview questions formed the basis for answering RQ1 and RQ2. Responses to these 16 guiding interview questions provided Head Start teachers' descriptions of inclusion and the barriers they encounter. Specifically, the responses provide insight on the daily struggle of Head Start teachers to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. The results described here illustrate the Head Start teachers' roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The results are organized by RQ1 and RQ2 with the respective theme, as well as the codes that the theme emerged from.

Theme 1: Head Start teachers are Challenged in the Role of Teaching SWSN but Overcome the Challenges by Prioritizing Student Learning Needs and by Being Resourceful

Within this theme, challenging, resourceful, and prioritizing student learning needs were offered by the participants. Furthermore, in responding to the eight guiding interview questions for RQ1, the participants expressed that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN is challenging, requires the ability to be resourceful, and requires a focus to prioritize student learning needs.

Challenging. Participants felt challenged in presenting factual information to students. Participant one (P1) stated:

The biggest challenge is having students that you can not understand if they are getting what you are teaching. Another challenge is having to wait so long to get

some students tested to see if they are having problems understanding and possibly may have a disability.

P5 stated, "...it all depends on how children learn differently. Children don't learn on the same level." P8 stated, "Sometimes when we have children who are visually impaired, they may not be able to see that through a letter, but we may have to find a different way to help." P11 stated, "And as far as their attention span, how long it takes for that student to present their information, whatever the disability or short coming is, can become a problem for our classroom." Also, P12 stated, "Some of my students do not understand at the same pace as other students."

The participants also felt challenged when assessing students for factual information. P8 stated, "They may not be grasping the information." In addition, P10 stated, "I want them to be able to tell me quicker than they have retained it." Participants also felt challenged while guiding students to learn classroom and school rules. P3 stated, "Keeping them engaged" is a challenge while guiding students. P9 stated, "Some students just want to learn the rules."

Participants felt challenged to guide students to follow classroom and school rules. P1 stated, "The challenge for rules is the students who don't want to comply and will sometimes want to do something different." P2 stated, "Kids just won't follow those rules." P4 stated, "They don't want to follow the rules." P7 stated, "Some of the classroom will not follow the rules." P11 stated, "Not receiving enough information on the children is a challenge." P12 stated, "Now, at times, we sometimes face challenges when students act as if they do not recall the class rules."

Guiding students to follow rituals in procedural learning was considered by participants to be an additional challenge. On this topic, P2 stated, “Kids like to be taught differently.” P10 also stated, “Kids like to be taught differently.” Likewise, participants felt challenged to guide students to follow routines in procedural learning. P9 stated, “Some children have problems following steps.” P10 stated, “Some students catch on to the routines faster than others.”

Participants voiced their concern with the challenges of presenting critical thinking to students. P1 stated, “The challenge is making sure that students understand.” P6 stated, “So you have to make them come out of their shell... when they are comfortable coming out of their shells and thinking out the box, then that's when I know I did what I needed to do.” P11 stated, “Time is a challenge and also making sure that the children understand what they are being taught.”

Participants also felt challenged to promote critical thinking to students. P8 stated, “Some students may not understand the concepts.” P9 stated, “Sometimes it is difficult to get the children’s attention. They are too busy doing what they want to do.” P11 stated, “Students not expressing themselves is a challenge and not being able to work with them within the limited time that I have to teach.” The participants’ responses to the guided interview questions demonstrated the constant challenges Head Start teachers faced in their duties to provide preschool inclusive education services for SWSN.

Resourceful. Participants felt that the ability to be resourceful was required to overcome the challenges in their duties to provide preschool inclusive education services

for SWSN. Participants expressed this requirement when responding to overcoming the challenges of presenting factual information to students. P2 stated:

Well, we do alternate resources. We find things that are accessible. The things that I find right there within the school or I go out and purchase them myself. And basically, I pay for most of the purchases. I also learn how to do things by myself by watching YouTube and Pinterest videos.

P4 stated, "...we'll have our activities where, you know, they can maybe use stamps for the letter A." P8 stated, "Find a different way to help them learn." P9 stated, "We have an interactive theme board that we use to let them come up to the board to show what they have learned." P10 stated, "I teach my students factual information by presenting the facts and then break them down into different songs or I have gone as far as making up a catchy song that will help them to remember."

Participants also expressed resourceful as a requirement in overcoming the challenges of guiding students to learn classroom and school rules. P5 stated, "I add visuals or pictures to what I'm trying to get the children to learn." P8 stated, "So we have to go back and remodel or maybe try a different way. Maybe we do it through song." P11 stated, "I show the kids what I want them to do. I write the rules on a big chart and we go over them daily until they can repeat them or share them with the class and me." P12 stated, "We practice the rules. We allow students to help write the class rules and we also allow the students to help one another to remember the rules."

