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Perceptions of Inclusion Factors by General Education Teachers and Administrators

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2010

BS, University of Oklahoma, 1991

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Special needs learners (SNL) underperform on state benchmark measurements despite the efforts of general education teachers to implement inclusion effectively. Using Bandura's theory of self-efficacy as a framework, the purpose of this study was to explore perceptions toward factors for implementing successful inclusion in a high performing school. Research questions explored the perceptions regarding methodology used to implement inclusion, barriers or facilitators of the implementation process, and how inclusion affects the attitude and self-efficacy of general education teachers when teaching SNL. A qualitative case study design was applied within a purposeful sample of 5 general education teachers participating in a focus group, 1 administrator respondent for a semi structured interview, and a site improvement document analysis review. Inductively coded and themed data were compared and analyzed through HyperRESEARCH computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. Findings suggest teachers and administration perceive a lack of preparation for implementing inclusion and there is a need for improved collaboration. Data from the document analysis indicated a gap in plans for improvement specific to inclusive settings. Study results can be used to inform leadership regarding PD opportunities to support general education teachers and SNL. Based on findings, 3-day PD collaboration modules between general education and special education teachers were developed. With better collaboration and strategies for implementing inclusion, SNL can improve performance in high-stakes tests to prepare for transition beyond the public school setting.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to all teachers with a passion for teaching that search incessantly for ways to reach students with special needs and to the children waiting to become something.

Acknowledgments

Above all I thank my husband, Justin, for his enduring love and belief that I am capable. You are my mentor for all things Word. You have never doubted me and for that I am grateful. I would not have completed this without you. To my children Chris, Ian, Alec, Orion, and Sam – you give me the drive to live every day to be better and do better. You are every reason that I have strength to move forward with my visions to improve society for those often ignored. I love you all so much for being my reason to try.

Mom – I wish you were here, because I did it. You knew I would. To a legend I know is real and to my greatest fan, Dad, I love you for your unwavering support. To grandma – that "someday" finally came and now we can all breathe. Thank you for sharing it with me every step of the way. To Ashly – you are my reliable sounding board and I am thankful for your wisdom.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Disabled students struggle with performance on standardized tests in reading and math (Lee, 2010; Shin et al., 2013). Teachers are held accountable for their performance as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) act increases access to standards, rigor, and assessment for special education students. With data showing that disabled students often continue to lag or fall behind in areas such as mathematics and reading (Carlson, Jenkins, Bitterman, & Keller, 2011; Lee, 2010; Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014b), districts strive to make adaptations for students. They express concern for student achievement hinging on the willingness of the teacher to assume responsibility for students' success or failure, regardless of student history, capability, or learning prowess (Baker et al., 2010; Kumar & Pavithra, 2013). As schools struggle to meet the ongoing needs of learners, more are looking to the culpability of educators.

Low performance frustration and future threats of dipping scores, potentially overpowers teachers' beliefs they can continue to be effective (Baker et al., 2010). As demographics change; however, teachers are having difficulty keeping up. Szumski and Karwowski (2012) reported the heavy bearing of lower socioeconomics increases the likelihood that students of disability are placed in inclusive classrooms more often than those with parents of higher socioeconomic status. In a district with high poverty, the effects can be overwhelming for general education teachers receiving increasing numbers of disabled learners in their classrooms. The changes in demographics and socioeconomic status that potentially affects the school population is more

rapid than the inclusive structure training necessary to competently run the classroom and manage behavior (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Fullerton & Guardino, 2010; McFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Szumski & Karwowski, 2012). The changes to testing procedures, poor scores among the subgroup, and burdening logistics creates roadblocks to smooth transitions and the implementation of effective strategies.

The 2014 removal of modified testing and the inclusion of test scores on standardized testing for students on individualized education plans (IEP) has made the difference for some traditionally higher performing schools in Oklahoma (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014a). A number of teachers who instruct special needs learners (SNL) in general education classrooms, may be at risk for changed attitudes about being able to perform effectively when teaching in inclusion settings (Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Viewpoints can develop that SNL are less capable; therefore, they are more helpless regardless of the methods used to instruct them (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Leyser, Zeiger, & Romi, 2011). Often instructional procedures fall short of what SNL need to proficiently achieve if teachers are left to their own devices (Leyser et al., 2011; McFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) stated teachers often begin with a positive attitude, but as experience is gained and teachers come into contact with the varying severity of SNL needs, perceptions of instructional efficacy wane when working with SNL.

While inclusion is the go-to for providing disabled learners with the least restrictive education environment, not all are convinced that inclusion is the method that provides special learners with what they need (Fuchs, 2010; Hwang & Evans, 2011). Heavy measures to prepare

general education teachers for working with SNL complicate the ideas of inclusion. According to Hwang and Evans (2011), one third of the teachers surveyed stated they lacked the time necessary to meet needs of SNL. Fuchs (2010) found teachers felt the lack of support and paucity of resources prevented them from effectively reaching inclusive learners. Training is also frequently not in place to implement inclusion. Results showed factors of curriculum and specialized instruction created many difficulties when establishing the inclusive environment for education (Fuchs, 2010).

Carlson et al. (2011) found special education test scores declined as students grew in age, particularly in math. Additional data suggested that teachers with higher self-efficacy increase the motivation and performance of students in academic content areas such as English and math (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). In schools declining in test scores, teachers may feel the barriers or frustrations with instructional effectiveness when creating an effective inclusion environment. Leyser et al. (2011) found that teachers of all levels scored higher in self-efficacy after receiving support through training. A problem is that not all teachers may realize the need for the process of inclusion to reach SNL; therefore, may develop antipathy if barriers remain unaddressed. One means to understanding if teachers in a traditionally high performing school are able to cope with the changing requirements for SNL is to examine perceptions toward teacher capacity during implementation and the factors that impact success in inclusion. Currently, there is a gap in data for a local district in Oklahoma documenting the perceived factors for successful implementation of inclusion and the attitudes and perceptions of the ability of general education teachers to effectively implement the process.

Implementing Inclusion

Teachers' sense of effectiveness is a commanding construct affecting all levels of experience in inclusive settings (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013). Many factors interact with the environment, making it either a successful learning context for teachers and students or a negative set of circumstances that produces arduous tasks. Without the proper factors in place, the implementation process has the potential to fail. Teachers may reach critical stages of helplessness and students may not receive the appropriate learning guaranteed under the law (Gotshall & Stefanou, 2011). A change in belief about inclusion creates defeating behaviors that manifest in the classroom (Polly et al., 2013). Consequences of these behaviors may affect performance of the student. Gotshall and Stefanou (2011) discussed the importance of adequate training for teachers so they can meet the needs of disabled students. If proper training is not provided then learned helplessness becomes the norm for students being served through inclusion.

Polly et al. (2013) examined questionnaire results from 35 teachers and 494 elementary students. Results showed a correlation between teacher beliefs and behaviors toward math curriculum paired with gains in math performance (Polly et al., 2013). Teachers who viewed the factors of math instruction with a more teacher-centered view had smaller student gains on the assessments based on curriculum (Polly et al., 2013). Educators confident and committed to a more focused instruction for students. Results suggested that the process of instruction created higher gains (Polly et al., 2013). Polly et al. argued the practices of instruction are more likely to become student-centered if teachers partake in training activities influencing the factors of belief

and methods for implementing effective math instruction. Positive applications to inclusion may be the results correlating teachers' beliefs to behaviors toward curriculum.

If teachers participate in the discovery of the necessary factors for making the inclusive setting successful for students, inclusion students' performance may benefit. Huberman, Navo, and Parrish (2012) found factors of persistence, enthusiasm, best practice instruction, and an overall sense of commitment that led to better results when employing inclusion while working with SNL in the general education classroom. Performance by teachers aligned with those possessing higher levels of preparedness when working with their students (Sharma et al., 2012). Limitations occur when teachers do not feel prepared to meet the inclusion requirements or resort to more teacher-oriented practices to stimulate student achievement (Fuchs, 2010; Polly et al., 2013).

According to Bandura (1997) and Kumar and Pavithra (2013), the construct of teaching self-efficacy refers to teachers' general perceptions that highly effective instructional skills and abilities help students learn. Those possessing high levels of self-efficacy maintain a masterful self-image when implementing programs for students (Bandura, 1997; Kumar & Pavithra, 2013). Often the understanding of the elements of a successful setting is evident through purposefully maintaining high personal achievement goals for their students and through delving deeper into instructional interventions (Kumar & Pavithra, 2013; Segall & Campbell, 2012; Sharma et al., 2012).

The notion of self-efficacy when working with students has been in the spotlight for a number of years, and many studies have explored the construct's connection to perceived

performance in the classroom for general and inclusive students (Busby, Ingram, Bowron,

Oliver, & Lyons, 2010; Loreman et al., 2013; Swan, Wolf, & Cano, 2011;). Since the emergence

of the self-efficacy theory in the 1970s, more focus has been given to understanding and

resolving potential issues attached to working in inclusion settings (Emam & Mohamed, 2011).

In current studies, attitudes toward effective inclusion for learners has been explored (Emam &

Mohamed, 2011; Leyser et al., 2011; Malinen, Savolainen, & Xu, 2012; McFarlane & Woolfson,

2013). As inclusion is accepted around the world, research increases to address the factors that

create a successful environment for teachers when teaching in the inclusive setting (Malinen et

al., 2012).

Identified in the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), the areas informing self-efficacy

are mastery, verbal and social persuasions, and emotive/physiological responses. Perceptions

related to the four domains contribute to a sense of effectiveness in the context of an instructional

setting (Kumar & Pavithra, 2013; Ryan, 2012). Paired with self-referential thinking, each area

provides opportunity for teachers to gather experiences that are environmentally reinforced and

cognitively processed to affect judgment when working with students (Todorov, Fiske, &

Prentice, 2011). If frustrating experiences within the inclusive setting lack constructive and

collaborative support and are unable to be addressed, research supports that self-efficacy, while

existing within the setting, will likely suffer (Bandura, 1977; Fuchs, 2010; Kumar & Pavithra,

2013). In the most unfortunate settings, teachers struggling with the frustrations with SNL

performance within the regular education classroom may experience barriers including failures

in goal setting or persistence in delivering effective interventions (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross,

Dookie, & Beatty, 2010; Cho & Shim, 2012; Polly et al., 2013). Additionally, teachers can become less likely to adapt instruction beyond customary procedures during a traditional instructional block. The potential result is a return to teacher-driven instruction, which research indicates is less likely to produce gains (Bruce et al., 2010; Cho & Shim, 2012; Polly et al., 2013). Experiences with low performance from inclusion students can hinder the effective implementation of the inclusion design and may affect attitudes of working with future SNL (Avramidis et al., 2000; Kumar & Pavithra, 2013; McFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). If experiences are negative, McFarlane and Woolfson (2013) stated that the likely outcome is an environment where teachers' willingness to work with SNL decreases which reduces student interaction and academic rigor.

Inclusion as a Requirement

NCLB (2001) addresses curricular access and the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement act (IDEA, 2004), places students of disability within the least-restrictive general education environment (LRE; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Placement of SNL in inclusion stresses considerable restructuring requirements for accommodations within a general education setting so that SNL do not simply experience assimilation, but are active participants in learning (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Slavin, 2009). Often without training, teachers are required to make adjustments within the organization of instruction pertaining to their general education classrooms. The disequilibrium created by additional strategies and interventions in the academic schedule offsets the sense of success that otherwise would drive the next steps for teachers (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Forlin and Chambers (2011) stated the lack of stability creates desire for additional resources. Teachers take on concerns about training and ongoing support for inclusive experiences since the role of the teacher is a critical influence on the success of inclusive education (Forlin & chambers, 2011). The effort to receive support moves teachers to look at peers and administration to fill the need.

The IDEA (2004) put into place ensured basic rights and protections for disabled students. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) was designed to attend to curricular elements within the education program while the LRE addressed environment for SNL within the general education classrooms (Kavale, 2002). In 1997, President Clinton signed IDEA (2004) amendments mandating improvement to the educational experience for learners with special needs in a LRE. The LRE serves SNL students fully with other nondisabled peers, and often this

uses the general education classroom as the support for special needs students. There is a general classroom policy overarching the inclusion process to prevent the selection of SNL for separate schooling or activity (IDEA, 2004). Fuchs (2010) stated that many advocates seek full-inclusion for all special education students that would eliminate the need for special education intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998). The focus of a full-inclusion classroom is social interaction and providing an atmosphere where labeling does not occur (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998). Others who advocate for the needs of the child prefer a heavier influence of special education services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998).

Fuchs (2010) discussed how teachers meet with the matter of part-time inclusion versus full inclusion. Often, inclusive placement is implemented in a general education setting despite concerns of educators and parents (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998). While full inclusion gains ground and the movement inches forward with some resistance, students and parents are succumbing to removal from the special education umbrella (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Historically, parents have been both accepting and reluctant to place SNL in the inclusion setting (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Grove & Fisher, 1999), but the adaptations in educational policy, and the push for more rigorous practices in the classroom keeps the setting rife with changes that are, for some, difficult to manage.

According to NCLB (2001), common curriculum is the springboard for general education performance in classrooms containing SNL. With the state benchmark standards changing to reflect rigorous requirements for all students of disability, special education learners face the challenge of performing to the proficiency levels of general education peers. According to

current amendments, special learners by default have gained pressured responsibility for the same standards of performance as the general education population. Teachers, by effect, entered into a whole new dimension of responsibility they feel is best left to others (Avramidis et al., 2000; Bangs & Frost, 2012; NCLB, 2001).

Discriminating between inclusive pedagogy, education, and practice can be difficult because inclusion remains misunderstood. The term of inclusion has eluded explicit definition, but the understanding that it is a difficult process is something that many agree upon (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Stated difficulties from past and current literature contain many of the same messages regarding teachers' needs for skills employing distinct instructional procedures and their belief that specialists would be better suited to meeting educational needs (Avramidis et al., 2000; Bangs & Frost, 2012; Forlin, 2001; Hart, Dixon, Drummond, & McIntyre, 2004; Hart, Drummond, & McIntyre, 2007; Savolainen et al., 2012).

Research connects the theme of struggle in the area of inclusion implementation in the general education classroom. One topic has recurred throughout the inception of the inclusive setting regarding how teachers struggle to meet the needs of inclusive learners and overcome the barriers that may prevent them from feeling efficacious (Berry, 2010; Fuchs, 2010; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Romano & Gibson, 2006; Sokal & Sharma, 2014). Kavale (2002) stated that there are necessary adaptations and attitudes, which remain absent. Teachers frequently do not successfully serve disabled students with an appropriate education. According to Fuchs (2010), teachers feel this way currently. Although the process of inclusion is governed by state and local administrative regulations, teachers are placed in the position of applying ill-defined practice

reforms in the classroom (Fuchs, 2010). Often, teachers find the implementation process an arduous task fraught with frustration and a sense of isolation. The struggle to find a balance between personal beliefs about ability to be effective and the requirements for meeting SNL performance is problematic (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Bangs and Frost (2012) stated teachers' views toward professional capacity with regard to inclusion leaves them discouraged that they are being asked to perform a difficult task they are not trained to carry out and their needs are not thought to be taken seriously. The requirements have the potential to affect beliefs about providing adequate inclusion implementation and instruction.

Intent of the Study

With the new grading system from the state of Oklahoma, assigned letter grades have declined since SNL state testing scores have been included in the school's overall performance report (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013b, 2014a). SNL require strategic intervention beyond the general levels of instruction. Therefore, they are placed under IEPs to accommodate learning gaps with specially designed instruction and supportive modifications to environment. The intent of the study is to support the local setting with qualitative descriptions addressing inclusion and influencing factors when implementing an inclusive process in the general education setting. The context of this case study was bound to one traditionally high performing elementary school in Oklahoma where the population includes general education teachers and administrators familiar with inclusion. The data from this study will contribute to existing research documentation regarding circumstances that occur when serving the inclusive classroom, but uniquely addresses teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy when implementing

inclusion. Results have the potential to serve the local Oklahoma school district by closing the gap between what teachers perceive about factors that affect inclusion and what barriers or facilitators they perceive contribute to successful implementation of inclusion. To better understand the inherent factors of challenges or success in the general education inclusive classroom setting, qualitative data formed in teachers' own words explored the diverse circumstances that surround serving the needs of special learners in schools affected negatively by their performance.

Definition of the Problem

District, State, and the Research

Testing results for the spring of 2014 show students as a majority in third through eighth grade failed to meet state targets in math and reading on mandated state standardized tests (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014a, 2014b). Special education students make up one area of the subgroups tested. Scores from IEP students were not included in the overall score reports until spring of 2014 because their scores were part of the modified assessment report.

In 2013, the state superintendent announced the removal of modified testing and all SNL were required to take the same tests as their general education peers (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013c). Regardless of the value-added reports (Batelle, 2015) showing some growth within the school and district, the IEP subgroup performed flatly within one elementary school that historically performed highly. Scores dropped the state school reports categorically from a B to a C, and bottom quartile performance containing IEP performance scores earned an F (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013a; 2014a).

State policy mandates that all students of disability be served inclusively unless the condition of the student cannot be accommodated in a regular education setting (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2002). Table 1 shows that in the district of study, 32,049 (79%) of the overall population of students receive services through the free and reduced lunch program (SES). The district demographics consist of 51.29% male, and 48.71% female. Of the 40,111 in the student populace, there are 1.36% Asian, 6% Native American, 8.77% multi-racial, 26.14% African American, 27.01% Caucasian, and 30.39% Hispanic, (Tulsa Public Schools, 2014; TPS). Eleven percent of the students (4,537) qualify for gifted and talented status. Students on IEPs inclusive of all ethnic groups total 6,594 (16.44%). Teachers are 19.41% male and 80.86% female (TPS, 2014). The total district population including teachers and students is 43,089.

Table 1

District Demographic Data

Students	District *n*	*District %*	*School n*	*School%*
Males	20,573	51.29	250	53.43
Females	19,538	48.71	201	44.57
Pacific Islander	128	0.32	2	0.44
Asian	546	1.36	4	0.89
American Indian	2,407	6.00	45	9.98
Multi	3,518	8.77	57	12.64
African American	10,485	26.14	57	12.64
Caucasian	10,834	27.01	237	52.55
Hispanic	12,190	30.39	49	10.86
Other	4	0.01	---	0.00
SPED	6,594	16.44	59	13.08
Gifted/Talented	4,537	11.31	49	10.86
SES	32,049	79.9	298	66.00
Teachers				
Male	570	19.14	2	6.25
Female	2,408	80.86	30	93.75
Total	**43,089**	**100%**	**940**	**100%**

Note. Adapted from "District Summary," by TPS, 2014. Retrieved from
www.tulsaschools.org/4_about_district/_documents/pdf/_school_profiles/district.pdf.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

A gap exists in local data containing information about teacher perceptions of the factors that influence successful inclusion. Notwithstanding the multitudes of literature that researches teachers' implementation of inclusion, more research may be needed for those in schools that are traditionally high performing, but are experiencing challenges in SNL proficiency on state standardized tests. The nature of this study was to allow the perspective of teachers to emerge in a process that qualitatively represents teachers' perceptions of inclusion factors. At the time of this study, no qualitative district data could be obtained regarding the perceptions of general education teachers and factors that contribute to inclusion implementation.