To overcome the challenges of guiding students to follow classroom and school rules, participants again expressed resourceful as a requirement. P1 stated:

For those students, we redirect them and, at times, we might try to change up the routine for them. For example, I have one student that refuses to walk in a line.

Therefore, he is always the line leader and holds one of the teacher's hands and to keep him in close proximity.

P7 stated, "So I will go over the classroom rules. Sometimes, we'll try to turn it into a game. So just a lot of repetition."

This need to be resourceful was also expressed by participants in overcoming the challenges encountered when teaching procedures. P6 stated, that if you use one child to follow classroom and school rules, the other children will see that one child all the time and will change their attention to follow classroom and school rules like the child that they see all the time." P12 stated, "I sometimes even draw pictures or show them pictures of what they are learning."

In addition, participants expressed this need to overcome the challenges of guiding students to follow routines in procedural learning. P1 stated:

Usually when we transition from one activity to another, I have music that helps me out a lot. We usually do a lot of transitioning with music. We make it fun, you know, with the routines to get them engaged since they're so young. We always try to make it fun with them.

P6 stated:

So I allow children to teach children. So once you scope out a child and have taught that child what to do, they can always help another child. They can explain it in a way that a child would learn from a child.

P9 stated, “I may set up something and ask them many open-ended questions and get a discussion going so that they can start thinking.” P10 stated, “I will have to tell them an answer and have them to reiterate what is said to them over and over until they are able to think of ideas on their own.” P11 stated, “I will enlist the assistance of another student and request that they conversate with one another while I am monitoring and encouraging the use of words.” The ability to be resourceful, as expressed by the participants when responding to the guiding interview questions, helps Head Start teachers to overcome daily challenges encountered in their duties to provide preschool inclusive education services for SWSN.

Prioritizing student learning needs. Participants felt that a focus to keep their priorities on student learning needs was necessary in their duties to provide preschool inclusive education services for SWSN. Participants expressed that a focus to prioritize student learning needs was necessary in presenting factual information to students. P1 stated, “We keep those children engaged. We actually show them. We show them pictures so that they can comprehend and start grasping whatever we are teaching.” P3 stated, “I would go on YouTube and have the children sing alphabets. I would go to the Dollar Tree and pick up alphabets for the children to learn them one letter at a time.” P5 stated, “If they don't learn on the same level, you have to find a way to teach a child that does not learn as quickly as the next child.” P9 stated, “So I had to change up and, you know, use a different method, a different strategy. Just find out what's going on with them.” P11 stated, “I often will pull a student to the side and, at times, I have my teacher

assistant work with a student one on one to make sure that they understand what I am trying to help them to understand.”

Participants expressed that this focus was also necessary in assessing factual information to students. P1 stated:

We do a lot of one-on-one correspondence in which we work with children individually and monitor their responses in circle time. And we do a lot of observation and doodles rules which we're just looking at those children and monitoring them.

P4 stated:

I might try to do one on one or maybe have somebody else do a little circle time. I'll take that child away and then try to present it a different way. They just may need that one on one focus.

P7 stated, “I will quickly try to grab their attention by directing them to another area, but continue to focus on what we need them to focus on.” P8 stated, “Sometimes, we have to go back and refer to that previous lesson and try to teach it a different way.” P10 stated, “Sometimes, I have to break them into smaller groups and present the information in smaller chunks.” P12 stated “I sometimes need to break down and help them to explain what they are saying.”

This focus was expressed by participants as necessary to guide students to learn classroom and school rules. P3 stated, “By modelling the behavior that I expect when I demonstrate those rules, I help to prioritize their learning needs.” Likewise, participants

expressed that this focus was necessary to guide students to follow classroom and school rules. P4 stated, “I try to make it fun for them. Don’t make it like you better do this.”

This focus was expressed by participants as necessary to guide students to follow rituals in procedural learning. P2 stated, “Modification. I see what their strengths and their weaknesses are. And then I modify my schedule accordingly.” P6 stated, “I allow them to kind of lead and guide in the way that they're learning.” P10 stated, “We continue to go over the model until the student follows the model.”

Participants expressed that this focus was necessary to guide students to follow routines in procedural learning. P2 stated, “I take them one on one and give them the option that they need.” P8 stated, “Keep them occupied, but also still engaged to listen.” P9 stated “Every child is different, and every child learns differently. So really, it’s about finding out what works for that child.” P11 stated, “If for some reason they do not know how to do it, I will model it again and again until they can do it.” P12 stated, “I continue to model the procedure and demonstrate learning.” As expressed by the participants when responding to the guiding interview questions, a focus on prioritizing student learning needs is necessary for Head Start teachers in their duties to provide preschool inclusive education services for SWSN.

Theme 2: Head Start Teachers Extend Their Best Effort to Teach SWSN but Need Resources and Training

Within RQ2’s theme, the participants offered communication, training, and resources. In responding to the eight guiding interview questions for RQ2, the participants

expressed that communication, available training, and available resources are barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

Communication. Participants felt that communication was a barrier that inhibited the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. P6 expressed that communication inhibits the available resources or training to teach factual information to SWSNs. P6 stated, “I use a lot of visual things in class so that we can communicate better.” P12 expressed that communication inhibits the available resources or training to teach procedures to SWSNs. P12 stated, “We need to ensure that we communicate the same thing to all the teachers and paraprofessionals due to the number of students in our classrooms since we rely heavily on the paraprofessionals.”

Also, participants expressed that communication is a challenge encountered when teaching critical thinking. P3 stated, “There really is a need for trainers to be readily available to train” and “Talking with other teachers and relying on experience” has helped with overcoming challenges with communication. P4 stated, “Communicating with the child should be done with children in a manner to not upset them.” Participants expressed that communication inhibits the available resources or training to teach critical thinking to SWSNs. P4 stated, “Support that can help us is dependent on better communication with the student and family.” P5 stated, “Resources that improve communication with children would help me to teach critical thinking.” P11 stated, “...we need information communicated and we need to check for understanding to ensure teachers have a working knowledge of how to work with each child in their classroom.” The participants’ responses to the guided interview questions help demonstrate how

communication affect Head Start teachers as a barrier that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

Training. Participants felt that the available training is a barrier that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. P2 expressed that the available training is a challenge encountered when teaching factual information. P2 stated, “Teaching tools were not available.” Participants also expressed that the available training is a barrier to teach factual information to SWSNs. P1 stated:

To be honest, I feel like we need a lot more training. I really feel like we need a lot more training because we have no idea that some of those children that come into our classroom have behavior issues or are special needs until the first day of school.

P3 stated, “Additional staff support and training would help” and “I think training that would engage the class would also help.” P4 stated, “Training that is effective and fun for the children would be helpful.” P5 stated, “I think that if I have a child in my classroom I should have training on how to deal with that child and how to teach that child.” P7 stated, “I haven’t had any specific training to teach factual information other than my student teaching experience, which was years ago. So many things have changed since then.” P8 stated, “Specific training on teaching factual information to students with special needs would be helpful.” P9 stated, “We get training, but it’s more of an overall training. I wish we had some more deep training on the individual needs.” P10 stated, “I need training from individuals that have real world experience with teaching factual information to student with special needs.” P11 stated, “I need training that will help me teach students with special needs.” P12 stated, “However, the training that we received was on the curriculum and not training on how to teach the information” and “We need training on explaining

or sharing directions with students with disabilities.” P10 expressed that the available training is a challenge encountered when presenting new information. P10 stated, “I would like to have training before hand on what the expectation is and what outcome we are looking for before starting a new project.”

The available training was expressed by participants as a barrier to presenting new information to SWSNs. P1 stated, “Training on special needs children would also help.” P3 stated, “Specific training presenting new information would help.” P4 stated, “We can always use more training and more information” and “Training on how to present new information to children with special needs like the nonverbal child that I teach.” P6 stated, “Additional training to teach new information to students with disabilities from the Head Start perspective.” P7 stated, “Specific training or materials for the new information is needed.” P8 stated, “Same as resources, training that would provide me with the foundation to present new information is needed.” P9 stated, “We need more deep training on presenting new information.” P12 stated, “Typically, we do not get the training until after the new program has rolled out” and “It would be nice to get intense hands-on training from professionals that are familiar with the subject matter before the plan is implemented.”

The available training was also expressed as a challenge encountered when teaching procedures. P2 stated, “I have had no training on teaching procedures.” P3 stated, “I take webinars. Sometimes all teachers can’t get it through the internet and they can’t get it through webinars.” P4 stated, “...no training. They just really gave us referral forms for somebody else. I feel like we should get more training on that.”

Participants expressed that the available training is a barrier to teach procedures to SWSNs. P2 stated, “We need teaching procedures training.” P3 stated, “But teachers do need training for Head Start and is this something that has not been implemented for all the teachers” and “Just relevant training.” P4 stated, “We need teaching procedures training.” P5 stated, “Available training and available resources are needed.” P6 stated, “Teachers need training on teaching procedures and the training should be available.” P7 stated, “I would love to have training on strategies that make procedures simplified for students with special needs.” P8 stated, “There is not enough available resources or training on teaching procedures to students with special needs.” P10 stated, “I would like to have more training on specific strategies that make procedures simplified for students with special needs and these strategies should be proven to work by individuals that have used them with students in our population.” P11 stated, “Training focused on teaching procedures would be helpful.” P12 stated, “We haven’t had any training to teach procedures to students with special needs” and “We need training for both teachers and paraprofessionals on teaching procedures.”