Evidence provided by the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT; 2013, 2014) scores through the Oklahoma State Department of Education (2013a, 2014a; TPS, 2014) grading system displays data illustrating levels of proficiency including SNL performance for the site of study. The grade card data for the state includes all schools for the district and reveals the variance between the state goals and district's failed achievement status in proficiency for content areas (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013a, 2013b; TPS, 2014). With state proficiency levels set at 70% achievement or above, the elementary school in this case study whose IEP subgroup produced score levels below proficiency across the critical areas of reading and math for third through fifth grade suffered a lower performance grade than in previous years (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014b). With all reported scores for the population

of students, the effect of IEP subgroup percentages played a detrimental role to the overall school achievement (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014a, 2014b; TPS, 2014).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

        Teacher preparation for inclusion. Dee (2011) found preservice general education elementary teachers often express inadequacy as they are asked to take on more responsibility for differentiating core content coursework for students on an IEP. Fuchs (2010) suggested barriers accompany the inclusion process. The findings echo teacher frustration that the inclusion responsibilities are too great and factors are not in place to ensure success (Fuchs 2010). Inclusion barriers such as low performance, behavior, lack of preparation, low resources, and support places high stress on teachers when attempting to manage (Fuchs, 2010). General education teachers are at risk to perceive their efforts as ineffective for SNL students leading some to the conclusion that the IEP population is best served by the special education self-contained classroom, while also feeling that inclusion is merely a disruption to the general setting and its students (Fuchs, 2010).

        Lack of an appropriate education can hinder the future prospects for special needs students. The duress that occurs from trying to provide for SNL educational needs comes from rigid requirements to implement an effective education tailored to educational needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, 1995). Goodman et al. (2011) studied records of over 67,000 disabled students in Georgia and found that the graduation rate for disabled students remained stable at a low rate of just under 30%. General education teachers experiencing pressure to increase student performance for SNL are reminded that without college and career ready skills strongly in place,

the scenario remains bleak in future job market prospects for those who perform in lower than average ranges (Batelle Memorial Institute, 2013; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Feng & Sass, 2013). The Office of Disability of Concerns (2013) indicated that due to the stringent requirements for those seeking a job, employment remains competitive regardless of the programs available for applicants with disabilities.

If teachers perceive they are more prepared and are experiencing positive results, they apply more time and effort to the instructional process and see challenges more favorably (Guo, Sawyer, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2013; Holzberger, Philip, & Kunter, 2013). Lowered self-efficacy when implementing the inclusion process potentially results in lower student response to the context and tasks associated with inclusion. As a result, teachers face the increased hazard of becoming distanced from their practice. If factors for successful implementation cannot be identified or implemented, studies show that it not only affects students that are part of the inclusive process but also affects students who may be candidates for inclusive services (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010). Pas et al. (2010) found that teachers with feelings of inadequacy more often refrain from referring students to support teams such as student services or special education. The lack of action also indicates the risk of disconnect between teacher and SNL students. The results suggest that some teachers may be perplexed regarding what to do with SNL instructionally (Pas et al., 2010).

Teacher perceptions have an impact on what new strategies are used with SNL and to what degree they will go to move a student in performance. Managing challenging students, some educators experience stress implementing evidence-based practices and will often return to

the safety of traditional methods (Jordan et al., 2009). The characteristics of inclusion, access to collaboration, and the management of behavior development influences individual perspectives with regard to teaching action in the inclusive setting (Malinen, 2012; Sharma et al., 2012). Acquiring skills to provide interventions in the inclusive classroom is only one part of what teachers require to begin building instructional confidence and reducing the frustration. They also need to believe that the methods they use effectively affect student achievement. Exploring deeply what teachers perceive to be the factors for success in developing and maintaining inclusion offers an opportunity to connect teachers and their practices successfully to students' performance.

Administration Influence on Inclusion Implementation

Kurt, Duyar, and Calik (2012) found a connection between teachers, administrators, and the transformative leadership role is important. Using a multifactor leadership questionnaire tool and the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale, Kurt et al. suggested that collective efficacy and leadership together mold a personal sense of effectiveness in teachers. Leaders serving the needs of teachers by recognizing challenges within the classroom through actively identifying areas where teachers need support, serve to generate opportunities to address perceptions and deficits. Not all administrators are capable of seeing where teachers' development is interrupted. Looking at school relationships through the socio-cognitive theory, administration and teachers interact through a mutual organizational and personal relationship to domains (Kurt et al., 2012). If leadership fails to attend to the shared sense of capacity to work with SNL, the arbitration between perceptions of mastery and the structural behaviors of teachers fails. The power of

administration to address needs for support plays a key role in changing teacher perception about their ability to serve students with special needs (Fuchs, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2012). Realizing how school administration perceives the implementation of inclusion in general education classrooms is an important part of the research presented here. Teachers must be empowered to discover what does and does not work and they must receive the support necessary to achieve success.

Inclusion Connection to Student Performance

NCLB (2001) policies hold schools and students to the same accountability for achievement. The IDEA (2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2013a) mandate requires SNL to receive general education services in the LRE as long as the disability is not so severe that alternative tests and portfolios are more appropriate as a measure of performance (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013d). For disabled students who can be served through inclusion, assessments with state determined grade-level criteria measure benchmark skills with the end goal of SNL performing at the same levels as general education peers.

Literature shows that proficiency on statewide tests is not an unrealistic goal for IEP students. Huberman et al. (2012) found that SNL spending as much as 80% of their inclusion time in a general education setting made great gains to proficiency on state testing measures in English language arts in one California school district. The study of multiple districts found that success followed well-implemented inclusion. Effectively applying inclusive practices for SNL, the districts invested in teachers by bolstering instructional approaches through support from resource teachers and providing collaborative PD (Huberman et al., 2012). Each district with

higher proficiency rates worked toward an increase in performance using a strong focus on outcomes and attending to the need for differentiation through carefully constructed intervention programs and explicit instruction (Huberman et al., 2012). Other studies on this remain elusive, but the results offer opportunities for future research.

The factors of collaboration, support, and PD appear in other studies that suggest reinforcing teachers' efforts through ongoing resources and that supporting development lays a good foundation for teacher perceptions of success with students and effective inclusion (Pas et al., 2010). School-level practices that support commitment to the inclusion process through networking leads to improved instructional practices (Huberman et al., 2012; Moolenaar, Sleegers, & Daly, 2014). Collaborative efforts increase the likelihood that student achievement will benefit (Huberman et al., 2012; Moolenaar, Sleegers, & Daly, 2014). Resources, partnerships with special education teachers, data examination, accountability, targeted training, and solidarity of strategic implementation creates a unified effort that potentially adds to the self-efficacy of teachers working with inclusive students (Berry, Daugherty, & Wieder, 2009; Griffin, Kilgore, Winn, & Otis-Wilborn, 2008; Huberman et al., 2012). Recognizing what it takes to create an effective inclusion setting is paramount to creating effective resources and support systems that underpin teacher and SNL success in the general classroom.

If the factors for successful implementation of inclusion are not identified or supported, the probability of teachers willingly approaching such a difficult task decreases (Fuchs, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2012). Teachers with a strong sense of mastery possess a higher self-efficacy, which results in greater efforts in leading students to better instructional performance (Pas et al.,

2010). Malinen et al. (2013) reported experience as a necessary factor in successfully teaching SNL. Results indicated the factor of collaboration as important to the instruction of inclusive students among Chinese, Finnish, and South African cohorts (Malinen et al., 2013). A confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the Inclusive Teacher Self-Efficacy Practices (TEIP) scale variables of teacher self-efficacy in the areas of instruction, collaboration, and managing behavior of inclusive students (Malinen et al., 2013). Results suggest that experience and collaboration is an important factor in working with inclusive students in all three countries (Malinen et al., 2013). These factors lead to a sense of mastery which aligns with Bandura's (1977) proposal that mastery is assumed to be the most durable source for teachers' belief they are capable of approaching difficult tasks (Malinen et al., 2013). Implications of the study also suggest that working with inclusive students relies heavily upon support, collaboration, and high quality experience working with SNL (Malinen, 2013).

The advantages of knowing what general education teachers believe they need to accomplish in effective inclusion settings contributes to how teachers form self-efficacy when working with SNL. Teachers who perceive the ability to competently perform a task experience less stress in the classroom. Additionally, a higher sense of ability reduces burnout, and leads to higher effectiveness serving students (Pas et al., 2010). Holzberger et al., (2014) reported satisfaction in the job leads to better instructional quality. Their cross-sectional analysis involved a longitudinal panel study using self-report measures and teacher/student ratings (Holzberger et al., 2014). Results confirm the "positive relationships between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs" and the higher levels of individual learning support for cognitive activation and classroom

management (Holzberger et al., 2014, p. 782). Results also indicated self-efficacy can become a

consequence of the educational process (Holzberger et al., 2014). Fuchs (2010) found teacher

methodology can affect the process of inclusion. Issues and common challenges such as lack of

administrative support, low interaction with special education peers, and lack of preparation

hinder the inclusion implementation that may ultimately affect self-efficacy (Fuchs, 2010).

Research data also highlights how deficiencies in self-efficacy for general education

teachers exist across multiple grade levels (Malinen et al., 2013). As inclusion increases in

popularity and policies emerge to implement successful inclusive education, school systems

worldwide find great interest in how teachers perceive their ability to master the inclusion

process (Savolained et al., 2012). In turn, they seek to explore root causes of low self-efficacy in

the inclusive setting (Savolainen at al., 2012). Savolainen et al. (2012) gathered data to answer a

question regarding inclusive education from a teacher's perception. Results from the Sentiments

Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education (SACIE) scale indicate attitudes toward SNL

services may gravitate toward neutral ratings, but further analysis shows that a more critical

stance was taken when bringing inclusion to the mainstream school (Savolainen et al., 2012).

Teachers were less likely to embrace the process fully and attitudes about the implementation

were lower due to the perceived consequences of inclusion (Savolainen et al., 2012).

Organizational systems also affect the implementation of instructional requirements.

Administration's focus on efficacy in inclusion increases the importance of support within the

classroom (Savolainen et al., 2012). Educational systems progressively desire to strengthen the

relationship between high perceptions of instructional ability within the inclusion process, and

delivery of curricular content to SNL in an attempt to transform the way teachers interact with students requiring stronger attention (Savolainen et al., 2012). Jaafari, Karami, and Soleimani (2010) confirmed in their study that organizational learning is meaningful to teacher self-efficacy. Results displayed no statistical difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers, nor was there a difference between young and old where self-efficacy was concerned (Jaafari et al., 2010). Using correlation analysis between the variables of stress and teacher efficacy, Veresova and Mala (2012) found teachers with elevated levels of self-efficacy maintain better coping mechanisms in place that lead them to reflect and seek support for strategic planning. The conclusion may be drawn that leadership within schools who bolster teachers' understanding of what the inclusive process is, how it aligns with educational goals, and how rigorous and ongoing support can ease the anxiety over inclusion implementation.

Teacher concerns regarding low performance and inclusion are not exclusively with elementary schools, but extend on into higher grades as well. Instructional success in an inclusive environment influences students' performance by increasing academic confidence; therefore, positively influencing academic achievement (Dinther, Dochy, & Segers, 2011; Guo, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010). In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy in applying differentiation for IEP learners leads to negative consequences relevant to teachers' work with their students (Holzberger et al., 2014). Current literature addresses how discovering the self-efficacy needs of teachers opens a greater opportunity for providing them with an understanding about IEP students' learning in the core contents when interacting with the academic environment (Mariano-Lapidus, 2012). The intent of this study contributes to a qualitative

understanding for how general education teachers and administrators perceive inclusion factors and how general educators' ability to work within those factors influences the phenomenon of inclusion during the process of implementation. The data from the study potentially supports the district of study's vision in providing excellence for every student, every day, through highly qualified instructional staff in every classroom.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, these terms are defined:

General education: General education refers to classrooms serving students not on an IEP placement or in a special education program (McCray & McHatton, 2011).

Inclusion: Inclusion involves educating children with disabilities within the general education setting (McCray & McHatton, 2011).

Individual education plan (IEP): An IEP is a plan for students who after diagnostic assessment are determined to be affected by a learning disability and are in need for team determined instructional modifications in content areas (Tod, Castle, & Blamires, 2012).

Least restrictive environment (LRE): The IDEA (2004) defines the least restrictive environment as:

> 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.

Professional learning committee (PLC): A professional learning committee is a team of educational professionals gathering to apply best practice collaboration to explore questions that propel work with students and others engaging in the process (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; ASCD, 2015).

Special needs learner (SNL): An SNL is a learner that qualifies for IEP status (Bakken, 2010).

Teacher self-efficacy: Teacher self-efficacy is defined as a teachers' perception or belief regarding how well they use instruction to influence a student's learning regardless of student ability (Kumar & Pavithra, 2013).

Significance

District and Classroom

District. Fuchs (2010) stated that there is an importance to validating the daily challenges teachers experience in the classroom. Student performance is one such challenge for general education teachers working with SNL. The significance of this study resides in deepening the comprehension of the perceived factors for successful inclusion and how those factors influence teachers' perceived abilities to manage implementation. Members within education potentially realize undercurrents that factor into instructional effectiveness. The ability to successfully implement inclusion depends upon understanding the factors that make it work. Teacher beliefs

about effective instruction rely upon the context of the educational setting (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009).

Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) studied the dimension of in-service education courses for teachers. Survey results demonstrated teachers' need to address beliefs and conceptualizations regarding inclusion (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). In-service training is positive, but only if multiple issues are resolved prior to embarking on training for teachers. Teacher expectations and perceptions must play a role in developing training courses designed around inclusion (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). Leaders' understanding of perceptions relevant to the factors that influence skillful inclusive instruction strengthens support for teachers. The learning environment provided by general education teachers for inclusive students influences how students achieve. Hypothetically, if frustration over low performance of SNL is present, then a sense of mastery is threatened.

Without factors for successful experiences, positive feedback through adequate interaction with others in the profession, and less than anxious settings, teachers may be left unwilling to try new methods and inclusion suffers (Guo et al., 2011; Kumar & Pavithra, 2013). Successful factors for inclusion include teacher behaviors, attributes, and attitudes toward student performance held prior to implementing inclusion. Unaddressed factors such as trained skills, administrative support, and context are documented in research to result in low self-efficacy coupled with burnout in teaching (Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, and Benson, 2010; Veresova & Mala, 2012). Understanding the contextual factors for inclusion, lays potential

groundwork for assisting administration, policy makers, trainers, and teachers in implementing an inclusive setting that helps SNL succeed in meeting necessary standards.

Classroom. Special education students in the district of study are failing to perform well on state measures as evidenced by state testing scores (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014a, 2014b; TPS, 2014). Teachers who teach in an elementary general education setting provide an umbrella of services to inclusive students (IDEA, 2004). Their efforts are required to support full equitable participation (NCLB, 2001). The frustration they feel over performance can hinder SNL instruction due to lowered self-efficacy with regard to how inclusive students can be taught to achieve proficiency.

Students of inclusion experience rigorous accountability for learning (NCLB, 2001). Since the development of self-efficacy is context specific (Bandura, 1986, 1997), reason dictates that through the social-cognitive lens a degree of effort invested is related to a teachers' perception of what contextual factors free them to be successful with innovative methods, to persevere in challenging performance scenarios, and become more willing to interact with IEP learners in a positive manner. While special education teachers lean toward a better understanding of SNL and have more positive interactions with them (Segall & Campbell, 2012), general education teachers comparatively lack confidence in working with such a challenging group. They see lack of training and knowledge of disabilities as distracting factors for inclusion. They perceive a need for receiving the support of administration, respect among colleagues, professional development (PD), and familiarity with SNL disabilities (Allison, 2012). A high sense of self-efficacy also contributes to the commitment to a well-managed classroom when

behavior issues are present (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Llorens-Gumbau & Salanova-Soria, 2014). Each dynamic leads to positive or negative practices in the classroom that potentially impact student achievement (Allison, 2012). Siegle and McCoach (2007) studied performance in math when receiving instruction from teachers with increased self-efficacy instruction. Self-efficacy of the students and posttest math outcomes were positive as compared to pretest performance (Seigle & McCoach, 2007). It stands to reason that experiences in the inclusion classroom shape attitudes toward inclusion and affects how inclusion is implemented in terms of experience and understanding. Administration support also has the potential for becoming a factor for successful inclusion settings (Allison, 2012). For teachers new to the inclusive process, administrative supervision can be directed in a manner that influences teachers' perceptions negatively or positively toward working with SNL (Allison, 2012; Dinther et al., 2013; Kurt et al., 2012). Administrators well trained in inclusion implementation are in a better position to provide supportive, collaborative work environments that aid in the effectiveness of an inclusion setting.

Guiding/Research Question

Literature suggests teachers' negative reactions to the inclusive process produces a negative set of behaviors and broadens the negative effect on inclusion (Fuchs, 2010; Malinen et al., 2012). Frustration with student performance is one factor that can lower teachers' sense of effectiveness when working with SNL (Malinen et al., 2012). Fuchs (2010) found collaboration is another factor that raises instructional self-efficacy (Malinen et al., 2012). Teachers' self-efficacy is a primary influence on developing instructional goals and objectives; therefore, they potentially increase behavior management in the instructional process.

The factors for executing successful inclusion may or may not be present, which can influence how teachers approach SNL. If teachers find the factors are not present, attitudes can affect the process (Fuchs, 2010; Holzberger et al., 2013). Teacher attitudes are an important determinant for how inclusion is implemented. Administration has influence over providing teachers with support to gain more confidence in their instruction, but it may not always accommodate the process.

A gap exists in qualitative data documenting what teachers perceive to be the greatest factors with inclusive teaching in the higher performing school setting where SNL scores merge with overall data. Based on the current literature and the research that shows inclusion is a complex process that requires supporting factors, and self-efficacy in educating inclusive SNL, the following research questions guide this study:

Research Questions

1.   What methodology is used to implement inclusion in the general education classroom?

2.   What are the barriers and facilitators of the implementation process?

3.   How does inclusion affect self-efficacy for those teaching SNL in the general education classroom?

Review of the Literature

The following databases and search engines were accessed to obtain empirical literature relating to the topic of study between the years of 2010 and 2015. Results were gathered from EBSCOhost, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Science Direct, SAGE, ProQuest, JSTOR,

and Google Scholar. The local university and professional libraries also served to support the

study. The keywords in the literature search related to the concepts of *inclusion implementation*

and opposition, teacher self-efficacy, self-efficacy and factors for inclusion, special education

collaboration with general education teachers, self-efficacy and performance of disabled

students, self-efficacy and the classroom, high performing schools and special education,

inclusion and pre-service or experienced teachers, and *successful inclusion versus unsuccessful*

inclusion. Additional literature relating to laws and policies for special education students was

also accessed using internet searches for policy documents and government websites. Boolean

operators provided connecting concepts, limited, or widened topics. Archival research and cross-

referencing was used to link studies and topics. Quantitative and qualitative studies provided the

basis for conceptual and theoretical claims. Seminal theory works located in the above

mentioned databases underpinned the guiding thoughts and research questions.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Until the 20th century, special education remained a separatist set of instructional actions

toward the disabled. In the 1970s things began to change and FAPE (IDEA, 2004) prevented

discrimination for students of disability. Over the decades, special needs students have begun to

experience inclusion with peers that are nondisabled while at the same time receiving access to

the general curriculum. In present times, the shift to inclusion has moved students of special

needs out of the primarily special education classroom and into the general setting (Zigmond,

Kloo, & Volovino, 2009). The purpose for the move is to provide social integration with

nondisabled peers and to provide management in a LRE. The belief prevails that the more

disabled students receive in socialization experience, the better the acceptance and the more normalized the SNL has the opportunity to become. The social gains associated with the inclusion are often attributed to peer interactions during learning sessions, peer tutoring, assigning roles to the SNL, creating flexible means of communicating, and other methods of reaching special learners (Farlow, 1996). However, moving SNL into general education classrooms has not gone without great debate and research to decide the optimal place for instruction. The original intent of special education was to alleviate the load that disabilities placed on teachers (Zigmond et al., 2009), but while the theory of inclusion for SNL began primarily as a social and academic experience, it has morphed into an intense set of stressors and expectations for teacher and students' performance (Fuchs, 2010).