Participants expressed that the available training is a challenge encountered when teaching critical thinking. P2 stated, “We haven’t had training on teaching on critical thinking.” P3 stated, “There really is a need for trainers to be readily available to train.” P4 stated, “Training on dealing with behavioral problems is needed.”

The available training was expressed by participants as a barrier to teach critical thinking to SWSNs. P2 stated, “We just need critical thinking training to start with.” P3 stated, “Training for teachers to teach that and to teach about special needs children is needed. You can't put a child that's blind in your classroom and you don't know nothing about teaching a blind child.” P4 stated,

“More training is needed” and “Specific training aimed at critical thinking would be helpful.” P6 stated, “...training needs to be provided to teachers” and “We should have been updated on training way back when and every year is just a renewal for training.” P7 stated, “We haven’t had specific training for teaching critical thinking skills.” P8 stated, “Training on critical thinking taught to students with special needs is needed.” P10 stated, “I haven’t had any specific training on teaching critical thinking skills to students with special needs” and “I also think that as teachers we should use our parent teacher meetings to help train parents on how to bring out critical thinking skills.” P11 stated, “The training that I feel that we received is not adequate for the children that we serve.” As expressed by the participants when responding to the guiding interview questions, Head Start teachers need more training. Not having available training is a barrier that inhibits the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

Resources. Participants felt that the available resources are barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. Participants expressed that the available resources are challenges encountered when teaching factual information. P3 stated, “Resources are not available and training is not available.” P4 stated, “Not having readily available resources and the right training is a challenge to teaching factual information.” P7 stated, “It sometimes takes some students longer to grasp the information and that can be a challenge. Especially if you do not have all the materials readily available.”

Participants also expressed that the available resources are barriers to teaching factual information to SWSNs. P2 stated, “There are no resources or training to teach factual information.” P3 stated, “My resources and training have been limited.” P4 stated, “There are limited to no resources or training to teach factual information.” P7 stated, “As far as additional

resources I could use someone that would be in the classroom to support the students that might not understand the concept immediately.” P8 stated, “Additional staff support and additional training would help.” P9 stated, “So we’re looking to get resources. We’re looking to try to get resources to help them.” P10 stated, “The additional resources I need to teach students with special needs would be the equipment that is needed for them.” P11 stated, “To teach, these factual concepts we must have resources. For example, I’m going to introduce you to a banana. I need to at least have a picture of the banana” and “I must have resources readily available in the classroom.”

Participants expressed that the available resources are challenges encountered when presenting new information. P1 stated, “A lot of times they give us information at the last minute. They don’t give us enough time to be prepared. I need the correct material and resources to teach the children.” P8 stated, “Having available resources is a challenge.” P11 stated, “Actually to have the real thing, you need to see what’s real ... the biggest challenge is having the resources that you need to present the information.”

Participants expressed that the available resources are barriers to presenting new information to SWSNs. P1 stated, “Resources that will allow us to understand and to provided needed services for special needs children would help.” P2 stated, “I would not have the resources” and “I would need computers and reference documents.” P3 stated, “Sometimes, to be honest, I do not feel the resources are readily available to meet the challenge. You don’t have enough teachers.” P4 stated, “Any resource on how to work with this child to meet their needs is needed.” P5 stated, “Resources that I can get from them, from Head Start and from anybody else I can get through would help.” P6 stated, “It’s just resource books and some resource websites where we can go on” and “Additional resources outside of the resource books and resource websites would be helpful.”

P8 stated, “Resources are not available and I need training” and “Just resources that would provide me with the foundation to present new information would help.” P9 stated, “And people sometimes don’t think of people as resources, but people are resources. If you don’t have enough people, you don’t have enough resources.” P11 stated, “I still think they should have an expert, a nurse or even a part time nurse that comes in so many days or the whole week to deal with students that need extra attention.” P12 stated, “Resources that will help my class understand the new information would help”

Participants expressed that the available resources are challenges encountered when teaching procedures. P5 stated, “Not having enough required resources and not having the right training have been my challenges.” P6 stated, “I had to look for resources when I didn’t have resources.” Participants also expressed that the available resources are barriers to teaching procedures to SWSNs. P1 stated, “We need more certified staff that can help us.” P2 stated, “Available material is needed to teach procedures to the kids.” P4 stated, “We need more time for kids that may have behavioral issues. I feel like we need more support.” P7 stated, “We do not have interactive technology. It would be good to have interactive technology in the classrooms for the students to touch and interact to reintroduce procedures.” P9 stated, “More resources to help them and more people are needed. There is not enough people.” P10 stated, “More resources and more specific training need to be made available to the teachers” and “It would be good to have interactive technology in the classrooms for the students to touch and interact with that reintroduces procedures.” P11 stated, “I need available resources that can interact with the children.” P6 expressed that the available resources are challenges encountered when teaching

critical thinking. P6 stated, “I don’t have the resources or appropriate training to provide needed services for the child.”