The theories and practices of inclusion are now being called into question (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Fuchs et al., 2014; Glazzard, 2011; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Marling & Burns, 2014). Not all perceive inclusion to be the best setting for students to receive specialized instruction due to separation from the specialized intervention of special education teachers (Fuchs et al., 2014; Goodman et al., 2011). Aside from the accommodations that take time, space, and strategy, teachers meet with attitudinal barriers, issues with one-on-one teaching, administration support strains, and the process to raise students to the same "norm-related standards" (Glazzard, 2011, p. 59) as their peers.

Failure to care for SNL in a manner that is truly in the spirit of the LRE, places a heavy strain on teachers experiencing tension between what inclusion is supposed to represent and the pressures of standards for performance. The strong focus on narrowing the achievement gap

between SNL and general education students results in "compensatory and deficit approaches geared toward normalization and indeed standardization, of groups and individuals rather than the denormalization of the institutions, systems and rules which comprise education" (Glazzard, 2011, p. 59). The manner in which philosophies about inclusion are formed is "hostile to the notion of full participation" (Glazzard, 2011, p. 59). If inclusion represents a hostile environment to teachers as well as students, participation in constructive classroom experiences is impossible.

     With camps for and against inclusion, the reality is that it is a difficult practice for teachers to manage. In high performing schools, successful inclusion provides SNL with the capabilities to outperform expectations if the setting provides structure that is appropriate to meet the needs of disabled individuals (Marshak et al., 2011; Mastropieri et al., 2006; McDuffie et al., 2009). Inclusion is not applied in the same way in all educational settings, however. In-depth literature reviews of inclusion models, applied as early as kindergarten and primary grades, conclude the varying services and the manner of construction leaves a great deal of interpretation when implementing the process, so inclusion does not always reach its intended form (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011). Moreover, disabilities that at one time encompassed the physical domain have been expanded to include a broad cognitive realm. Theorists view this shift as an affront to the purpose of special education (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013).

     The reality being what it is, data suggests that without the proper factors in place, inclusion may not serve SNL appropriately and teachers potentially suffer the frustration of lower performance results while developing beliefs that they are unable to manage the task of

providing for disabled students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Fuchs, 2010; Sharma et al., 2012). This relates to the findings of Bandura (1997, 2006) that individuals have the potential to lower self-efficacy when outcomes are unsuccessful in previous attempts. The relationship of context to inclusion is paramount for teacher understanding of successful inclusion requirements and perceptions of self-efficacy when teaching students of SNL.

Self-efficacy connection. The self-efficacy theory stems from the pioneering works of Bandura (1977, 1994, 1997) and teacher efficacy research of Fuchs (2010) and Gavora (2010) who accept Bandura (1977, 1997) as a seminal authority. Bandura is the most cited theorist with regard to self-efficacy and is relied upon here due to his widespread acceptance. While others produce current research, Bandura's concepts remain the backbone of these and many other modern studies.

Self-efficacy falls under a social cognitive theory umbrella (Bandura, 1977; Fiske & Taylor, 2013) and has been studied by many since its inception. Social cognitive theory describes individual function within defined domains: cognitive and affective (emotional/physical) responses (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Each domain frames the response of an individual with regard to experience and performance in given tasks. Performance proficiency is guided by higher-order skills that are adequately self-regulated and contribute to the understanding of a phenomenon (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). In terms of education, these domains offer support or operate as the antagonist for perceived instructional expertise. The skills included are generic but are used to identify task requests, directing and coordinating actions, and setting goals and incentives to stay

engaged in stressful situations (Bandura, 2006). Bandura emphasizes that strategies developed in one sphere of activity covary in perceived efficacy.

Self-efficacy theory posits that one's capacity to perform an action effectively relies upon the feelings, perceptions, motivations, and personal philosophies of the individual through cognitive, environmental, and behavioral factors (Kumar & Pavithra, 2013). The individual becomes both a product of the environment and an influence on the environment based on motivational factors (Holzberger et al., 2014). The relationship between experiences from the past, the self-efficacy held, and experiences yet to come is contingent upon the interpretation of performance once a task is accomplished (Bandura, 1995). Goal setting and comparison to personal standards lends direction to behaviors and builds future persistence to fulfill individual goals (Bandura, 1995). Fixed traits are not cemented, but instead are malleable as an individual's gained experiences add to the construct (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Canrinus et al. (2011) stated that teachers' self-efficacy is affected by the relationship built with the experiences they already have and how they have been supported in developing their professional identity.

Four general sources of efficacy-building areas identified as influential in the ability to feel successful fall into the categories of: (a) perceptions of expertise or mastery, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) social/verbal persuasions, and (d) emotional/physiological responses (Bandura, 1977). Individuals move toward an activity assuredly only when they deem themselves proficient at controlling the stressors that otherwise causes avoidance (Bandura, 1977). In a certain situation, individuals' perceived self-efficacy affects the choice to undertake an activity; however, if inability exists, it overshadows expectations of ensuing success. It then influences

coping efforts and the amount of effort given to a task wanes (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Gavora, 2010; Kumar & Pavithra, 2013). The self-efficacy theory espouses that perceptions of effectively being able to perform a task based on past successes primarily determines the future approach to situations (Bandura, 1977, 2006). Focus on teachers' formative or underdeveloped stages offers the best opportunity to build development programs that address efficacy issues with regard to teaching special education students (Baguley et al., 2014; Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2013; Leyser et al., 2011). Building capacity with implementation of inclusive education requires understanding of the differences in individuals, environment, and response to instructional context.

The relationship between self-efficacy and the social cognitive theory allows interdependency of environment, personal beliefs, and behavior to be the stimulus for performance (Djigic, Stojiljkovic, & Doskovic, 2014). Baguley et al. (2014) stated that since personality is not static, it changes with experience. Self-efficacy in social cognitive theory suggests that mediation occurs between an individual's knowledge of the traits they possess, their personal skills, and the future actions they perform using reflections on self-performance (Baguley et al., 2014).

Self-efficacy also changes as influences bring reevaluation (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Pendergrast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011). Beliefs are processed through the lens of accomplishments, vicarious experiences where individuals witness success or failure in meaningful tasks others undertake, positive beliefs brought on by verbal persuasions of others, or emotional/physiological signals (e.g. evidence of nervousness, excitement, or complacency)

which contribute to personal judgment about capability (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Pendergrast et al., 2011). Self-efficacy is a critical instrument in behavioral change. It introduces behavior directed toward initiating success in a certain goal (Bandura, 1977).

Conceptual Link of Efficacy and Inclusion Factors

According to the conceptual framework of Proctor (1984), the efficacy of a teacher not only affects the relationship with peers but also influences interactions with students. Early research confirms the findings of current research that behaviors in the classroom are related to what the teacher perceives to be personal instructional ability and will filter views on student performance in a manner that guides them to believe students are incapable (Brophy & Good, 1970). Fuchs (2010) stated that if self-efficacy is not in place, students may not receive appropriate instruction suited to their needs because teachers' actions are paired with what they believe about their personal teaching abilities and the perceived performance levels of students. Fuchs et al. (2014) discussed conclusions that the general education setting is not conducive to the specialized learning needs for disabled students and inclusion perpetuates the stigma of low performance while increasing demands on teachers and students.

Students who are bottom 10% performers tend to continue low performance in math fractions when receiving inclusive instruction versus specialized fraction intervention (Fuchs et al., 2014). Factors making the inclusion process successful must be identified so the process can run effectively. If teachers believe they have the supporting self-efficacy due to prior successful experiences, teachers are more likely to provide the instructional facilitation resulting in positive

student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1970; Doyle, Hancock, & Kifer, 1971; Good, 1981; Palardy, 1969; Rubie-Davies et al., 2015).

If successful factors have been identified, then the inclusion process can operate in a positive manner for students. In the event that elements for effective implementation are lacking, the behavior of the teacher has the potential for a strained relationship between students and instruction (Fuchs, 2010). With regard to a student-teacher relationship, teacher expectations are often developed based on interactions and assessment (Rubie-Davies et al., 2015). Low-formed expectations from teachers create vulnerability within students' expectations of themselves and low-performance often results (Rubie-Davies et al., 2015). If teachers concentrate on students' inabilities and the instructional interactions are not eliciting high performance, teachers inadvertently communicate lowered expectations to students.

Although studies indicate that robust self-efficacy also benefits an individual, the construct influences others and contributes to a stronger collective efficacy (Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011). This study is concerned with the identification of perceived factors teachers rely upon for successful inclusion in the general education classroom and perceived individual efficacy during implementation since the teachers are self-reliant to instruct in inclusion classrooms with challenging students (Lee et al., 2011).

Review of Current Literature

Inclusion

Purpose. Special education was established to provide for the special education needs of disabled learners through specialized supports, and services. The delivery of accommodations

occurs through the LRE and brings the specialized education services to the student (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, 2015). IDEA (2004), as amended in 1997, provides law mandating LRE for SNL to prevent barriers from accessing appropriate curriculum under FAPE (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Fidelity to the law allowed schools to move students out of secluded settings into a model of inclusion within a non-disabled peer environment of the general education classroom (Fuchs, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2014; Kavale, 2002; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The enactment required the individualization of the education program so students could receive access to the general curriculum. The encompassing mandate brought adaptations to physical and social aspects of the classroom and provided opportunities for appropriate educational experiences (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The law mandates that as long as disability allows, SNL be given equal opportunity just as their general education peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). To provide the best experience for students with disabilities, the general education classroom offers the least restrictive environment to maximize social relationships with general education peers and maintains the goal of closing achievement gaps (Hannes et al., 2012; Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). The academic benefits consist of the services being brought to the child through a general education teacher rather than placing undue pressure for the child to meet the demands of the services (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Debates. With the movement to full-inclusion for many schools, great debates have opened into discussion regarding what is best for students. Discussions by researchers in the field state that inclusion is not always the best option for SNL, as an assumption is made that teachers

harbor satisfactory information, inclination, and competency regarding the needs of learners

(Baker & Zigmond, 1990). Additionally, the general education classroom is an environment

where "nothing changes and no one pays you any attention" (Zigmond, 2003, p. 196).

According to Zigmond (2003), there is in large part a failure to identify what is best for SNL.

Researchers such as Zigmond et al. (1995) and Waldron and McLeskey (1998) espoused

the necessity of a more individualized student report. The argument for individualized data

gathering for achievement report is that if the regulation specifies one place for all students then

the premise of special education instruction is not focused on the individualized needs for SNL

(Zigmond, 2003). Zigmond (2003) stated the implication for future research is to identify new

ways to design data analysis and personalize the achievement data rather than use pre and

posttest treatment group designs. Doing so would explore effects of inclusion at individual levels

for those integrated with non-disabled peers.

The current literature regarding the advantages of inclusive settings indicates students

with disabilities are meeting expectations for critical core content areas, reading and math. Using

archived data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), researchers used the numbers to perform

a comparison between students attending inclusive settings for the years 2003-2009 and

performance on statewide grade level skills assessments. Data supporting the findings indicated

the number of special education students included the general education classroom up to or more

than 80% of the academic day increased in proficiency performance in reading and math (Roden,

Borgemenke, & Holt, 2013). Huberman et al. (2012) carefully chose eight districts in California

that displayed strong academic accomplishment in special education. Interviews were conducted

with special education directors to identify factors contributing to success for students. From

those districts, four were chosen to profile and one, Sanger Unified, stood out among them all.

The study found that in four California districts with proficiently performing inclusion students,

students benefitted from the practice of general and special education teachers (Huberman et al.,

2012). Those who closely collaborated with data and strategy feedback, conducted continuous

assessment, and participated in targeted PD as a norm excelled. The efforts of the featured

district diminished the number of students necessitating the services of special education to

levels below the national standard (Huberman et al, 2012). However, as Gehrke and Cocchiarella

(2013) indicated in their studies, teachers who did not receive adequate training or administrative

support lost willingness and ability to remain efficacious while implementing inclusion. As a

result, confidence in serving SNL may lag which creates a disconnect from the instructional

service they provide.

Gehrke and Cocchiarella (2013) asked 125 preservice elementary, secondary, and special

education teachers about their perceived ability to implement inclusion successfully by using a

mixed method self-report survey. They reported that while universities provided information

about how to identify an effective inclusion process, a deficit was discovered in uniform training

providing connection to what inclusion means and how it functions. An absence of confidence in

ability to provide successful inclusion was also noted and knowledge differences about inclusion

depended on the level of teaching chosen by the participants (Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2013). The

implications of the study leaned toward understanding where pre-service teaching students were

with their knowledge of inclusion, examining the effectiveness of course content and field

experiences used to form the knowledge about inclusion, and evaluating the connection between what is taught and what is reality in districts and schools. When surveying 323 in-service teachers, researchers found that special education teachers possessed higher self-efficacy in implementing inclusion than general education teachers due to understanding of laws and having received higher levels of training regarding inclusive education (Wang et al., 2012).

General education teachers differ significantly from special education specialists regarding self-efficacy and understanding of factors that make inclusion successful (Wang et al., 2012). If inclusion is going to be implemented, then attitudes, adaptations, and support must be in place (Kavale, 2002). If the inclusion classroom is to be successful, teachers need the recognition that development of the setting is context and task-specific. Teachers must have the opportunity to identify the factors that will serve SNL and they must be able to capture the elements of the construct in a way that leaves them feeling confident in strategies that will work with their students (Sharma et al., 2012).

Teachers' Attitudes and Efficacy in Implementing Inclusion

Teachers' attitudes generally rate positively when approaching the concept of inclusion, but over time and with experience they find that the mounting misunderstanding of how to provide for SNL taints the teacher self-efficacy within the inclusion process (McFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) reported through a survey used to gather teachers' perceptions about in-service training pertaining to inclusion that attitudes are significant as predictors of the successful or doomed implementation of inclusion. Of equal importance are the concerns that teachers have about inclusion which contributes to their failed

willingness to use the process despite the positive attitudes held toward the theory of inclusion (Fuchs, 2010; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). One possible barrier to fulfilling the process of inclusion is teacher perception of the effect of inclusion on other students in the classroom. Using the theory of planned behavior, McFarlane and Woolfson (2013) examined the relationship between teacher attitude and actions toward students with social, emotional, and difficulties with behavior. Questionnaires revealed that in-service training played a role in more positive feelings toward inclusion but more experience in the profession interrupted the willingness to work with the students. Results also showed that teacher perception of leadership expectations predicted teacher behaviors. The results suggest that administration potentially plays a pivotal role in how teachers embrace inclusion.

Administration and Inclusion

Leadership and support is one of the needs that influences schools when implementing inclusion. Support comes from supplying teachers with the identified components of how they best accommodate the process. Fuchs (2010) provided qualitative analysis of codes and themes in a study focused on inclusion and teachers' needs. Focus groups and interviews yielded results from teachers who identified they need time to collaborate, receive more special education involvement, receive time to prepare for instruction, and receive training. Resources were another concern along with administrative support. In general teachers favored the idea of inclusion and the potential benefits it can provide, but were against the inclusion process when applied to their classrooms due to the high demand and stressors that come with the program. Avramadis et al. (2000) found over a decade ago in a questionnaire reflecting "personal and

situational variables" (p. 282) that participants possessed a lack of confidence to implement

inclusion and meet the needs of the IEP subgroup. Moreover, the researchers found that

depending on the varying degree of the disability significantly affects attitudes toward

integration with non-disabled peers. If general education teachers receive increasing support

through administration's acknowledgment of the barriers experienced in the inclusion classroom

from day to day, the actions of providing them with what they need potentially raises self-

efficacy and attitudes positively toward the inclusion process.

Inclusion and Teacher Performance

Inclusion implies the right to participation and equal achievement (Nichols & Sheffield,

2014). Many teachers fail to make changes in the school culture supporting students with special

needs (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Malinin et al., 2013). Evidence suggests that fewer teachers

have detailed training with working with SNL. Aside from the usual paucity of supplies,

curriculum, and various tools, teachers often run inclusive classrooms with an unknown deficit in

delivering adequate instruction which may result in inflated self-efficacy ultimately resulting in

failure to maintain fidelity of best practices (Anderson, 2011; Bruce et al., 2010; Kosko &

Wilkins, 2009). Kettler and Albers (2013) posited that the use of best practice produces

longitudinal effects for special education students when teachers receive support in solidifying

performance (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Qualitative studies discuss the need for

teachers to receive support through training to positively influence teaching by alleviating stress

and introducing them to more resources (Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2011). Best

practices result from proper identification of effective implementation factors and mastery in

delivering content to IEP students; therefore, the subject of understanding what teachers believe are important elements in inclusive classrooms requires attention.

Programs are available to assist teachers with difficult and challenging tasks when instructing in inclusion. The caveat to using programs for improving performance is that the programs often layer each other, and teachers potentially receive no support or practice in using them; so confusion results with little achievement for students and with low ratings of manageability from teachers (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Jones et al., 2009). Inclusive students benefit from teachers confident in their ability to deliver differentiated content. Since studies show that SNL students who have teachers with confidence in their self-efficacy gain assurance in their own academic abilities, and perform better, acknowledging the value of self-efficacy in the inclusion teaching setting cannot be overlooked (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Yusuf, 2011).

Educators just entering the classroom with a lack of calibration in their mastery of delivering content knowledge tend to overestimate their abilities, thus producing a negative effect of belief when evidence of low performance emerges. Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) found exposure to a new teaching strategy reduced self-efficacy in 50% of their four treatment groups. Teachers aware of the new strategy that improved student performance elicited a lowered sense of self-efficacy and entered a personal reassessment of what good teaching meant to them. The new standard became what the intervention could do for the students, and they took on feelings of inadequacy that registered stronger than before the treatment of the study. This is problematic when a general education teacher comes to rely upon standard

interventions and does not look to the empowerment of setting up the context or tasks to make inclusion successful. Tschannen-Moran and McMaster also found that PD through administering implementation strategies provided teachers with more experiential support and increased implementation when new experiences received follow-up assistance.

Research indicates confidence of teachers increases when they contribute to a motivated exploration of methods relevant to the inclusive environment, which districts may ignore (Guo, Conner, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012; Huberman et al., 2012). Kutash et al. (2009) stated that the more experience gained with methods related to special education instruction for students of inclusion, the better the achievement result. When teachers do not gain experiences first hand, they gather a sense of vicarious accomplishment collaboratively from peers. Witnessing success triggers a connection between the onlooker and the activities performed by another as actions are compared, analyzed, and accepted as experience. Self-efficacy rises when the onlooker believes the task to be personal in similarities. The benefit of this facet of self-efficacy is that a positive influence for those uncertain about their abilities raises perception of ability. As Bandura (1997) points out in his work; however, the vicarious experience is double-edged depending on how the model for the experience handles the outcome of the experience contribution.

Martin and Shapiro (2011) examined teachers' evaluations regarding student performance compared to personal prediction. Findings demonstrate that judgment alone cannot sufficiently determine student risk factors and instructional needs (Begeny, Krouse, Brown, & Mann, 2011). Many teachers ultimately rely on personal predictive rating measures as indicators

of mastery which produces more errors than employing evidence based methods of instruction or data-based decision making for individual students (Kettler, & Albers, 2013; Huberman et al., 2012). Multiple commitments in a classroom leads to inadequacies in teacher education about how to approach SNL. The results of research show that teachers are left to struggle with all their instructional responsibilities. PD often intervenes, but Lee et al. (2011) stated the *ad hoc* one-stop method proves inconsistent and incongruent.

The importance of modeling cannot be ruled out when considering vicarious experiences as a contributor to effective inclusion. Attempts to develop teachers in a system that is classified and separated for general education teachers is harmful because it fails to merge teacher education systems. Students are often perceived to be more disabled and less capable as students with varying needs when an effective example is not available (Young, 2011). The result is that general education teachers inadvertently communicate to students they are a different type of pupil than others and attitudes for inclusion decline (Young, 2011). Research supports providing teachers with PD that provides skill-growth in task-focused experiences through modeling and collaboration to increase mastery efficacy (Hughes & Chen, 2011). As teachers increase belief they can implement inclusion, student-teacher relationships achieve higher quality. The potential result is that students engage in tasks with more effort.

Movkebaieva, Oralkanova, and Uaidullakyzy's (2013) findings suggest that the presence of inclusion in education presents a major difficulty for normally developed children. School based practices can make difference for teachers and students if school-based factorial effects or practices that are influencing implementation. Robinson and Babo (2014) studied the outcome of

general education students in an inclusive setting for two schools. Obtaining data through regression and ANCOVA, differences were examined from both cohorts. Findings suggested that the school showing lower growth among the cohort was likely due to violation of fidelity of process implementation for inclusion. The presumption drawn from the data supports the individual school factors might be involved and administration has the task of optimizing the inclusion process.

Moreover, teachers do not possess the most basic mastery provisions or principles of inclusion due to lack of information on the subject (Movkebaieva et al., 2013). Feng and Sass (2013) noted a void exists with regard to the effect of teacher development experience, and achievement for students with disabilities. Schools providing teachers with support in a format that allows reflection and collaboration produce higher self-efficacy gains and special education student proficiency achievement (Huberman et al, 2010).

A relationship exists between the supports that teachers provide for inclusive students and their motivation to learn (Lamport & Carpenter-Ware, 2012). The underpinning focus for meeting learners' psychological needs is the emphasis on student-teacher relationships and providing verbal discourse that is encouraging with regard to completing tasks that pupils perceive to be too difficult or impossible. Katz, Kaplan, and Gueta (2009) used self-determination theory as a framework for a cross-sectional investigation detected the teachers' importance to supporting the psychological needs of students. Teachers' influence on motivation for completing homework is important for students who express higher needs in the classroom. The end goal is more about providing a positive environment where the teacher is connected to

the student and provides positive verbal persuasions to dispel student feelings of failure which affects motivation and achievement (Hardre & Sullivan, 2009).

Current research data displays a need to optimize teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion (Emam & Mohamed, 2011). Teachers communicate attitudes through verbalizations, and a negative environment fosters a sense of failure in students, particularly those already struggling. Students prefer not to reveal disabilities. When SNL encounter challenges, they face the dilemma of general education teachers verbally disclosing their struggles which research shows to result in the compromise of academic identity (Joet, Usher, & Bressoux, 2011; Riddell & Weedon, 2014). Students receiving evaluative feedback alter their confidence levels. The younger the student is developmentally, the more impressionable. Negative comments from trusted adults damage self-efficacy; however, if verbal feedback is tailored to the developmental skills of the student, self-efficacy rises (Joet et al., 2011). Great care must be given to the messages sent with regard to student abilities. Joet et al. (2011) discussed how the distribution of positive input primarily goes toward boys and girls receive less, so the focus of positive reinforcement must be carefully examined to maintain equality of teacher feedback. The imbalance of rigor for all students contributes to compounding issues already present in inclusive settings. Sincere praise focusing on effort rather than the ability of the student helps to redirect mental resources to build skills rather than cultivating self-doubt. In reference to teachers and their development for teaching, Tschannen-Moran and Johnson, (2010) found that teachers with a stronger sense of ability while working within an instructionally conducive environment were able to feel more effective in providing students with effective

education. The teaching perception is affected by factors, however. Results suggest that if a teacher perceives ability to deliver instruction because of the strength of one factor (e.g. classroom management), the ability to deliver instruction while influenced by other failing factors (e.g. student engagement or best practices in reading) diminishes the perception that the delivery is effective so the "interplay of these important dimensions of teaching needs to be better understood" (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2010, p. 760). The context experienced by the teacher affects the development and maintenance of beliefs about teaching capability. The interplay of the factors shapes the climate of the setting (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011).

Interactions in the inclusive classroom bring on cognitive judgments based on affective and cognitive information, such as physiological responses, motivational issues, and social interaction dilemmas (Adeniyi, Fakolade, & Tella, 2010; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Sebastian, 2013). The emotional dimension affecting efficacy perceptions is critical in teaching regardless of the educational setting. Emotional influences play an extensive role in developing self-efficacy. The point of information coming from the emotional and physiological input controls the judgments of instruction (Sarkhosh & Rezaee, 2014). Vermeulen, Denessen, and Knoors (2012) stressed the effect of the emotional dimension within the inclusive setting. Findings suggest that with more requirements to differentiate lessons for SNL, teachers become more hostile toward the inclusive setting due to the frustration and anger created by the demands. Motivation to move forward digresses and teachers move into avoidance from situations possessing the potential for causing exhaustion, and other physiological responses such as raising breathing rates, digestion issues, high blood pressure, and irritation leading to the emotional

feelings of helplessness (Veresova & Mala, 2012). Veresova and Mala (2012) discovered that teachers with coping mechanisms maintained higher perception of ability to complete difficult tasks effectively. Stress that is resolved through coping techniques that are proactive, reflective, or strategic, results in a better physiological well-being state, somatic presence and social interaction.

Implications

Possible directions for this study are rooted in providing collaboration and PD in a manner that is not costly to the district, but utilizes its best assets within the special education domain. As teachers identify the influences on self-efficacy when instructing inclusive classrooms, the district may target the highest needs through PD which means firmly established PLCs, higher collaboration between general and special education, and concurrent PD modules geared strictly to address needs. Based on anticipated findings of this study, allotted time segments for interdepartmental partnerships between general education and special education teachers could be sectioned in before school or mid-week plan time PLCs to discuss data of inclusive students and specific strategies geared toward instructing SNL (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). PD that is provided during staff gatherings, or as an afterschool monthly workshop at school sites by the special education department might detail solutions to the misunderstandings that studies show so often occur in inclusion. To bolster the inclusion process in the general education classroom, ongoing and targeted workshops detailing evidence-based practices and inclusion models for delivery may be important in enhancing other factors identified by teachers. Carter, Prater, Jackson, and Marchent (2009) used completed interviews and forms relating to a

distinct model for collaboration. The findings identified factors that influenced the collaboration experience. Teachers' varying perceptions about disabilities relates the main barriers with collaboration for disabled students. Another barrier is the dissent in views of what disability means. Using a model focusing on curriculum, rules, instruction, materials, and environment (CRIME; Carter et al., 2009) in training for collaboration efforts may be one way teachers of general education and special education can work together to implement effective structures and strategies for SNL.

Supporting Implications

Implications for future support involve developing PD modules with components aimed at creating a common understanding of inclusion among general education teachers, special education teachers, and leadership. The emphasis is on the collaborative process. Using PD modules in a minimum 3-day workshop, teachers will receive training curriculum and materials including clear goals and learning objectives to reach a successful inclusion implementation within the boundaries of a collaborative model focusing on factors within CRIME (Prater, 2003). The model will focus on guiding teachers through collaborative action planning for the inclusive setting. Scaffolding content through protocols, power point presentations, technological tools, and following an implementation guideline for the training, teachers will receive hour-by-hour detailed learning designed to address areas of need based on findings of the study. An evaluative component at the end of the PD will guide the next steps to the planning process for further training opportunities.

Once trained, this model can be particularly effective even when administration is distanced from the inclusion process. However, the model relies upon teachers' fidelity to the collaboration process. Providing a PD collaboration framework such as CRIME (Prater, 2003) teachers learn to operate in a structured model for inclusion implementation using instructional methods that are specific within evidence-based practices that are intentionally taught and supported through follow-up development with special education teachers. Structured collaboration training will help general education teachers produce the largest results possible (Carter et al., 2009; Forness, 2001).

Districts throughout the United States have shown that providing the necessary time and effort to raise up general education teachers in response to their concerns in implementing inclusion works when implemented in a format that is consistent, targeted, and reflective (Huberman et al., 2012). Since there currently is no specific system-wide procedure for addressing general education inclusion support, designing a plan for addressing teacher identified factors for effective inclusion may enhance the inclusion process and increase effectiveness for teachers and heighten student performance within the inclusion model.

Summary

Inclusion is becoming the norm for educating students with disabilities, and due to enacted laws, such as NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004); the general education classroom provides the setting. Performance results of inclusive students have resulted in unsatisfactory ratings, and scores are currently included with performance of general education peers, which penalizes the district of study on state proficiency measurements. Inclusion is a difficult process and is hard

to manage unless factors contributing to the success of the process are known. Identifying factors of successful inclusion promotes a successful implementation in general education settings and clarifies general education teachers' role within the context. Researchers stress that teacher perception of self-efficacy implementing the process is important (Emam & Mohamed, 2011; Fuchs, 2010; Tchannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Administration has the potential to play a significant role in helping teachers obtain confidence in their teaching practices. Leaders who are aware of the components of successful inclusion are in a position to give teachers what they need to provide SNL with the appropriate education that the law allows.

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore, in depth, what teachers perceive to be the factors for successful implementation of inclusion and the perception of ability to implement the process. The study sought to determine administrative perception of support required to for inclusion and how administration determines factors important to the setting. In the remaining sections, this paper will discuss methodology for the study, project recommendations including timetable and implementation details, and reflections and conclusions addressing potential impact for social change.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The case study was chosen to explore the issue of factors for successful inclusion and how general education teachers in one elementary school perceive ability and self-efficacy implementing the process. In a case study, multiple perspectives may emerge when documenting the dynamics of inclusion and the flexibility of the case study allows the appropriate process of study needed to understand the context, perceptions, and the real-life setting from a participant's view (Simons, 2009). To obtain understanding of the significance of the factors involved with implementing inclusion in a general education classroom, this qualitative case study employed the use of a focus group, semistructured interview, and document review as the appropriate form for gathering data.

The focus group and semistructured interview process of data collection allowed the participants to remain in control of the knowledge of what inclusion means and the significance of how it works within the bounded system of the school and its operation. The approach gave participants the opportunity to express values, perceptions, and attitudes about an issue in a way that was emergent. The qualitative aspect of emergence in the focus group and interview provided the most precise data about the experiences of inclusion within the research setting.

Through the sharing of information, participants offered experienced perspectives into the issue in a way that is current and relates to the context of the problem. Document review allowed the identification of trends and informational connections to the data gathered through

the focus group and interview. The qualitative link to other cases and contexts was a valuable contribution to practice and knowledge of the case.

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) and Savolainen et al. (2012) agreed that the qualitative aspect of study is largely neglected and is a very necessary component in educational studies. The richness of the descriptions is foundational to understanding specifics of teacher experiences. The method of qualitative case study chosen for this research allows refining of the qualitative process. To optimize the "level of specificity that corresponds to the task being assessed" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 240), the case study offers the opportunity to bring more description to the topic of inclusion while reviewing multiple data sources to comprehend the many facets of a phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This case study used the paradigm of constructivism which functions within the relationship between researcher and participant while allowing the participants freedom to share their story from a personal reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The use of the case study qualitative research design offered the opportunity to search for meaning and understanding of a phenomenon within a bounded system of a phenomenological context using the researcher as the chief tool in collecting and analyzing data through guiding research questions (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The result of the case study produced an artifact deeply rich in its description (Merriam, 2009). For this study's purpose, using qualitative data in a manner to describe a central phenomenon in the subjects' own words provided a powerful view into the subject of study. The qualitative case study additionally allowed for exploring contextual situations that are relevant to the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009).

Appropriate to the study, an instrumental qualitative case study design was used to inquire and investigate through "field oriented research" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40), giving "insight into an issue thus facilitating an understanding" of a phenomenon (p. 48). Yin (2014) posited that the case study is valuable because it offers multiple points of data review. A variety of data gathering methods provide more than one source of evidence. Qualitative methods use triangulation to provide an advantage. Multiple points of data review in this study served to understand the complexity of the case as themes emerged. The finalized description produced an in-depth analysis of a case rather than the mere essence of a phenomenon. The strength of the qualitative case study manifests as it seeks to answer the questions of "how" and "why" rather than just "what" about the experience.

The topic of study required a narrative depth that is not available in a quantitative methodology. Bypassing the quantitative aspect allowed me to clarify boundaries that otherwise might be elusive. The quantitative methodology characteristically focuses on a "logical progression of stages or tasks" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 214), whereas the qualitative "research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 214). With the qualitative approach, the focus remained on the specific unit of analysis--the case itself rather than the methods used to analyze (Willig, 2008).

Using a qualitative design involved the method of sampling, interviews, and coding to determine themes that were analyzed to describe the phenomenon. Studies have stated that the possibility of collecting data from all members of a target population is unrealistic and that qualitative research gathers a subset for a given inquiry in research (Oopong, 2013). Oopong

(2013) argued "the aims of a particular research as well as the features of the study population influence the decision of which individuals and the number of individuals to select for a given research enquiry" (p. 203). The selection of participants in this study was purposeful to the focus group and administrative interview; therefore, it required a smaller subset of subjects. The participants were also undergoing unique changes in the elementary school setting with high performance history affected by a state mandated IEP subgroup on testing scores (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013b, 2013c). To raise the external validity and the generalizability of results, a broader sample size consisting of subjects from other similar schools and grade levels should be considered to address future research findings. The use of interviews in this case study was a caution to me in that they carried potential to only be considered more as a verbal report due to the possibility of poor recall or poor articulation (Yin, 2003). Providing interviewees with questions prior to the interview period offered a chance for subjects' advance reflections and thorough delving into the topic.

Coding and theming also carried limitations. The flexibility of the analysis process created the potential for focusing on too many variables in the data. Maintaining the consistency of data also posed a potential threat when analyzing individual responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An organized system of recording codes and themes was used to control data findings in a manner consistent with the guiding research questions.

While all forms of research should be concerned with these points, qualitative research presents a challenge with subjectivity through a reflective process. Great caution should be applied to ensure the success of the study and the integrity of data management (Merriam, 2009).

The case study chosen for this research focused on an issue that used a bounded case to illustrate the concern through multiple participants who might be influenced by self-efficacy factors that potentially impede practice. The study sought to identify themes about how teachers may be affected rather than what they merely experience.

Qualitative Research Design and Case Study Approach

This study's purpose was to gather information from teachers and administrators to identify what they perceived to be the most influential factors relating to self-efficacy when educating the inclusive student. The qualitative case study design was chosen for its strengths in providing inductive deep explorations into a phenomenon resulting in a comprehensive examination of the guiding questions for the study (Creswell, 2009). The design also removed a wide overview of an experience, and instead created themes stemming from how perceptions contribute to a teaching practice in context.

The focus groups, interview, and document analysis used lent to "the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (Yin, 2003, p. 15) and were "not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone, but a comprehensive research strategy" (Yin, 2003, p. 15). The events and the perceptions at the heart of the study had been rapidly changing which brings a contextual condition to the study and deeper relevance to the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This study used multiple sources of data and description of case-based themes within a bounded system.

Research Setting

The general education population of teachers from which the participants were selected work in one elementary school in Northeast Oklahoma. The school is in a suburban setting and served 451 students at the time the study was carried out (TPS; 2014). This qualitative case study involved one elementary school within the district of study whose demographics continued to change through redistricting and the mobility of families in the area. The school houses elementary status students from prekindergarten through fifth grade. All grades except prekindergarten are tested through district or state standardized tests. The school was chosen for its status as a traditionally high performing elementary school (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014a, 2015). Elementary has received testing focus within the district for 2 years, and third grade is under a retention law imposed by the state which targets low testing scores regardless of special education scores (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2015b). Performance reduced the effectiveness scoring for the school (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2015a).

Participants

Sampling. The sampling for the case study was purposeful. Purposeful sampling was important to increase the study quality and trustworthiness (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Participants were chosen based on best fit criteria as general education teachers in a traditionally high performing school implementing inclusion (Creswell, 2012). Sampling for the focus group discussion contained participants from all 20 general education teaching staff. Only five responded and signed consent forms. The small number of participants allowed a deeper inquiry

into the research questions. Special education teachers were not considered as participants and were considered delimitations for the study. Within the inclusion model, the general education cohort chosen was responsible for implementing inclusion without certification in special education. Identifying the factors that work in the general education setting was the bounded context for the case study and the general education perspective was solely sought. The population for sampling in administration consisted of two administration members from the school engaged with teachers and SNL in an inclusive classroom. The administrators were chosen for semistructured interviews. Only one was able to contribute to the study. Teachers for the focus group had direct experience with the required inclusion for the general education classroom and were purposefully invited to participate.

For administration, the semistructure interview was a better fit for gathering data. The semistructured interview was constructed to allow the respondent the opportunity to reply thoroughly and comprehensively through guided discourse. The aim of the semistructured interview was to provide fluid questions specific to the individual so the meaning of the respondent was correctly identified (Yin, 2003, 2014). The focus group and interview were recorded and transcribed by dictation software and were also taped by voice activated recording as a backup in the event of software failure. Once the focus group and administrative data were collected, a document analysis was added to triangulate with the participant data.

Access

Access to participants was provided with permission from the principal of the school and individual teachers voluntarily participating in the focus group (Appendix E). Two consent forms

were developed for administrative participants and general education participants respectively

(see Appendix D). Prior to collecting data, each participant was required to sign an informed

consent form (Creswell, 2009). All participants were asked to respect the confidentiality of

information shared by fellow focus group members before and after the study. Confidentiality

was protected in the focus group translations and/or interview notes to protect individual

contributions to the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). All information was kept confidential and

stored on password-protected devices and in locked containers where hard copies of documents

such as translation notes were required.