The available resources are expressed by participants as a barrier to teaching critical thinking to SWSNs. P1 stated, “We need just more certified staff that can help us. That’s what we don’t have at all.” P2 stated, “We need resources for critical thinking teaching to students with special needs” and “We need more than one person. We need a disability team that can support all teachers.” P4 stated, “Resources are needed for critical thinking teaching.” P7 stated, “I do not have any resources available to teach critical thinking skills.” P9 stated, “I feel like we need resources that will specifically help them.” P11 stated, “Interactive resources would be good for my children.” P12 stated, “I believe that interactive resources would help with critical thinking.” The participants’ responses to the guided interview questions help demonstrate the value of resources to Head Start teachers and their need for more. Not having available resources is a barrier that inhibits the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that in order for trustworthiness to occur, the data collected must be consistent and reliable. To ensure consistency and reliability of the data that I collected, I used various strategies throughout the study. Specifically, I used credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies to ensure trustworthiness. I explain these strategies in detail in the below paragraphs.

Credibility

I used strategies of capturing what the participants believed, experienced, and perceived through semistructured interviews to accomplish credibility in this study. The

respondent's validation, which the researcher solicits feedback from the participants, is a common strategy for credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, I performed member checking upon completion of analyzing the semistructured data analysis to strengthen the credibility of the data by capturing what the participants believed, experienced, and perceived. In the performance of member checking, I emailed the participants with a summary of my initial findings with instructions to review the findings and to provide comments, if applicable, within 5 business days from the email submission date. I received no comments from the participants in reference to the summary of initial findings submitted for their review.

Transferability

I included strategies of rich descriptions and specific details about the context of the participants' responses through the transcript excerpts to establish transferability in this study. I used field notes to increase the potential for transferability. In accordance with Cyr (2016), field notes attest to trustworthiness by ensuring that the process analysis incorporates important information from the researcher's personal experiences in the study. The rich descriptions and specific details about the context of the participants' responses and transcript excerpts, as well as the field notes permit the opportunity for readers to compare to their own perceptions. This study has the potential to be transferred beyond Head Start programs to other classroom settings that provide inclusive services to SWSN.

Dependability

I used strategies to include an interview protocol, semistructured in-depth interviews, a tape recorder, and a video conferencing tool to achieve dependability for this study. These strategies allowed me to establish the appropriate interview conditions for the study's participants. With the appropriate interview conditions, I took detailed notes, recorded all interviews, and transcribed all interviews. In addition, the appropriate interview conditions allowed me to present the data and my findings with transparency based the results from open coding and thematic analysis. The ability to present data and findings transparently contribute to dependability based on the research strategies, which permit future researchers to replicate and evaluate the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Confirmability

I used the strategy of reflexivity to ensure confirmability in this study. Confirmability resembles replicability, which concerns the extent to which a study can be reproduced (Nassaji, 2020). Furthermore, reflexivity is described as the researcher's ability to look at himself through a critical lens of self-reflection examining his biases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, I used reflexivity as a continuous process by reflecting on my data collection, my data analysis, and my thoughts during the coding process. Through the continuous process of reflexivity, I was able to demonstrate that the data represented the responses of the participants and not the biases or viewpoints of the me as the researcher.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. This study was conducted at a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia and presents the results of interviews with 12 Head Start teachers who worked at four sites. Data were collected from one-to-one semistructured interviews using an interview protocol and a Sony UX560 tape recorder. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the one-to-one semistructured interviews were conducted by video conferencing through Zoom. The one-to-one semistructured interview consisted of 16 guiding interview questions, eight for RQ1 and eight for RQ2. After the recorded interviews, open coding and thematic analysis were completed for the data obtained from 12 semistructured interviews.

RQ1: How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN? From the participants' responses to the guiding interview questions, Head Start teachers described their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN as challenging, resourceful, and prioritizing student learning needs, which were identified as codes for research question 1. From these codes, Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN but overcome the challenges by prioritizing student learning needs and by being resourceful emerged as the theme for RQ1.