In an effort to maintain a researcher-participant relationship, securing agreement was the

first step. Describing the intent of the study and providing a guarantee of confidentiality

increased the level of trust needed to gain access to the subjects. Establishing a code of conduct

through the consent form acted as a contract between me and the participants and ensured a

nonthreatening course of action to which I adhered (Carlson, 2010). The focus was on

sustainability of trust.

Data Collection

A qualitative case study approach was used to explore experiences within a phenomenon.

Data were collected to gather deep qualitative insights not able to be obtained with surveys. Data

were also gathered to investigate for varying layers of reality as perceived by those experiencing

the phenomenon of inclusion in general education classrooms. The focus was on fundamental

explanations from personal perceptions of a phenomenon within the participants' natural setting

(Vissak, 2010). Teachers consenting to voluntary participation were involved in a focus group to

discuss their perceptions about factors affecting their inclusion experiences. Participants in this study were invited via a letter of invitation, and times were arranged via personal email, text, or in a face-to-face interaction as led by the participant.

Data collection employed three types of data gathering to bring multiple points of data to analysis. Using multiple points of data provided sufficient information to answer research questions. The use of teacher focus groups, administrative interviews, and document analysis allowed the researcher to gather data on a complex and dynamic issue while exploring a real-life event using flexibility to explain events from multiple perspectives (Vissak, 2010).

Focus group. Focus groups, interviews, and document analysis are common to the qualitative methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). A dynamic group discussion was used to collect information from the focus group (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Twenty invitations to general education teachers were offered. Five general education teachers responded and signed consent forms. Focus group activities and interviews took place outside of contract hours and were arranged 1 week before data gathering. The setting was familiar to the participants, which reduced risk for anxiety that could arise from a sense of exposure or loss of confidentiality. The data collected were appropriate in meeting the purpose of the study by producing quality in depth descriptions of the phenomenon of study within the bounded context.

Self-administered focus group questions (see Appendix B) consisted of inquiries regarding teachers' perceptions, feelings, or attitudes about factors in inclusion. The purpose of using the group setting in lieu of a strict individual interview was to "allow observations of how

and why individuals accept and reject other ideas…and gather comprising individuals who do

share some common identity and goals as well as a common concrete situation" (Stewart &

Shamdasani, 2015, pp. 10-11). Individuals were allowed to respond freely and openly as they

desired. All participants were offered chances to clarify and build upon the topic by adding

thoughts as they arose. The focus group discussion was translated using speech translation

software and recorded by audio recorder as a backup. Notes were taken as an added caution

when points of interest or emphasis arose and were reviewed later during transcription and data

comparison. Focus group interaction was anticipated to last for approximately one hour and met

the expectation.

Interviews. The structure of an organization may often lend variance to vantage points

particularly with regard to how administration perceives factors with inclusion. The tasks and

values of leadership can be far removed from the direct contact with students in an educational

setting on a daily basis. For the purpose for this study, invitations were provided to two

administrative personnel who maintained contact with teachers and inclusion policies on a

regular basis. Only one respondent was able to sign a consent form. The confirmed participant,

the principal, was engaged in a voluntary semistructured interview at agreed upon times outside

school contract hours.

The administrator was asked similar open-ended research questions posed to focus group

participants in order to obtain perception data on the same guiding research topics. Clarifying

questions allowed me and the participant to maintain mutual understanding of context and

intention of responses. Data were captured with Nuance (2015) speech recognition software and

recorded on audio recorder in the event software failed. As an additional precaution, notes were taken during the interview process to capture key phrases that were emphasized by the interviewee and were reviewed in the transcription and comparison phase.

Document analysis. A document analysis of the site plan for improvement (TPS; 2015) provided a third method of data review. The purpose for this type of analysis was to provide significance to the topic of study. Document analysis was used for combining evidence to establish credibility, identify themes through deep coding, and to abate bias. The document analysis provided me with an opportunity to search for substantiation and merging of data to reduce potential for bias that occurs with a single source or method (Patton, 1990).

Data Tracking

Data tracking was an important part of protection for participants. Transcripts, coding tables, documents, audio files, and personal reflection notes generated for interpretation were stored on a personal computer that was passcode protected. Individual jump-drives, hard copies of documents, consent forms, and recordings were kept in a mounted and padlocked safe box assigned only for the purpose of holding research material related to this study.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the district is to travel and make contact with teachers who request assistance in their practice. The contact with schools is weekly or as needed. Certifications include a B.S.Ed., M.S. Ed., and a certification in Early Childhood. Experience in teaching is just over 8 years in general education with 1 year in special education. The current role as staff developer and coach did not interfere with the data collection within the study. A clear separation between

coach and researcher was articulated and the opportunity for participants' to opt out was offered should individuals perceive the role would pose risk to the safety of the study by compromising researcher-subject relationship.

      Interactions. Once permission was granted by administration, teachers and leadership received invitations to the study and were allowed a moment of questioning and think time before follow up. All interactions with teachers were from personal email accounts, face-to-face interactions, or texting from personal numbers. No school time was used and instruction was not interrupted. Prior to the study, all participants were asked to sign a form of consent. An opportunity for asking questions before signing was allowed and opt out was carefully explained as an option at any time during the study. Of those that responded, none withdrew.

Data Analysis

      Data were collected and analyzed by constant comparison. Speech-to-text software was used to capture the discussions and an audio recorder was used as support in the event software failed or clarity was needed for items unable to be electronically transcribed. Focus group and interview discussions were transcribed into text-based documents immediately after interactions. Once transcriptions were complete, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software was used to facilitate the analysis of common statements, themes, words, and phrases. Analysis of site plan documents was conducted to identify trends and associations to the transcribed data. A part of the procedure involved "reading and re-reading data to search for and identify emerging themes in the constant search for understanding and the meaning of the data" (Burnard, Gill, Steward, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p. 431). An inductive analysis approach identified themes

within the data. This approach is common within qualitative studies where there is no predetermined structure imposed on the analysis process (Burnard et al., 2008). While the approach is time-consuming, it is comprehensive. The inductive approach involved collection of theme from the text, producing further exploration and deep interpretation to develop. Constant comparison with cross-examination of multiple data sources allowed me to confirm themes or modify them as further details were identified.

Three primary procedures emerged during the analysis process: transcription, coding, and interpretation. Once transcriptions were processed, open coding began with critical text examination and contemplation of the meanings within the text. Notes written during the focus group and interview summed up some elements with statements or words. Areas of off-topic discussion were withdrawn from the analysis due to lack of relevancy. A second pass over the data reduced the number of classifications by crossing through all of the duplicates. During the third review, connected categories were identified, diminished, and grouped together. Lastly, data that belonged to each category were divided by subject. Once saturation was reached, the resulting organization of data allowed the report of findings to be easily written (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

Focus group data and interview transcripts remained confidential to protect participant contributions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Data were only viewed and analyzed by myself. Confidentiality allowed greater amounts of data to be gathered for more thorough results. Analyzing any commonalities or discrepancies in themes between teachers and leaders afforded me the opportunity to comprehensively explore the phenomenon of inclusion from both sides.

Separate questions investigating the same categories for the administrative semistructured

interview were adapted from focus group guiding questions (see Appendix C). No requests for

extension from the participants occurred. Interview time with administration was anticipated to

last no more than 45 minutes and did not require an extension.

Evidence of Quality

Triangulation

The use of varying methods gives respective benefits. Data supportive to explaining

attitudes and actions of the participants in a group originate from multiple sources. Numerous

qualitative results were obtained and analyzed using emerging themes to represent conceptual

relationships in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To provide saturation, triangulation of

three sources of data in the form of focus group transcriptions/translations, administrative

interview transcripts, and site plan documents elucidating the larger context were used for

analysis. The purpose of triangulation was to obtain a more accurate validation of qualitative

research through use of multiple data points. The method of triangulation increases the

trustworthiness of the interpretations resulting from multiple analyses of data by using a number

of participants such as teachers and administrators in a setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using

varying methods counterweighs the boundaries presented by single analysis. This allows the

strengths of each to merge thus intensifying trustworthiness during the phases of interpretation

(Shenton, 2004).

Next, data were analyzed comparing perspectives and verifying intent to produce a

description of the content (Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation is a strong

strategy that "encourages productive research...it heightens qualitative methods to their deserved prominence" (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012, p. 160). The data analysis method is useful in comprehensive qualitative research. Sources enhance verification and reduce the effects that bias can bring to a study.

Bias in Analysis

My role as district staff development involved working with schools on targeted PD. Contact with teachers remained focused and professional. During the time of the study I traveled throughout district's schools, and so bias of personal opinion did not feed greatly into the topic. However, bias was a potential hindrance to the qualitative data analysis due to the nature of the topic explored and the employed methodology.

Increased efforts to diminish risks to the validity of the study were applied by looking for different ways of data organization, possibly leading to dissimilar findings. Discrepant data were reported in context of the findings. Independent coding and cross check analysis was applied to enhance reliability and trustworthiness additionally controlled for bias in interpretation (Suter, 2012). By building in a check system to keep focus on the purity of results, any bias in the study was identified and removed leaving deeply analyzed and reliable results.

<div align="center">Discrepant Cases</div>

Analyzing discrepant, or negative, cases was one component of testing for validity qualitative research. The purpose of identifying such data was to determine whether it was reasonable to modify conclusions drawn from the results (Maxwell, 2008). Information that was contrary to evolving categories was considered a discrepant case. During analysis, varying

perspectives were actively sought and recorded. The data were carefully analyzed and recorded. Results were compared and discussed with findings general to the study.

Data Analysis Results

It is important to note that many of the themes emerging from the data were closely linked. Should there be development or decline in one theme, another theme was affected. Three research questions were the basis for data gathering and analysis. The questions explored the topics of inclusion in three areas:

1. What methodology is used to implement inclusion in the general education classroom?

2. What are the barriers and facilitators of the implementation process?

3. How does inclusion affect self-efficacy for those teaching SNL in the general education classroom?

Five participants engaged in the focus group. Findings involved perspectives from teachers and administration. While subthemes converged with larger themes, each set of participants provided perspectives related to their experience and position in the school.

Demographics

Prior to presenting participants with questions specific to inclusion, each subject was asked to provide a general overview of their history of teaching in terms of degrees held, the number of years teaching experience, and when inclusion in the general education classroom was first experienced (See Table 2). Twenty invitations were provided for general education teachers at the school site. The population consisted of 19 females and 1 male. Five general education

teachers responded to the invitation and were participants in the focus group. The grade levels represented were kindergarten through third grade. Respondents were all female. The focus group took 45 minutes. Experiences were expressed in the context of inclusion in the general education field. The number years of experience ranged from 3 years, 14 years, 18 years, 26 years, and 27 years. All teachers in the focus group held Bachelor's degrees in early childhood or elementary although one had a Bachelor's degree in home economics and a National Board Certification. Two teachers possess a post-graduate Master's degree and one is working toward a Masters. One teacher is pursuing her doctoral degree.

The administrator participating in the interview has a Bachelor's in elementary education, a Master's in early childhood, and a current certificate for elementary principal. Experience in the educational system includes 25 years in education (9 years administrative and 1 year principal intern), three years in one state and 22 in another. Inclusion experience was encountered as a teacher in the first years of teaching.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Sample Participants

Gender	Participant *n*	Years *n*	Level	Degree	Inclusion Exposure
Male	…	…	…	…	…
Female	1	3	2nd Grade	Bachelor's	Internship
	1	14	2nd Grade	Bachelor's	First Year
	1	18	3rd Grade	Bachelor's	First Year
	1	26	Kindergarten	Master's	First Year
	1	27	1st Grade	Master's	First Year
	1	25	Administrator	Master's	First Year
Total	6	88.00			

Note: Data obtained from focus group and semistructured interview transcripts

Focus Group

The data gathered from the focus group resulted in themes that emerged and remained constant throughout the discussion. Data were constantly compared as the coding process was conducted. Themes were convergent and re-emerged often throughout the focus group discussion.

Themes from the focus group discussion resulted in five categories: (a) structure of inclusion, (b) resources, (c) training, (d) collaboration, and (e) preparedness. Subthemes converged with primary themes during the analysis process. Time and class size were able to be connected under structure and resources for inclusion as they were discussed within those contexts. One discrepant case was identified and presented perceptions contrary to the remaining participants. The teacher perceived that the inclusion process has been a successful experience

for her in her history of teaching. Findings for the discrepant case are discussed separately in relation to the themes.

Theme: Structure

The structure of inclusion in a general education classroom relies upon a heavily developed schedule. Effectiveness is determined by the ability of the teacher to serve students in a differentiated manner, and with the functionality of an everyday routine (Valiandes, 2015). Teachers in the focus group identified inclusion structure or method as a barrier to the effective implementation in the general education classroom and as a failure of the inclusion methodology. Currently, inclusion students are placed in the general education setting with minimal pullout by special education teachers. Within the structure, student performance is nurtured in the regular education setting and ideally the special education teacher is available to support general education teachers and SNL during the instructional process. However, teachers perceived the structure of the day does not support the ability to provide for SNL in a manner that is fluid and reliable nor does it allow teachers to devote the time they feel is required to fully serve SNL students.

Subtheme: Time. When teachers were asked about the methodology of current inclusion, three teachers discussed what prevents inclusion from being a successful process in the classroom. The methodology of inclusion and the time to work within the structure was discussed within the context of barriers, as it was perceived that they could not be separated. The structure of inclusion is perceived to be a holding place for students to spend all day with no reprieve from the issues that plague the setting. One teacher reflected:

To be honest, we don't have the time set up within our day…when are we going to meet with them? We don't have that set up in our day, we just don't…I hate to just focus on the barriers, but I don't feel like that we have the other, what did you say it was the facilitators or whatever. I feel we have more barriers than we have the positive stuff" [talking about SNL]? Honestly…think it does not serve the special child…our model…our system…it doesn't serve the special ed children or doesn't serve the regular ed children that are, you know, in the classroom [referring to time for employing the model of inclusion in its present state of SNL being served in the general education classroom].

Two teachers summarized their thoughts on how they were unable to service students fully because of safety concerns and time consumption. The first participant stated perceptions as follows:

I felt like all my attention was focused on them [SNL] and not the rest…so I just felt like I just didn't service, because I was just worried about safety and it was true inclusion. They did not go anywhere else, they stayed there.

The second teacher shared that efforts in the classroom with inclusion students takes her time away from the remaining members of the class, "I spend most of my time working with those children…" (speaking about SNL in her classroom).

Additional thoughts offered as teachers consider further about the barriers they have experienced involved expressing frustration with the lack of strong structure for the inclusion process. The current methodology for inclusion leaves teachers with a sense that the structure

overburdens them so progress with instruction is impeded. A teacher offered thoughts on how the program works when saying, "I don't think it is working. I can tell you that I don't think it's working the way it is set up right now."

Teachers reflected upon what it would mean to have a structure in place where SNL could be apart from the class. Perceptions were communicated that the inclusive students were interruptive and made the instruction a burdensome task; therefore, they desired a different option for inclusion students:

It would be really nice if the special education teacher would come into my classroom and with me at once a day or a couple times a week pull those kids maybe to a table and work on what I'm working on and help them get to where they need to be as far as that goes…they're in my classroom all day long disrupting. I barely get through even a lesson without having to, you know, either send them to another classroom for a little while so I can get though it because of all the interruptions or um just do what I can to keep them on task…then I have those that just simply shut down and don't do anything and throw papers all over the floor so this is what we deal with …and you can't just focus on that one because you've got all the others that need you and are here for a purpose, and you have to get them ready for testing…I think we are doing them a disservice.

Another participant added:

I was thinking a few years ago I had a student who was throwing chairs in the classroom and I wished he wasn't identified as emotionally disturbed (ED) and of course all the paperwork and stuff, but I wish there was a safe place that he could have gone and maybe

attended in a classroom for a couple, a week or two weeks, something so he could have

gotten the emotion needs he needed…I'm thinking within a week he was throwing chairs

or hurting someone every day that week and I just felt like he should have had a place to

go so I could have had class. I mean my students had to go out in the hall while he's

throwing chairs so you know I have to consider my students' safety.

Attitudes toward inclusion were positive in theory, but one teacher maintained a sense that inclusion is not operating in a manner that it should. "In theory, inclusion is the greatest; I mean it takes a village to raise a child right? But it's not working the way it is now and I, I don't know why."

The structure of inclusion affects time when so much paperwork is required to track students. Teachers perceive they are unable to fulfill their primary function as educator. Villarreal, Rodriguez, and Moore (2014) found the time spent in managing paperwork leaves teachers feeling that they need specific time set aside to complete documentations without requirement to manage a classroom or use so many after contract hours. One participant echoed the frustration in reference to paperwork as part of the inclusive structure, and stated the barrier of time revolves around the paperwork to complete, "and the paperwork to me is a barrier…the length of time it takes to fill out the paperwork." Lindqvist, Nordänger, and Carlsson (2014) supported the reflection that increased accountability or documentation provided frustration in education with teachers who left or considered leaving the profession.

Subtheme: Class size. The structure of class size also interferes with the inclusion process. Class size can significantly affect SNL performance when class sizes are large (Arico,

2011). Shin and Chung (2009) found that achievement in smaller classes was superior to that of more heavily populated classrooms. Student reading scores and math retention increase when classrooms are smaller as well (Din, 2010). Teachers expressed the perception that the larger classroom structure was a detriment for the inclusion process and hindered them from being able to serve their students:

> I still think we need smaller classrooms…I mean I just think you need smaller classrooms for all of this to be totally successful. Number-wise, 26 is too high…I mean I think the numbers have gotta come down in classrooms to better serve all the children.

Other teachers responded to class size as a structural factor. One teacher added, "I was thinking how does class size fit into that because I'm thinking if you're going to include special needs children anywhere on the spectrum, it would help if we had smaller class sizes." Another teacher agreed, "…are we serving everyone is my concern."

 Two participants recognized the need for inclusion to be a program that functions in every aspect:

> And see, our special ed. teacher that's serving kindergarten through third, I know for a fact she's got 18 third graders, but also too she has one that is full time with her all day so I don't see how she can go into a room with that.

The second added, "As busy as our schedule is, hers is as equal, I mean we're just all running around trying to do the same thing but we just can't" (speaking of concern for the special education teacher when they reflected about the way teachers on both sides of inclusion are overburdened).

Theme: Resources

The lack of resources creates strain on teachers when trying to serve students who are inclusion-based students. While *resources* is a stand-alone theme, time crosses into the resource theme when the special education teacher is seen more as a resource than a collaborative partner and time operates as a resource that is required to perform. The context of resources did not involve traditional school supplies or requests for curriculum tools, rather the focus group concentrated on the function of the special education specialist in the school. Teachers in general education classrooms often believe that the function of the special education teacher is to be the resource for pullout or segregation (Cassady, 2011). Providing SNL with their own space to learn was the perceived solution to caring for them and teachers in the focus group would prefer the special education teacher to give them time through a needed "break" or a place to send the students when they are at loss for what to do with behavior or academics. Teachers discussed their perceptions regarding students remaining in the classroom during general education instruction:

> I just try even talking in the hall, say what can I do to help her [special education teacher] and she's available 'cause I had one child who had a melt down and I took him in there and she helped talk to him and everything. It's good to know we have a resource…

> Other participants discussed the need for a break from the SNL in the classroom.

Teachers perceived the inclusion students needed a place to go so they could receive a break. Teachers stated that not only was it important to them to receive a break from SNL students, but peers of SNL would also welcome the break. One teacher stated,

"Sometimes, mentally I mean I would have loved to have a break from some of the ED students you know?" Another teacher added, "Their peers, you know? Their peers would have welcomed a break." Unfortunately, resources are not always readily available for use. The teachers in this study indicated their sense of isolation when trying to cope with the inclusion process. The resource of added personnel to handle special education students also was perceived as a resource component for successful inclusion. Everling (2013) used mixed-method research to determine Texas educators' perspectives about inclusion. Findings indicated that for SNL to receive the most effective instruction, teachers perceive they require additional personnel to support the inclusion process. Teachers in the focus group echoed the perception that the resource of additional help is lacking, and said, "So lack of resources…personnel. I don't think we have enough people in place to make it to happen." A second teacher added, "The assistant is being pulled for that one child and that's not, that's not fair." A third teacher stated, "They should rotate and help like the special education teacher could."

An expression that resources are not available or lack in numbers communicated the perception that resources could be a solution for teachers. The teachers stated that the special education teacher held onto the resources that could potentially provide them with relief. Analysis of this theme indicates teachers want a rotation that assigns personnel to them for the purpose of assisting in serving students.

Theme: Training

Olinger (2013) found teachers perceive training is a factor beneficial to successful inclusion. Throughout the focus group, the lack of knowledge was stated in areas where attitudes about inclusion were reflected upon. When asked to describe attitudes toward inclusion, and why the attitude exists, one teacher responded that she is not trained to help the students in her room:

> I don't think I like it any more, I mean I think we're doing them a disservice if they can't see the general ed. classroom, but I think with our resources and our lack of communication with the …special education teachers…everybody's being disserviced because I don't have the training, the time, the know-how to help these children in my room. I just spend my time…you gotta go down the hall for a little while so I can get through this lesson with these other kids because, you know, and I don't feel I'm doing them a service either, because, I lose my patience. I don't have the time or the knowledge.

The teachers' response referenced the lack of knowledge for how to serve SNL, which aligns with Fuch's (2010) identified theme of training. Fuchs reported the consistent need for teachers to receive training for making adaptations instructionally so they could meet the needs of IEP students. The insufficient preparation relates to the overall problem that despite inclusion efforts, barriers to implementing successful inclusion still remains and student achievement is lacking.

Theme: Collaboration

    Horne and Timmons (2009) reported that teachers perceive collaboration is necessary to serve special needs learners. Teachers believe the time required to service inclusion students is disruptive to the general class needs (Horne & Timmons, 2009). In this focus group, a desire to spend more time in collaboration was expressed as a possible way to attend to the instructional demands of inclusion learners. Teachers perceived they could receive valuable input from the collaborative process. The focus of the collaboration was not only on more interaction with the special education teacher, but with other teachers from other classrooms that serve SNL in an inclusion setting. When one teacher considered factors for successful inclusion, she said:

> But we have all those early releases. Why during the early release can we not
>
> have vertical alignment to discuss this because like these are two second grade
>
> teachers. We haven't even discussed, like, what this third grade curriculum is,
>
> [and] what do they really need to know for third grade? That's one issue, then it
>
> also goes with the special education who, where's this child at, what level, how
>
> do they learn better, are they more hands on, you know, kinesthetic, audio visual?
>
> The more information would help the teachers work together and better serve the
>
> children. I think the early releases should be more towards that [vertical alignment
>
> collaboration].

Another teacher offered what collaboration could mean to serving specific needs of SNL. Her desire to collaborate was stated, "I would like to collaborate with other second grade teachers from another site and then collaborate with the teachers in this building in first, third

grade, so we can work together…in special ed." She went on to say, "We definitely don't have the communication [about] what they're working on in their classrooms…there's no communication. There's no work being passed between the classes."

The statements of the teachers outlined the desire for increased interactions between general and special education peers. They emphasized the need to know where students are in their learning so they are not so isolated in the inclusion process. They also desire the opportunity to build a network of relationships with special education teachers who possess the expertise they feel they lack.

Theme: Preparedness

Soodak, Podell, and Lehman (1998) suggested that teachers who maintain receptiveness to inclusion perceived a greater sense of capacity when working with special needs learners, but the more experienced they became the more hostile attitudes became and the less prepared they remained. The suggestions for further study indicated that additional research was needed for identifying school factors to discover the necessary components for successful implementation and feelings of support. During the focus group, teachers expressed they felt overwhelmed and had fear that their skills at serving the inclusion students were not adequate and they felt pressure to perform regardless of what they feel might be best for students:

> I'm scared to death that I'm not going to teach this child as much as they need by the
>
> time they get to third grade and you know with the pressures of testing and telling us
>
> what that child needs when we really kind of know, wait a minute they're not even ready

for that let's just jump 'em from here ABCs and go over here all this little in-

between…there's too many holes for that.

Other participants stated they perceived a sense of having to endure the current process of inclusion by saying,   "We want to do a good job, but what's in place right now…I'm losing my mind. I feel like I'm not doing the best I can be…that I can do." Another teacher then added, "We know that we can't change it and so we do the best we can." A third teacher reflected on how SNL impacts teaching as a whole and stated she perceives everyone experiences difficulties when working with inclusive students. She remarked, "I don't think you can speak to any regular education teacher who feels efficacy dealing with children who are included in their classroom. I would love to see who that person is and talk with them, because, we are hitting a brick wall." "I am overwhelmed," a teacher added. Two other teachers made statements providing an assessment regarding how inclusion affects the general perception of effectiveness when serving SNL. One said, "I am overwhelmed" while another specifically added, "How do I feel I'm doing? Not well. Not well at all."

The response of the teachers in the focus group indicated a lack of preparedness to work with SNL in the general education classroom m. The perception that they were doing the best they could while still trying to cope with the stress of emotive factors indicated a sense of helplessness in the area of capacity when performing their jobs. Bandura (1986) stated a necessary component of performing a task relies on the understanding that mastery is not only related to motivation, but also the outcomes of emotion. The cycle of personal judgment regulates the capability to execute and succeed at selected tasks. Teachers need to believe they

are able to plan and execute activities that draw students into the learning process in a way that stimulates achievement.

Discrepant Data

Cassady (2011) found that teachers prefer collaboration when dealing with inclusive students. The discrepant data gathered aligns with research, and while it varies from perceptions of inclusion experiences from other participants, it resonates with the themes produced from the focus group discussions. Blask (2011) found a majority of teachers surveyed believed they were prepared and sufficient at instructing SNL. Results of Hwang and Evans' (2011) study indicate that 51% of the teachers in general education felt sufficient in collaboration while the remaining percent felt insubordinate to or insufficiently interacted with special education teachers.

Discrepant data emerged in the findings with regard to one teacher who stated a successful experience occurred with inclusion in one of the past settings. A perception emerged that the current setting differs from a prior engagement with inclusion, and the statement occurred that students must stay in the general setting so they gain readiness for testing. The teacher attributed success with collaboration. Statements in response to serving students and keeping collaborative communication going revolved around lesson planning and working together:

> How we handled that…was that we had to send our lesson plans to them [special education teacher] and they sent their lesson plans to us, and they would know which objectives we were working on. But, I don't know if everybody wants to do that or not…some teachers did not want her there…they wanted her to pull them.

Collaboration also came in the form of coteaching:

> I taught fourth grade math and so it's a testing grade, and if you read the IEP it states the special education teacher is supposed to teach them on their level, and that's where the report card comes from, but the regular education teacher has to teach grade level so they can pass the test so for us it worked great. Her and I got along really, really well. I would send her my lesson plans. She knew exactly what objectives we were working on. She was right beside my room, which also facilitated immensely because she'd come in and we'd do our lesson. We'd do group and then she could tell if she needed to break it down more or if I needed to break it down more for certain children and even pull them to a table and pull other children who maybe weren't identified or who were struggling with a concept. She could rotate around the room and do small group and I could rotate and do small group. When she did that with me those last two years probably about 80% of our special ed. kids reached proficient or above and actually advanced in math, but it was because we were working so well together….I knew what time she was scheduled for math and I had two classes…she was always right there, her room right next to where she could pull you like hey they're really in over their head, I've gotta pull some small manipulatives and go do it and maybe we didn't. We were worried about them being embarrassed. If you're having to pull out the money or something you can pull them to her room just for special ed kids. The other kids couldn't go to her room. In my room she could come pull several kids over.

Discussing the current inclusion context, the participant stated perceptions that an acceptance is inevitable that class numbers are high and changes result in a difficult situation made more complicated, but that if collaboration were available as she experienced it, inclusion could continue to be successful:

> If it's the right people I mean when teachers can get along and collaborate it's very productive, but if you end up with a barrier…it's not gonna work….We need smaller classrooms really bad…and then it would be more successful…but we do need more resources, when I say what I'm talking about, like having time to collaborate work together; all of it.

The statements reiterated belief that inclusion does work, but only if factors of resources and time are provided. All teachers agreed there was a need for time to collaborate to keep the lines of communication open regarding their students. If inclusion could be implemented in this way, then it is perceived the process could be very effective.

Interview

A semistructured interview took place with one administrator. Two invitations were offered, but only one accepted due to unforeseen circumstances requiring the other to be unavailable. The administrator has leadership responsibilities in the school and works with teachers on a consistent basis. Inclusion is a familiar topic and is a component of administrative authority in the setting.

Demographics

The participant in this study is a female administrator who maintains a Bachelor's in elementary education, a Master's in early childhood, and a certificate for elementary principal. She has 25 years in education, which involves 1 year of acting as an intern principal and 9 years of administrative leadership. Three years were spent in one state, and 22 are in the current state. She encountered inclusion as a beginning teacher prior to becoming leadership.

<div align="center">

Themes

</div>

Shani and Koss (2014) found that leadership is more action oriented when dealing with inclusion and teachers see inclusion in need of a more practical approach. Snyder (1999) concluded "administrators are going to have to take a more aggressive approach in preparing general education teachers" (p. 180). Leaders maintain a different view about what it takes to implement inclusion. During the interview the themes that emerged were from the perception of a principal. Interview questions were asked in reference to expertise as an administrator in the context of the teachers from the school. Three of the themes identified in the data were similar in topic; however, the perception varied in the areas of people responsible for the care of students, what type of training is necessary, and the type of resources that are needed to support them. Themes identified in the analysis were: (a) philosophy, (b) relationship, (c) training, and (d) resources.

Theme: Philosophy

The administrator indicated that there is still a struggle with the tenets of teachers in the general education classroom. The perspective of the principal is that special needs students are

often seen as the responsibility of the special education teacher. The current methodology of

inclusion that is in place leaves a philosophical gap between the regular education teacher and

the special education services the children receive. According to Nichols and Sheffield (2014), a

perceived struggle with philosophy about who, by default, becomes responsible for inclusive

students creates a methodological barrier. A successful collaborative ownership of SNL is

achieved when acceptance and support for students comes from all stakeholders (Nichols &

Sheffield, 2014). When asked how the administrator perceives teachers experience the inclusion

process, the following was stated:

> I think there's a struggle between those are my kids and those are your
>
> kids…the…teacher's still responsible for exposing those children even if they are pulled
>
> out for resource making sure they are exposed to grade level materials…I mean honestly
>
> it's you know my experience in my buildings, it's not all teachers it's usually a small
>
> handful of teachers that are still struggling with that. One it might be their philosophy or
>
> two it also might be…their years of experience when…that was the perception when they
>
> began teaching that child was not mine that child belongs to such and such. That's…still
>
> a struggle…in education today…that still trying to determine you know, be all inclusive
>
> it's our child not their child. I still think that's still an issue with some, with some….I
>
> would like for it to be seen that special ed it's not that's your child, not my child, it's our
>
> child that train of thought.

Avramidis et al. (2000) stated that often teachers hold positive views about students that

do not require additional management or instructional strategies. If more challenging situations

occur, a lack of confidence will often be the result. The administrator indicated an issue still exists when responsibility for SNL is not shared.

Theme: Relationship

The topic of relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers is not a new one. Trent et al. (2003) qualitatively studied the evolution of teacher relationships as they moved to a collaborative model that resulted in shared responsibility and cohesion in teaching. Data suggested that although teachers possessed different perspectives and teaching styles that initially created tensions between the general and special education cohorts, merging instructional approaches resulted in a rich relationship that benefited students with and without disabilities. A reciprocal partnership, where role exchange was acknowledged by both groups, paved the way for restructuring implementation of collaboration and cooperation when serving SNL.

The indications of the data underscored exterior factors such as ineffective principal oversight and awareness (Trent et al, 2003). Hofman and Kilimo (2014) found teacher capacity to engage in high levels of collaboration also played a significant role in working with disabled students. Continuous training, recursive application of solutions, and flexibility to modify poorly designed structure passed down from administrative levels was required to make the process effectual (Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Trent et al., 2003). Additionally, not all teachers were aware of relationship components necessary to work within an inclusive environment; therefore, intensive PD interventions were required to remedy misconceptions through high levels of collaboration (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014).

Administrative interview data from this study indicated leadership acknowledged circumstances beyond control and stated that there was a dearth of awareness and commitment that might keep the relationships successful. The data were aligned with the focus group theme of collaboration, but diverged in that there is a discrepancy between expectations and what the teachers practice in reality:

> There's an expectation in my building that there should be a teacher relationship between the regular ed. teacher and the special ed. teacher. Um, reality is unfortunately there are still teachers who say they are doing one thing but they are doing the opposite of that.

The factors necessary for successful inclusion implementation also revolve around relationship and collaboration as a result of the relationship piece. When asked to determine what factors were perceived necessary for successful implementation, the interviewee stated a belief that the teachers needed understanding gained by a strong relationship between general and special education:

> I believe weekly planning, making sure that they understand the accommodations on the IEP, making sure they understand and be a part of the IEP process, that they know the accommodations for the child and also how the relationship that's built where the special ed teacher can build a relationship with the …regular ed teacher to do what's best for the child; individually differentiating, communicating, and planning between two teachers. What is the resource teacher working on, how can she support what's going on in the

regular ed classroom. Is that teamwork? But, I think sharing of lesson plans…a

professional learning community and having that open dialogue about the students.

The importance of working together relies upon building relationships.

The respondent elaborated by saying:

That's how you build a relationship with another teacher and it's critical to meet the

needs of the student…I was going to say, you know. Special education is all about

differentiating for the child, meeting where they're at and trying to move them where

they need to be. I think that needs to be a philosophy of the regular ed. It's supposed to be

the philosophy of the regular ed teacher, and that's the type of…community and

environment I try to create in my schools…it takes a village to teach a child; not just one

or two people and …it's my expectation that you will work together. It's not a choice.

Theme: Training

Findings from research indicated that teachers perceive the most important factors for a

good relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers is

communication and common planning within collaboratively structured gatherings (Delkamiller

& Leader-Janssen, 2014). General education teachers are experts in crafting curriculum while

special education teachers possess expertise in "providing access to content using a variety of

strategies" (Delkamiller & Leader-Janssen, 2014, p. 55). Conflict arises when there is a lack of

training in the collaborative model before implementation (Delkamiller & Leader-Janssen,

2014). Without guidance in the critical first steps to the collaboration, strained attitudes develop

toward working together.

Principals often report they provide time for collaboration, PD that is ongoing, and resources to support inclusion (Murray, 2013; Olinger, 2013). The participant in this interview perceived aspects of training do occur, but also perceived that some details remain unaddressed and training issues create a potential barrier to successfully incorporating inclusion into the classroom. The perception mirrors Fuchs (2010) and Orr's (2009) findings that teachers in general education report they do not have the training for servicing SNL in an inclusive environment. The focus group in this study expressed training as an area of need, and the participant in the interview stated that general education teachers often do not possess the training or the relationships with special education peers necessary to reach capacity. Teachers and leadership perceived special education teachers are experts in providing services to SNL. Additionally, they perceive that special education teachers possess the skillful ability to meet students in a differentiated manner in ways that are not within the general education toolbox. The paucity of networking adversely affects longevity and success of the inclusion model (Trent et al., 2003).

Leadership perceived that teachers do not feel masterful in the general education classroom, and they entered with lack of preparation. This factor relates to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory that teachers may not perceive mastery if they have failed experiences or are unprepared to perform a task. Leadership reflected on what was heard from teachers and what was experienced as a past educator:

> …I think that they …have told me that. They feel that the special ed. teacher, if that's what their degree is from college, has actually more hours and uh college hours and

experiences with um working with students with disabilities versus regular ed. From when I was in college, there was only one class called the exceptional child, and that is the only experience and training I had in college for my degree…I do think there's that fear I don't know how to teach this child and I feel that there's that frustration that I don't know what to do so hence.

Next, the administrator answered a question about perceptions of where the role begins in providing training for teachers that otherwise are left confused about how to effectively instruct SNL:

I would probably say right now the hot thing is literacy differentiation, working with students in small groups. We still have some teachers that just do whole group teaching and we're trying to move to more of a small group, whole group, small group, and that way you can differentiate for the child…that type of professional development.

Makinen (2013) stated the culture of inclusion is rooted in the "collaborative practices of the school community" (p. 58). Incongruous experiences, lack of relationship, stress factors, and inability to come together as a unit to dedicate practices within collaborative customs during the problem solving process creates a hindrance in building the inclusive model. Dynamic relationships fostered in the social ambiance of PD contribute to strong collaborative networking partnerships needed in successful inclusion implementation (Anderson, 2011; Bandura, 1971; Fuchs, 2010; Knowles, 1984; Trent et al., 2003). The trust cultivated through strong PD teaches teachers how to come together collaboratively; therefore, reinforcing the commitment to team and individual levels of service to SNL.

Theme: Resources

The leadership participant perceives that resources are provided for general education teachers to perform their job and change their mindset in serving SNL. Teachers who deal with inclusion students; however, perceive resources are a lacking factor for inclusion to be successful (Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012). The types of resources the participant in the interview varies from the resources that the focus group teachers perceived to be necessary in that the focus is textual or didactic rather than structural:

> I think that begins with the expectation of the administrator, and if that mindset is not there…I try to guide with PD and resources for the regular ed teacher so they can understand how they can work with the special ed teacher to meet the needs and differentiate for that child.

A clarifying question asking the principal what her provided resources included resulted in this response:

> Could be with the latest trade book…, for example *Great Habits and Great Readers,* you know, *Teach Like a Champion*; those are book studies that I plan on doing next year with my staff…and it gives us resources and strategies for teaching reading and also *Teach Like a Champion* would work well with any scenario, any subject, best practices.

The statement revealed a differing view between teachers and leadership about the concept of resources. Teachers' statements indicated a desire for an active input of resources through collaboration with special education teachers, a support system allowing time to gain knowledge through interactions, and the opportunity for relief. Meanwhile leadership perceived a

more passive approach by offering a menu of strategies directed for use in academic

achievement. The connotations of variance in interpretation revealed a gap between what

teachers and administration perceive as a facilitating factor in inclusion.