RQ2: How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN? For RQ2, Head Start teachers described the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education

strategies for SWSN to be communication, training, and resources. Three barriers were identified as codes from the participants' responses to the guiding interview questions for RQ2. From these codes, Head Start teachers extend their best effort to teach SWSN but needing resources and training emerged as the theme for RQ2. In Chapter 5, I provide an interpretation of the findings, with reference to the literature, limitations to the study, recommendations for additional research, as well as implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. A basic qualitative design was used to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. In a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia, teachers struggled to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. The study's implications for positive social change may include providing valuable information for future Head Start programming, providing insight on training needed to teach SWSN in Head Start programs, advancing practice and policy development within instructional programming, and delivery of services for SWSN, leading to positive social change in the delivery of inclusive education, or guiding future research.

The analysis of the study data for RQ1 indicated that the participants expressed that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN is challenging, requires the ability to be resourceful, and requires a focus to prioritize and engage students. Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN but overcome the challenges by prioritizing student learning needs and by being resourceful emerged as the theme from the data analysis of the participants' responses for RQ1. For RQ2, the analysis of the study data indicated that participants expressed that communication, available training, and available resources are barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. Head Start teachers extend

their best effort to teach SWSN but need resources and training emerged as the theme from the data analysis of the participants' responses for RQ2.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings for this study confirmed those of literature reviewed in Chapter 2. One finding for RQ1 was that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN is challenging whether the role is in curriculum, instruction, or management. While the teacher's role is challenging, there is a direct correlation between the teacher's role in curriculum and knowledge retention of Head Start students, which curriculum may predict long-term academic outcomes (Heilmann et al., 2018). Likewise, the teacher's role in instructional methods is challenging and there is a need to improve the teacher's role to address the unique learning needs of all SWSN (Kauffman & Badar, 2014). As Head Start teachers' roles in the management of inclusion in classrooms are challenging, their roles may buffer against influences of curricula and increased accountability (Walter & Lippard, 2017).

A second finding for RQ1 was that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN requires resourcefulness. Head Start teachers need to be flexible to question their own understandings and assumptions about their work, about their students, and about the purpose of education (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). In exercising their flexibility, Head Start teachers can implement creative curriculum within their classrooms despite being bound by federal policy and, furthermore, remaking, reweaving, and indigenizing curriculum may be required to adequately educate SWSN (Henward et al., 2019b). Also, Head Start teachers must

improve their willingness to change, their approach to instruction, and their relationships within teaching teams in order to positively influence literacy for SWSN (Mihai et al., 2017).

A third finding for RQ1 was that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN prioritizes student learning needs. The quality of instructional interactions in Head Start classrooms depend on the effect of the teacher's role in the students' learning environment within the classroom (Kook & Greenfield, 2020). In addition, effective inclusive learning environments in the 21st century classrooms must value all students and must be individualized to meet the needs of each student for self-discovery and peer collaboration (Maghfiroh, 2017).

For RQ2, one finding was that communication is a barrier for Head Start teachers that inhibits the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN for this study. When communication is not effective, the learning environment for students to include SWSN negatively affects academic performance. Improving communication with students, teachers, and administrators within the learning environment improves the academic performance in targeted areas (Musyoka & Clark, 2017). As Head Start teachers' roles in collaborative coaching increase, the teachers use of responsive strategies will increase, as well as the improvement of the teachers' ability to communicate with students (Romano & Woods, 2017).

A second finding for RQ2 was that training is a barrier for Head Start teachers that inhibits the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN for this study. Although many Head Start teachers are dedicated and skilled, large numbers of

them do not have adequate training (Whitaker et al., 2017). Head Start teachers that receive different types of professional development report more use of recommended practices compared to teachers that do not receive professional development (Dunst et al., 2019). Head Start teachers need additional professional development in order to capitalize on the unique qualities of their students, in which, the professional development should take place in settings that are comfortable for teachers and that allow teachers to provide input in the learning needs of students (Hirsh & Hord, 2010). Also, designed, structured training provides experience that encourages student teachers to engage, teach, and support SWSN (Golmic & Hansen, 2012). Barriers to competence, such as training, affect the extent to which teachers are willing and able to implement inclusive practice for SWSN (Pit-ten-Cate et al., 2018).

A third finding for RQ2 was that resources are barriers for Head Start teachers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN for this study. Head Start teachers' acceptance of SWSN varied greatly depending on available resources for special education, such as inclusion classrooms for SWSW, which teachers that receive training have a higher acceptance for inclusion (Lee et al., 2015). Furthermore, out of the factors of workplace satisfaction, having available resources is a predictor for teacher turnover (Jeon & Wells). Lack of resources is a key barrier to operating successful inclusion programs (Shoulders & Krei, 2016).