Document Analysis

During the process of collecting data, an investigator may collect documents to include in

the qualitative research. Document analysis yields what is important or valued in the context of

the study, and evidence is available without researcher intervention (Bowen, 2009). The benefits

of document analysis lie in identifying trends grounded in a setting that is local and is unbiased

about the information presented (Bowen, 2009). The analysis can be time consuming and data

may not be generalized to all populations; however, in this study it is relevant to the bounded

context of the research. The procedure for analysis involves the interpretation and synthesizing

of data within the documents and is then placed into themes and categories during content

analysis (Bowen, 2009). The importance of using document analysis in this study supported

efforts to prevent investigator bias, and assisted in establishing credibility of findings.

Improvement Plan

The document analysis consisted of the school improvement plan for PD (TPS; 2014).

Site improvement plan (SIP), *Component Four*, states that staff and the curriculum program for

the school must be equipped to help all students meet the State's requirements for academic

achievement. The goals and objectives of the plan must be accessible to all. The improvement

plan meets state statutes that requires PD be extended, where appropriate. An analysis revealed

themes related to (a) collaboration as a staff and (b) collaboration in the form of professional learning communities. Each theme referenced student achievement as an expected outcome.

Collaboration as a staff (CAS). General education teachers often lack the preparation to implement inclusion effectively (Gable et al., 2012). Schools are left to fill in practice gaps to meet the needs of all students. Goals provided by improvement plans identify the current achievement reality and a goal that provides a specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented, and time-bounded result when the goal has been met. In this PD improvement plan, the focus was on student achievement pertaining to state and district mandated assessments in the areas of reading and math. The expected outcome anticipated a 10% increase in performance among testing students. In the document, no direct communication related to the subject of inclusion students, or inclusion as a larger topic. SNL were not approached as a specified area of improvement, rather improvement of all student achievement remained the overarching goal. The plan stated:

> The cornerstone of our PD is collaboration. Within this framework, we use
>
> mandated district early release days for all staff PD that is researched-based to
>
> impact student achievement. Our teachers also engage in weekly team level PLCs
>
> to include occasional vertical alignments where we actively engage in discussions
>
> and planning around analyzing multiple measures of student data, developing the
>
> site specific curriculum maps, and aligning our curriculum to district and state
>
> academic standards. (TPS, 2014, p. 14)

While PLCs were mentioned, there was only one reference for aligning student performance. No specifics were revealed for how to address challenges with inclusion or SNL. No definition appeared to detail steps for collaboration or plans for implementing a collaborative framework. PD was listed as a strategy for raising student performance; however, specific PD interventions were not clarified. The goal to provide foundation for future efforts with student achievement stated, "Through our use of well-targeted PD activities described above, we will increase instructional effectiveness in order to realize an increase of 10% in proficient and advanced on the OCCT testing for reading and math" (TPS, 2014, p. 14). Indications for targeted objectives were stated; however, no specifics were outlined in the document. The statement implied the school's awareness of improvement needs and alluded to designated achievement goals, but lack of alignment existed. Policy and procedures did not detail a course of action. The implication emerged that while expectations for student achievement exist on the part of the organization, future school improvement is left without a roadmap to follow.

Collaboration as professional learning communities (CPLC). Collaboration at a teacher level produces benefits in commitment to each other and the school. In collective learning, teachers accept higher responsibility for students' learning and integration (Lee et al., 2011). During review of the document topic for PD, the content lists the strategy of CPLCs to improve student performance. CAS was listed as a strategy in areas involving best practice review through curriculum development, engaging in a book study on the topic of poverty to develop positive learning environments, data review, and benefits of using technology, which aligned with the administrative interview data. No areas specific to inclusion or support for

general education settings serving special learners were identified. Additionally, there were no observations of statements alluding to strategic meetings between special education teachers and general education teachers. CPLC agendas and team collaborative planning were specifically cited for use in topics of: (a) safe school, (b) copyright laws and digital citizenship, (c) value added and other academic measures, (d) English language learners, (e) climate study, (f) student engagement and student discipline, and (g) site improvement plan review.

Although the theme of collaboration was identified in focus group discussions as a need for inclusion settings in general education classrooms to be well supported, no provisions for CPLCs between general education teachers and special education teachers were specifically defined in the improvement plan PD goals. Administration perceived collaboration to be a necessary component of the inclusion process to facilitate understanding IEP procedures, and objectives. Regular education teachers perceived they require more collaboration with special education. They also perceived the time is not available to collaborate. Increased training was desired through special education interaction and collaboration.

Administrative leadership needs to be more aware of what teachers perceive and must work to build the collaborative relationship while at the same time working to understand how barriers create potential problems (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). The action plan of conducting book studies aligned with administration's concept of providing resources for developing teachers' bank of training; however, the focus group saw resources as providing further supportive personnel and time for collaboration with other teachers to see how inclusion works in other classrooms. The plan does not communicate how it intends to address the concerns in

the future or if the improvement plan intends to address them at all. Further consideration and dialogue may be necessary to bridge administration interpretation of what PD is needed versus what factors teachers require in the PD activities.

Conclusion

Three guiding questions were used to identify factors that affected successful inclusion in the general education setting. Guiding questions sought to discover perceptions on the current methodology, barriers/facilitators that affect implementation of inclusion, and self-efficacy when implementing the process in general education. Themes were identified in data analysis as follows: (a) structure, (b) resources, (c) training, (d) collaboration, and (e) self-efficacy. The methodology for implementing inclusion was discovered to be lacking when meeting teachers' expectations for meeting SNL needs in the general education classroom. Focus group teachers expressed concerns for the structure of the inclusion process and the barriers that time presents when working within the current setting. They perceived the structure of the day does not allow them to provide adequate support for SNL due to the demand of time not available in the day. Inherent barriers operate as a hindrance to meeting the needs of SNL. Teachers maintain perceptions all students experience inequity and no students benefit from the inclusive process as long as barriers remain.

Collaboration appeared as a theme that had both barriers and successes related to the factor. Discrepant data were reported as one teacher had experience in a past setting with collaboration as a positive and facilitating factor when time, communication, and relationship were present. In the current setting for the study, perceptions of effective collaborative efforts did

not present strongly and the desire for establishing the practice between general education and special education emerged. This data aligned with other perceptions in the focus group that current protocols for collaboration do not possess these factors.

Results of the study relate to the social cognitive theory where self-efficacy is addressed. Social cognitive theory posits that learning occurs through varying processes that play a role in developing the capacity for acting intentionally (Bandura, 1977). Symbolic activities contribute to the reflective solution of problems as individuals engage in observation and interactions with others (Dimopoulou, 2012; Knowles, 1984). The premise behind the importance of the findings in this study is that as teachers are proactive in their learning relating to the inclusion environment, the influence of collaboration with special education peers increases metacognitive actions resulting in adaptive behaviors toward SNL (Bandura, 1986; Dimopoulou, 2012). The efforts may relate to better student performance. Bandura (1993) deems perceptions of the collective capacity as important to the development of organizational functioning due to the relationship between personal and unified efforts to make change (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). The greater collective efficacy begins in the foundations of the philosophical underpinnings of social sway and the provisional support afforded by leaders (Bandura, 1993; Dimopoulou, 2012; Goddard & Goddard, 2001). According to Bandura (1993), there must be more than simple understanding of facts and rationalizations for an individual to operate within given sets of activities. Cognitive, motivational, and affective contributions also must be present. The results of this study relate to the social learning aspects identified by Bandura (1993, 1994) in the areas of (a) cognitive, (b) motivational, and (c) affective categories.

People cognitively draw upon what they know to create options for action (Bandura, 1993, 1994). They amend judgments when compared to the consequences of their actions. If actions produce less than desired results, low conception of abilities impedes the completion of tasks. If conceptions remain high; however, then the errors become part of a learning process where mistakes contribute to the expansion of competencies or personal improvement. The results of this study revealed teachers' perceptions that they are not ready for the inclusion process in its present form so they require more support and collaboration to raise levels of knowledge for preparedness. Since individuals will only pursue what they achieve proficiently (mastery), the results of this study create a sense of urgency in supporting coping efforts for lacking factors in the inclusive classroom. Individuals who possess a dearth of knowledge or perceived competency to reach low-performing students remain in the comfort zone of tasks that minimize high levels of effort so they do not run the risk of being overshadowed by the success of others (Bandura, 1993; Varga-Atkins et al., 2009). Collaborative work that highlights ability as achievable progress centralizes self-comparison and creates an environment that builds perceived control over a task (Bandura, 1993).

The statements of teachers in the focus group communicate they are not performing well in the current inclusive setting. The motivation to carry forward is hampered by the sense that they are ill equipped to manage the implementation.

Factors of self-efficacy identified in this research pertain to what teachers perceive they can do in relation to what they feel they are given as tools in knowledge, relationships, and circumstance. Perceived efficacy prompts effort and the motivation to persist in a task (Dimopoulou, 2012). If

low efficacy persists, undertakings often induce reactions of stress, depression, and a narrowed

vision when problem solving resulting in loss of motivation to perform (Bandura, 1977;

Dimopoulou, 2012; Veresova &Mala, 2012).

The lack of preparedness results in the perceptions that there is only a choice to do one's

best. In the affective sense, fear and the statement that teachers are "hitting a brick wall,"

produces an urgency that something needs to be resolved. Frustration mounts when factors do

not support efforts to teach, and as a result, teachers are left to continue in a threatening structure

that is "not working" (Bandura, 1993). They are left to "dwell on coping deficiencies" (Bandura,

1993, p. 132). To effectively implement inclusion-focused attention on specific factors assists

creating the successful inclusive environment.

Leadership who employs a system of collaboration nurturing supportive relationships

between special education and general education teachers allows development of shared

competencies within a social network concentrated on a single purpose of resolving issues that

are meaningful to organizational improvement (Bandura, 1977). Vicariously receiving proficient

modeling driven by competent transmission of knowledge, teachers receive effective skills to

manage demands of serving SNL (Bandura, 1994). Collaborative, social interactions rife with

modeling and verbal persuasions lead to relaxed endeavors with increased willingness to

undertake the task of inclusion (Emam & Mohamed, 2011; Savolainen et al., 2012).

As instructional leaders, school-level administrations hold responsibility for supporting

teachers in their role as facilitators of learning (McFarlane & Woolfson, 2012). The

administrative semistructured interview was conducted and the following themes were identified:

(a) attitude, (b) relationship, (c) training, and (d) resources. Administration indicated a struggle

exists with the attitude of teachers in the general education classroom. From the perception of

leadership, the methodological view of SNL is that they belong to the special education teacher.

A perception exists there is a gap in ethos that hinders regular education teachers from serving

SNL effectively. Data aligned with the focus group perception that inclusion necessitates peer

training and relationship building through collaboration; however, there is a barrier between

what administration expects and what is practiced. Perceptions indicated that although a stronger

relationship piece is required, until general education and special education teachers achieve a

unified view of SNL, success is not likely.

Interview data also revealed that there was a perception teachers' lack of training

prevents them from delivering effective instruction. Administration perceived the role in

assisting teachers with training comes through interventions in literacy, differentiation, and small

groups. Resources are provided in PD such as book studies that offer strategies in reading or best

practices. Pedagogical differences occurred in the comparison of themes on resources in the data

between administration and focus group teachers.

Document analysis revealed PD as a tool for increasing student achievement. Two

courses of collaboration were named as whole staff collaboration and learning communities. No

precise direction was provided for collaboration between general education teachers and special

education teachers. Inclusion students were not explicitly named as a targeted group to be

improved. No provisions existed for learning community meetings between special education

and general education teachers.

The guiding questions for this study directed the collection of data through a qualitative case study means. Qualitative data supports what teachers perceive. Through theory and current literature, this research offers to better understand teachers' perceptions about factors for successful inclusion using qualitative exploration. Participants provided a holistic picture that was inductively analyzed by myself to establish a set of themes communicating a meaningful and comprehensive representation of how teachers and administration experience inclusion.

Sections that follow will provide an introduction to a PD module project plan and 2-year implementation timeline. The PD will address the need for collaboration between general education and special education teachers. The project will introduce a framework for questioning during preplanning and planning stages of the collaboration. Implications for PD will be discussed locally and far reaching settings. Modules will address themes found in the study. The sections will outline the description and goals, the rationale, and the literature that supports or challenges the project framework, and will culminate with how the project can be used for social improvement.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Inclusion poses challenges to general education teachers. The challenges with factors of inclusion, such as creating an inclusive environment among structural barriers, leave teachers expressing the recommendation that they receive more resources, support, and training to enhance the inclusion process for SNL (Lindsay, Proulx, Thomson, & Scott, 2013). Inclusive education, when implemented successfully, has the potential to increase student motivation both socially and in performance; therefore, teachers who are afforded the opportunity to collaborate often gain a sense of self-efficacy in delivering instruction to students (Chong & Kong, 2012). If teachers are dissatisfied with the idea of inclusion or harbor misunderstandings of what inclusion means, the operation of the process may be inadequate resulting in a lowered sense of self-efficacy in the classroom (Boyle, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2013). There is evidence that inclusion works when peers support each other, which was found to be more significant than direct resource teaching (Boyle et al., 2011).

PD is successful when it is rigorous, enduring, and relevant to practice. Specifically, PD is successful when it is content-specific and creates a functioning relationship with colleagues (Chong & Kong, 2012). The motivational benefits of PD focused on collaborative connections between teachers translate to a classroom setting where students receive the advantage of engagement and at times, higher student achievement (Chong & Kong, 2012; Huberman et al., 2012; Perkins & Cooter, 2013). The results of this study have inspired a project development that will be implemented in the elementary site of study (Appendix A).

Five general education teachers and one administrator participated in a focus group and a semistructured interview respectively. Focus group questions and interview questions supported three guiding research inquires seeking teacher perspectives on factors affecting successful inclusion in the general education classroom. Qualitative data from this research was employed to support building collaborative relationships between general education and special education teachers' use of PD. The title of the three module PD workshop is *Improving Factors of Inclusion.* The following paragraphs will outline the workshop's description, goals, implementation plans, project evaluation, and implications.

Description and Goals

The purpose for the developed project is to support the needs of general education teachers when implementing inclusion in their classrooms. A 3-day module-based PD workshop is the foundation for teacher engagement in collaborative work. Researchers have found using modules to be effective for training as teachers are more prone to accept new changes or ideals in their practice if new information is exhibited while explained and teachers have the opportunity to make reflections on the new content within context (Valdmann, Holbrook, & Rannikmae, 2012).

The modules additionally scaffold content to provide methods of collaboration that are teacher led, but information rich for the principal leader when joining PLC sessions. The PD driven by the research study builds opportunities for administrative support for teachers through shared documentation obtained from collaborative efforts of teaching staff. Administration will

be invited to participate in the modules and to engage with teachers during the activities and protocols (Gaspar, 2010).

The following description of the modules addresses the problem of potential frustration teachers experience from lower SNL performance when implementing inclusion in general education classrooms. The PD uses concepts of collaboration to bridge relationships between special education and general education teachers to address identified factors of the inclusion process. The topic addresses the gap between general education and special education collaborative instructional practices that teachers and one administrator in this study state are present and that research findings support to be evident (Hwang & Evans, 2011).

Structure

The PD will take place during scheduled days that the district provides for schools to determine their own development content. Since this study produced themes that teachers in the focus group identified as factors needing support, the content is feasible for offering in PD. No cost is involved to the school and instructional coaching personnel already grounded in the district will provide the presentation.

Careful attention will be given to learning styles and adult learning theory (Knowles, 1977). The content will be enhanced with transition activities, opportunities for movement, communication, silent reflection, and norms-based interactions between peers. Technology such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and cloud-based documents will be integrated to reduce material overload. Handouts that are intended to contribute to future collaborative efforts will be provided

in hard copy. Content will be relevant to practice, and research-based strategies for collaboration will address what is important to teachers according to study results (Knowles, 1977).

Module 1

During the Module 1 introduction, staff and administration will receive a summary of the case study to build purpose for the training modules. Background data will be presented to support the modules. A sphere-of-control model will emphasize the areas that are within control of teachers and areas that can be influenced. This model will provide focused work on what can be done to influence the inclusion setting and will encourage teachers to leave behind the areas that are controlled by the district and state (e.g. class sizes, additional personnel, etc.). School Reform Initiative (2015) protocols will be implemented within the module to ensure structure and facilitated communication throughout the PD. Using teacher perceptions of what inclusion is will create a transition into the brief topic of inclusion in the areas of history, inclusion laws, and inclusion as a practice. Special education specialists who are a part of the staff and PD participants will be called upon to contribute to the group discussion. The importance of the specialists' involvement is to promote peer dialogue regarding SNL in an expert manner as the PD leader facilitates.

During Module 1, participants will receive opportunities to reflect on barriers and facilitators, what inclusion is, along with components of collaboration in 2 phases, and they will receive a framework for their collaboration question and resolution process. To reach all learners, the module is designed to allow for movement, activity, dialogue, and performance formative assessments that build in reflection that is relevant to practice (Knowles, 1977).

Module 2

Module 2 will build on the previous day's work and will provide specific protocols and a means for collaboration when time is a barrier. The use of protocols will facilitate site PLC conversations, and technology will be used to keep communication open, real time, and ongoing. There will be no cost involved, as the technology needed already exists within the district infrastructure. Teachers will have the collaborative opportunity to create a PLC form that incorporates their customized format and accountability for their collaborative efforts. Forms that are developed through real-time updates can be shared among staff members and administration. The PLC form will be shared with the principal through live document updating. The shared documents will serve to provide a formative assessment so leadership can identify needs among staff and work to support the areas that evolve through PLC discussions. The principal will also have the opportunity to add targeted suggestions, provide responses, ask questions, or deliver input into the topics of PLCs. Special education teachers will be used during the modules to facilitate development of considerations for SNL in PLC form development.

Module 3

Module 3 is about practice with meaning. Mock scenarios will be used to provide teachers with the opportunity to use questions, protocols, strategy sharing, and collaborative talk-through during the process of discussing inclusion topics. The action plan will be developed by determined next steps, and a timeline will be proposed for the project. An agreed upon follow-up protocol will be established between special education teachers and classroom teachers. Any

developing accountability measures will follow administration guidelines and will not be determined by the facilitator.

Rationale

Federal and state guidelines for serving SNL in general education classrooms requires that teachers are accountable for delivering a free and appropriate public education that is differentiated to the needs of the student within an LRE (IDEA, 2004). The barriers that are present in inclusion settings often result in teacher self-efficacy deficits (Fuchs, 2010). Teachers communicated the desire to collaboratively discuss SNL with special education peers to gain knowledge through planning.

Document analysis did not yield evidence that factors of inclusion have directly been addressed, nor did the collaboration plans involve direct communications between general education teachers and special education teachers. However, the administrative interview results did produce themes similar to the focus group teachers. One theme in particular was that of collaborative efforts and deeper knowledge of logistics such as IEP development and maintenance.

Teachers in this study also reflected on their need to benefit from more training to gain a better understanding about serving special education students. However, training is not the only support teachers perceived they needed. Collaboration and the opportunity to share with peers increases the likelihood that teachers remain motivated to employ best practices in their inclusion classrooms (Hepner & Newman, 2010; Nicholas & Sheffield, 2014).

The focus group teachers wanted to be able to collaborate to communicate lesson plans and to gain support for times when they are unable to manage students. For collaboration to happen, teachers need to know what collaboration looks like, how to communicate, and ways to make collaboration happen in a sustainable way. The notion of a "one-shot" PD must be counteracted with a shared dialogue between teachers over time to cultivate a sense of what inclusion means along with how it is best served (Williams, 2010). In the following section, a review of literature will offer theories and research to support the genre of PD chosen.