The conceptual framework for this study was the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms. Accordingly, the model of inclusion in early childhood classrooms when employed as the conceptual framework assists in facilitating an examination of the

Head Start teachers' struggle to provide appropriate services to SWSN in inclusive classrooms. In this study, the model of inclusion assisted in capturing the struggles of the participants to perform their roles as Head Start teachers. The participants expressed their role as challenging, as well as requiring resourcefulness and the prioritizing student learning needs. Also, the model of inclusion also assisted in identifying the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. Whether communication, training, or resources, barriers inhibit the operation of inclusion programs.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to trustworthiness arose in the execution of this basic qualitative research and centered on transferability. The population for this study was limited to Head Start teachers teaching SWSN by inclusion in a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia. In addition, the small sample size was limited to 12 Head Start teachers. Also, all participants for this study had at least one year of teaching experience in a Head Start program; however, for those with only 1 year of experience, their limited experience may have presented some skewed data. Considering the limitations proposed by population, small sample size, and teaching experience, the transferability of the findings for this study may be limited based on researchers that question whether the optimal level of saturation and, thus, the assurance that further data collection and analysis were unnecessary. Specifically, the findings for this study may be viewed by researchers as only presenting descriptions of Head Start teachers teaching SWSN by inclusion in Southeast Georgia. To increase transferability would require future studies

on Head Start teachers' descriptions of their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN and on Head Start teachers' descriptions of the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN to also include Head Start teachers outside of the local Head Start program in Southwest Georgia.

I increased transferability in this study by including rich descriptions and specific details about the context of the participants' responses and transcript excerpts. I also maintained field notes to increase transferability by attesting to trustworthiness through process analysis that incorporated important information from my personal experiences in the study. The field notes and the rich descriptions and specific details about the context of the participants' responses and transcript excerpts may permit the opportunity for readers to compare to their own perceptions.

Recommendations

Further research on the topic of Head Start teachers' descriptions of inclusion with an expanded population outside of a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia and with an increased sample size is recommended. Extending the population outside of a local Head Start program in Southeast Georgia and increasing the sample size would improve the transferability of the results of the research and, also, improve the trustworthiness of the research. The results from this study showed that the participating Head Start teachers felt that their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN was challenging, requires the ability to be resourceful, and requires a focus to prioritize student learning. In addition, the results from this study showed that the participating Head Start teachers felt that communication, available training, and

available resources were barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. To obtain more insight on the results from the participants of this study, I recommend research using RQ1 and RQ2 from this study as the topics and using the findings from this study as the basis for the research questions. These future research studies may provide findings that will improve the understanding of inclusion in Head Start and data that can be used to analyze the root cause for issues encountered in the inclusive learning environment of SWSN in Head Start.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Head Start teachers' descriptions of their roles and the barriers that inhibit implementation of inclusive education for SWSN. The research of this basic qualitative research study revealed that the role of Head Start teachers in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN was challenging, required the ability to be resourceful, and required a focus to prioritize student learning needs and that that communication, available training, and available resources were barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. As related to this study, implications for positive social change may include providing valuable information for future Head Start programming, providing insight on training needed to teach SWSN in Head Start programs, advancing practice and policy development within instructional programming and delivery of services for SWSN, leading to positive social change in the delivery of inclusive education, or guiding future research.

Based on the participants' identification of challenging, resourceful, and prioritizing student learning needs as factors that affect the role of Head Start teachers and communication, available training, and available resources as barriers, I recommend additional training and professional training. The additional training and professional development should focus on providing Head Start teachers with the knowledge and skill to improve their performance in their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN. The additional training and professional development should also provide Head Start teachers with the foundation to overcome barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN. In addition to training and professional development, I recommend the inclusion of additional staff support in the classroom who are adequately trained to service SWSN and who are aware of onsite and offsite resources available for servicing SWSN. The additional staff support should improve the academic performance of SWSN in inclusive classrooms by reducing the staff to student ratio and by increasing the utilization of available resources to focus on students' individual needs.

Conclusion

The results of this basic qualitative study indicated that Head Start teachers are challenged in the role of teaching SWSN but overcome the challenges by prioritizing student learning needs and by being resourceful and that Head Start teachers extend their best effort to teach SWSN but need resources and training. Most Head Start teachers felt that they were challenged on a daily basis in while performing the duties of their role to provide preschool inclusive education services for SWSN. Likewise, most Head Start

teachers felt that the learning needs of the students must always remain a priority and that resourcefulness was a quality often shared by teachers who overcame their challenges.

With regards to barriers to teaching SWSN, most Head Start teachers realized that training and professional development were necessary in their quest to continue to improve their services to SWSN.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

Enrichment Services Program Inc. Head Start
2601 Cross Country Drive, Building C-1
Columbus, Georgia 31906

Mar xx, 2016

Dear Lawanda Lovett-Cunningham,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Head Start Teachers' Descriptions of Inclusion. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview staff. Individual participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include allowing access to employees, access to classrooms and allowing employees to participate in interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Teresa Johnson
Enrichment Services Program Inc.
Department of Early Childhood and Family Services
Head Start Director

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

<p>DATE OF INTERVIEW: LOCATION (SITE): CLASSROOM: INTERVIEWER: INTERVIEWEE: INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>Thank you for participating in this study interview. My name is Lawanda Lovett-Cunningham, the researcher, and I will be facilitating each study interview. Written permission was obtained from the Head Start director to interview up to 12 participants.</p> <p>The goal of this study interview is to answer the following research question:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">RQ1 How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">RQ2 How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN?</p> <p>Answers to the research questions may provide valuable information to future Head Start programming and may contribute to the positive social change in the delivery of inclusive education. Please note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were invited to participate in this study through work email addresses, which were supplied by the Head Start director. • An informed consent form was sent to each participant with the invitation to explain the nature of the study and the expectations for volunteering to participate. • Informed consent forms were received from participants prior to the study interview. • The guiding interview questions for this study consist of five questions for RQ1 and five questions for RQ2, for a total of ten questions. • Interview notes will be taken during the semi-structured interview to be used later to mitigate discrepancies in data collected. • Participant’s confidentiality is protected so that participants are not linked with the data and that no identifiable information is presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each participant will be assigned a number which only the researcher will know. ○ Participants geographical information, such as, the actual location of the Head Start classroom will not be made public. • Participation in this study interview is voluntary and participants may withdraw any time without repercussion. <p>Do I have permission to record the interview? Do you have any questions?</p>		
<p>INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct the interview in an unbiased manner. 2. Ask the interviewee the interview questions in the order listed. 3. Allow the interviewee adequate time to respond to question. 4. Record the interviewee’s responses as accurately as possible. 		
Research Question	Interview Question	Comment(s)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: LOCATION (SITE): CLASSROOM: INTERVIEWER: INTERVIEWEE:		
How do Head Start teachers describe their role in providing preschool inclusive education services for SWSN?	1. Tell me about how you present factual information to students. Do you face challenges in presenting factual information to students? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	2. Tell me about how you assess factual information to students. Do you face challenges when assessing factual information to students? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	3. What do you do to guide students to learn classroom and school rules? Do you face challenges in guiding students to learn classroom and school rules? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	4. What do you do to guide students to follow classroom and school rules? Do you face challenges in guiding students to follow classroom and school rules? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	5. What do you do to guide students to follow rituals in procedural learning? <i>Examples of procedural learning include learning how to ride a bicycle and learning how to play a musical instrument.</i> Do you face challenges in guiding students to follow rituals procedural learning? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	6. What do you do to guide students to follow routines in procedural learning? Do you face challenges in guiding students to follow routines in procedural learning? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	7. Tell me about how you present critical thinking to students. Do you face challenges in presenting critical thinking to students? What are the challenges? How do you overcome those challenges?	
	8. Tell me about how you promote critical thinking to students. Do you face challenges in promoting critical thinking to students? What are the challenges?	
How do Head Start teachers describe the barriers that inhibit the implementation of inclusive education strategies for SWSN?	1. Describe the challenges you have encountered when teaching factual information. How did you overcome those challenges?	
	2. Tell me about the available resources or training to teach factual information to SWSNs. What additional resources might you need to teach factual information to SWSNs? What specific training do you need to teach factual information to SWSNs.	
	3. Describe the challenges you have encountered when presenting new information. How did you overcome those challenges?	
	4. Tell me about the available resources or training to present new information to SWSNs. What additional resources might you need to present new information? What specific training do you need to present new information to SWSNs.	

DATE OF INTERVIEW:		
LOCATION (SITE):		
CLASSROOM:		
INTERVIEWER:		
INTERVIEWEE:		
	5. Describe the challenges you have encountered when teaching procedures. How did you overcome those challenges?	
	6. Tell me about the available resources or training to teach procedures to SWSNs. What additional resources might you need to teach procedures to SWSNs? What specific training do you need teach procedures to SWSNs.	
	7. Describe the challenges you have encountered when teaching critical thinking. How did you overcome those challenges?	
	8. Tell me about the available resources or training to teach critical thinking to SWSNs? What additional resources might you need to teach critical thinking? What specific training do you need to teach critical thinking to SWSNs	
Is there anything else you would like to add?		
Again, thank you for participating in this study interview.		