Review of the Literature

The literature review was accomplished through an exhaustive search of Walden University library 2010 – 2015 year resources (e.g. ProQuest, SAGE, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, ERIC, Education, and Research Complete); internet search engines such as Bing, Google, Google Scholar, and Yahoo; and article resource group sites (e.g. Academia.edu, JSTOR, ResearchGate, and Taylor & Francis). The local library provided additional literature support for the study. An author-name search was employed to locate additional studies that addressed the topic of study. A social sciences index search for the years 2010 – 2015 was conducted to identify additional studies that were elusive using other methods. Cross-referencing resources within the 2010-2015-year range from other authors also provided further research   for the study. Articles located were examined for empirical data that was peer reviewed and current.

Keywords used in the search for literature were related to *PD, collaboration, relationships among general education and special education teachers, teacher/administration perceptions of inclusion, benefits of modules in PD, factors for effective adult learning, adult*

learning theory, student benefits of PD and coteaching, and *effectiveness of modules in PD.* Boolean operators connected the topics. The use of seminal, qualitative, and quantitative studies provided foundational support for claims.

Research

Genre. The genre of PD for this project is a module-based workshop that uses reflection and project-based actions as a guide for learning. Modules are used to increase content knowledge through a system of carefully designed activities to assist teachers in developing strong pedagogical practices (San Antonio, Morales, & Moral, 2011). Modules are tailored to the needs of the learners and are aligned to the concepts that they are intended to teach through performance-based lessons. Reflective modules contain objectives relevant to the need of the individual and do not overburden the participants with too many topics (Enke, Kraft, & Metternich, 2015). Each facilitated interaction is personal, designed to provide feedback, moves from lower to higher skill levels, contains components relevant to the learner, and permits teachers to interact while advancing to the objective (Robinson & Crittenden, 1972; San Antonio et al., 2011; Thompson & Goe, 2011).

Research supports the use of modules in the professional learning development of teachers. The benefits of module in PD are not only valuable in improving practice, but also in personal growth and independence of the individual while fostering a collaborative practice for learning (Berry et al., 2009; Griffin et al., 2008; Huberman et al., 2012; Knowlton, Fogleman, Reichsman, & Oliveira, 2015). Partnerships developed through collaboration are more likely to serve students by bridging the beneficial and mutual experiences of teachers. Skills obtained

through the collaborative PD supports the content delivered in the classroom (Knowlton et al., 2015).

During document review for this study, statements were made that teachers would be encouraged to provide information about what they need to develop in PD settings; however, no goals directly addressed the concerns that the focus group expressed regarding inclusion students. Using data from the focus group discussion in this qualitative case study propelled the development of the project to be need-specific and interactive between teachers. Such interaction brings community to the development process and places learning in the hands of peers. Skills development may only be embraced if teachers maintain input into what they are learning.

DeNoyelles, Cobb, and Lowe (2012) researched to determine if teachers were perceptively satisfied with a faculty-led course development program. Faculty members began a designing process and the data revealed that teachers were more satisfied with the content they designed than the original PD program that contained more seat-time. Data also revealed that the factors for satisfaction involved autonomy, adult-learning principals that contributed to the development of the content modules, and finally a shift from individual to community in a diversified and blended fashion. Allowing the early contributions of faculty to the development of the learning program creates a connection to the relevancy of the topic and increases the chances of deeper learning (deNoyelles et al., 2012).

Schools providing teachers opportunities for participating in school-based learning are responsible for creating a culture to meet teachers where they are. The informal nature of PD modules serves the relationship aspect of teacher learning (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010).

This reaches into the social learning theory where Bandura (1971, 1977) explained the need to refrain from strictly cognitive aspects of learning, but also incorporating social characteristics. The benefit of using modular approaches to PD lies in the social, observational, and modeled interactions acquired through peer work and collaborative application of context to the learning. The confidence, willingness to transform, and the purpose driven practice that results from experiencing successful PD modules may relate to positive teaching behaviors and potentially increase student achievement. With modules, the habit of complacency in routine teaching lessens.

Modules introduce a new model of learning that relies upon teachers' ability to embrace less didactical practices, teacher-centered pedagogy, and interactive tasks with the ultimate goal of building a sense of mastery in the classroom (Bandura, 1997; deNoyelles et al., 2012). In alignment with the social learning theory, peers and administration can provide proper support systems built through ongoing collaborative efforts. Teachers who may begin to question their ability to perform under certain pressures and in certain tasks, have the potential to build self-efficacy through properly designed modular experiences.

Modules. Harris et al., (2013) stated school culture contributes to the development of teachers. Whether individuals or groups are supported remains the responsibility of leadership. Staff development activities increase the shared exchange of ideas and training by building key relationships within teams. Networking in such a way results in creating high expectation professional learning communities ready for collaborative work. Trust and risk taking operating together in a tightly meshed sense of responsibility benefits all involved in the process of

learning (Harris et al., 2013). Jurasait-Harbison and Rex (2010) found the environment for PD

relies upon creating relationships through cultural contexts. Planning stages for adult learning

involves producing an atmosphere where collaboration is the norm rather than the exception.

Using a model of development where relationships grow through the sharing of knowledge in the

social setting breaks the mold of isolation where teachers frequently opt out of the idea

exchanges characteristic of working as a unified group.

The context of coteaching in PD offers a viable way of including general education and

special education teachers in a modular design that is sensitive to the needs of each. Shaffer and

Thomas-Brown (2015) found an increase in content awareness and pedagogy between both types

of teachers when supporting students of disability. While coteaching with both general and

special education teachers in the classroom may not be feasible for some schools due to limiting

factors (e.g. class sizes, allocations, etc.), respective camps benefit from the collaborative

requirements of PD when participating in collective planning (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015).

Park and So (2014) stated; however, that data indicated PD carried the caveat of too

much personal risk for some. Data suggested the concept of being open to others when

referencing individual instruction was potentially too new for wide acceptance. Without the

culture of trust, teachers in the study felt at risk of exposure. The psychological barrier prevented

cohesive problem solving and was harmful to the overall development of shared practice (Park &

So, 2014). Data gathered also indicated that influences of bureaucracy diluted interactions of

collaborative work, which placed high demand on the individual sense of openness. To solve

dichotomous exchanges among staff, teacher participants offered the suggestion to structure

feedback with focus on relevancy of the topic rather than superfluous discussions, such as those about looks or gestures. They communicated that keeping conversations to analysis of classroom practice creates a turning point between failure and success in collaborative learning (Park & So, 2014). Implications were the threat of risk could be alleviated if assistance consistently comes from leadership in the form of communication, development time, and training (Fuchs, 2010; Lock, 2015; Park & So, 2014).

Boahin and Hofman (2014) researched the effect of modular learning on the acquisition of skills. Data were gathered from 316 students by use of questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation. Questionnaires were administered to gather views and perceptions regarding competency-based training (CBT). Observations of the assessment procedures in five of the programs used in the research yielded the impressions of the training sessions, and a series of semistructured interviews sought the relationship between the content and the creation of CBT curriculum. Data gathered were used to triangulate and validate the results emerging from the study (Boahin & Hofman, 2014). Results revealed that the use of a modular format had a directly significant effect on quality of teacher skills that were acquired. The researchers found that modules fostered feedback relationship with teachers that resulted in the ability to make the correct decisions about their students (Boahin & Hofman, 2014). This is important to the context of this study. Collaborative work within inclusive settings between regular and special education teachers is a foundation to effective teaching (Tzivinikou, 2015). Tzivinikou (2015) reported through quantitative analysis of self- evaluation rubrics, that teachers in the general education and special education classroom reported that there was an increase in collaborative efforts,

previous training recall to improve classroom practices, and differentiation for students. Additionally, the relationship gained allowed deeper planning and instructional practices.

Nabhani and Bahous (2010) investigated 739 teachers through semistructured interviews regarding the components of effective PD. Data suggested lack of post evaluation and fragmented structure interrupted the positive influence that PD potentially carries. A need for mentoring and purposeful modules emerged from the findings (Boahin & Hofman, 2014; Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). Opportunities to apply learning, monitoring, and collaboration were perceived as necessary before improvement to performance (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010).

The unfortunate scenario remains that teachers often receive PD telling them how to perform instructional sessions with their students, but without the experience of knowing how it feels, looks, or must be differentiated teachers may experience that change is difficult to create (Boahin & Hofman, 2014; Gaspar, 2010; Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). Moreover, as Forte and Flores (2014) found through analyzing questionnaires, responses in semistructured interviews, and reflective entries, teachers do not perceive they have adequate training in collaborative efforts due to organizational barriers such as time or the conditions of the workplace. As Kennedy (2011) found when reporting the perceptions of the continuous professional development (CPD), the occupational characteristics that CPD can take on prevents the collaborative undertaking. The framework for examining the data filtered the findings through three different lenses focusing on aspects of professional learning, CPD models, and teacher learning. In line with a social cognitive standing, findings revealed that the more social and

informal aspects of the PD received by teachers is key to the effectiveness of the program (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Laal, Kermanshahi, & Laal, 2014).

Modules require an opportunity to practice desired skills and are not to be treated as a mere disseminator of information (Ngang, Ynus, & Hashim, 2015). Ngang et al. (2015) found when working with teachers in soft skills used within their practice, actively performing the skills increased their development. The findings indicated the opportunity to actively engage with what otherwise would remain theoretical, reinforced comprehension of content. Using hard skill training benefits, the audience when information is the goal, but using active participation in tandem with training increases understanding (Ngang et al., 2015).

The module design is specific to creating those experiences, particularly if networking and collaboration are integral components of the module. If teachers perceive a task too difficult or too vague in structure, they will not respond, but rather will rely upon prior routines and carry out the same levels of instruction with negative attitudes and little to no change (Varga-Atkins et al., 2009). This is paramount when teachers perceive insufficient support when operating in the PD process. Pedder and Opfer (2010) found in their literature review that a lack of specifically designed CPD hinders the development process for teachers and fails to meet the specific needs of adult learners. A gap remains in data as schools tend to rely on surveys or questionnaires to determine CPD. However, results from 10 out of 12 snapshot schools, revealed that teachers believe CPD is distanced from the students' learning outcomes, and is more instinctive than tied to school improvement. Self-evaluative integration was also a missing link in the purpose of the

development. This can be harmful to new and existing teachers that are left to provide their own instruction in teaching practice improvement and support.

James (2010) found modules were adequate in providing pre-service student teachers with challenges presented through specifically designed experiences and through the personal development of self-expectation for instructional actions taken in the classroom. James stated the transformative approach to PD reinforces the realization that teachers are key participants in learning that helps them evaluate personal, social, and PD (James, 2010). Research suggests that participating in modules designed to focus learning in a collaborative manner draws teachers to a more student-oriented approach when teaching (Chang, Wu, & Wu, 2015). This is contrary to "industrial involvement in…programs" (Boahin & Hofman, 2014, p. 86) where low percentages of students obtained necessary skills. During their study evaluating a national PD program, Armour and Makopoulou (2011) found that implementation, learning interactively, and the collective participation that modules afforded were positive factors with teachers during their training. Teachers also found the modules that were designed for their PD to be very relevant to their practice. A pre-module needs assessment was used to create collaborative modules that were sustainable in what teachers regarded as beneficial and successful learning through collective participation methods. The study reinforced the concept that the relationship between learning and the learner is built upon a network of systems geared toward professional and personal development (Armour & Makopoulou, 2011; Potolea & Toma, 2011). Working with others in collaborative opportunities that stimulate reflection and dialogue potentially fosters professional growth in multiple participants due to interactive learning participation (Schneider

& Kipp, 2015). Reflective discourse adheres cognition and behavior among teachers with positive outcomes (Avalos, 2011; Horn & Little, 2010; Korthagen, 2010). Horn and Little (2010) researched the quality of dialogue between teachers related to "collective orientation and its contextual resources and constraints" (p. 211). Results indicated teachers' ability to successfully interact as a collaborative team pertained to the structural quality of professional learning opportunities connected to the conversational protocols they employed. Without the knowledge of how to collaborate; however, teachers potentially lose the opportunities to problem solve due to unskilled conversations (Horn & Little, 2010). Providing the social aspect of learning achieved through "networking and interchanges" (Avalos, 2011, p. 18) in PD increases the participation in creating a culture of learning (Korthagen, 2010).

Formal learning for teachers is quickly becoming an event of the past. As budgets decrease, demands increase, and resources wane. Organizations are looking toward incorporating socially infused settings for informal learning through modules (Thacker, 2015). Incorporating the context of the workplace into PD allows continuous adaptive change through reflection and teamwork (Johnson & Beehr, 2014; Moon, 2004; Vazquez-Bernal et al., 2011). Thacker (2014) argued participants used formal learning to connect with content and then turned to informal learning through collaboration to practice in a way that had meaning.

Armour and Makopoulou (2011) and Potolea and Toma et al. (2012) stated the perceptions of teamwork, positive identity in being a professional, and strong collaboration are cited as an outcome of working through modules. The process of their research also revealed that modules are difficult to design if interferences were present such as administration barriers,

obstacles in planning or control, and timing issues for implementation. Once these factors were overcome, evidence emerged convincingly that module learning is more effective than traditional instructive methods.

Reflection. Reflection in PD amplifies engagement and acts as a counterbalance to negative consequences of the rigorous teaching process (Kosir, Tement, Licardo, & Habe, 2015). As was revealed in this project study, the workload is perceived as overwhelming, and the struggles with student performance are real. When reflecting on preparedness, teachers reflected self-efficacy suffers because factors are not conducive to a well-functioning system. Kosir et al. (2015) stated operating in the anxiety of a stressful scenario drives teachers to burnout by harboring a sense of defeat. Teachers in this study shared their feelings of being overwhelmed and helplessness within their circumstances.

In their inclusive classrooms, teachers reflected in this study's reported data that expectations leave them frustrated and fearful that they are unable to perform their jobs. They are also left perceiving they are inadequate at implementing the process of inclusion effectively. The research from Kosir et al. (2011) posited that teachers allowed to spend time in reflection were better equipped to function autonomously. Collaboration and solving problems as a team was identified as beneficial in reducing professional stressors in the areas of management and intervention with individual students (Kosir et al., 2011).

Reflections bring about action in many stages. From beginning change to full implementation teachers use the complex stages of reflection as a means to improve practice and meta-cognitive functioning. The changes are not individual, but are intended to be social as well.

Sharing professional learning with peers opens the door to more reflection and hence more action through collaborative planning (Johnson & Beehr, 2014; Moon, 2004; Vazquez-Bernal et al., 2011). Reflection also requires dedication and support. Vazquez-Bernal et al. (2011) used a longitudinal study on reflection to determine the process over time and how it interplays with obstacles that slow the specific goals. Following one teacher over a 9-year period, the researchers discovered that the reflection process was in constant evolution and required the practice to be supported by the community. Based on the researchers' findings, a strong case emerged for emotional as well as cognitive components to be nurtured through the development process. Golombek and Doran (2014) researched 11 teacher learners through journal analysis and found that emotional content appeared which provided training points for instructional practice. The emotive factors align with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy and require nurturing in a positive manner for perceptions of mastery to improve. Using reflection as an active stage in PD and in combination with modules offers teachers the opportunity to learn new practices and connect with peers. The time spent in collaborative development increases the likelihood that teachers will use what they learn, grow with their practice, maintain support for peers, and serve students better.

Theoretical Support

John Dewey (1922) delivered his thoughts on the actions of habit by stating that "Habits are conditions of intellectual efficiency…all habit-forming involves the beginning of an intellectual specialization which if unchecked ends in thoughtless action" (p. 173). Even the most skilled can fall victim to routines that are ineffective and nonproductive. Teachers are no

exception. To combat the complacency of ineffective actions in the classroom, reflection is a process that is used in the PD realm. The theory of Dewey espoused that learning is a process that is not only ongoing, but is collective. Any past learning becomes foundational nourishment to additional awareness and understanding. A concept; therefore, involves scaffolding, in a sense, to become future information usable to one's craft or way of living. Information is expandable, and if reflection is not an integral piece woven into the fabric of action, contributions to learning can halt and stagnate. The potential result ends with a division among general education and special education teachers locked in a power struggle where one is seen as inferior to the other. Therefore, coteaching efforts can remain underdeveloped, or nonexistent with very little concern for collaboration or development to better relationships in professional learning (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014).

Social Learning Theory

This project uses the social learning theory to defend the genre and content used in the design of the development. The project uses cognitive and social aspects to deliver content. Since the change of knowledge is often the goal of PD, this project focuses on interactive participation between general and special education teachers to deepen understanding of the content and create a support system to maintain the learning (van den Bergh, Ros, & Beijaard, 2015). There are five points taken from the social learning theory that are underpinnings for the study project: (a) cognition and social context, (b) observation and consequences, (c) information, (d) reinforcement, and (e) active learning (Bandura, 1971, 1977, 1978).

Cognition and social context. The concept of social learning theory is that individuals learn by observing, emulation, and modeling (Bandura, 1971, 1977). The theory includes cognition and social interaction in a reciprocal relationship. The cognitive aspect involves changes in belief or knowledge about a topic. The social aspect involves learning through participation (Watson, 2013). For teachers the best illustration of cognition in the social context is when professionals learn together. PD modules are designed to bring teachers together to discuss an issue, a topic, data, and ramifications of practices in the classroom (Stoll et al., 2006). The problem-solving component relies upon collaboration and teamwork as well as the feedback of its members. Within the development of the project, cognition and social components were proposed to provide teachers with practice allowing them to focus on an issue, become solution oriented, observe the thinking process of peers, and follow the modeled process of collaboration. The discourse opportunities built into the modules facilitate the social need through collaborative interactions, which fulfills a need expressed by focus group participants and administration in the study.

Observations and consequences. From the perspectives of the social learning theory, knowledge expansion is a byproduct of the observational encounter (Bandura, 1986, 1994; Watson, 2013). As a result, mental models form from observations that translate into actions in the classroom. Following Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1994) theory, teachers observe, connect, and then potentially reenact by producing newly formed instructional behaviors in a classroom. However, teachers must be cautions to prevent practices from stagnating into the trappings of routine. New concessions must be made to avoid the pitfalls of relaxing in teaching practice.

With module-driven PD, reflection becomes a part of the growth process. Teachers have a vast observational repertoire of student behavior. They also have a wide range of knowledge regarding the consequences of using teaching strategies. Following the social learning theory, the project modules were designed to allow personal observations and consequences to be discussed, compared, analyzed, and resolved with peers in a safe environment constructed for adult learners' needs. Within a collaborative framework, teachers may arrive at informed decisions or conclusions together for the improvement of practice or to begin an inquiry process. Teacher perspectives are challenged and change is facilitated based on what teachers have already experienced (Wake, 2011; Watson & Evans, 2012).

Information. Watson (2013) gathered data studying math departments in four schools in England. Videos and interviews were performed to contrast the new lessons teachers created after PD modules were delivered. What Watson (2013) discovered was that teachers experiencing PD modules for two terms most often gathered knowledge from observations they made, and after extracting pertinent information would use the information in ways to change practice. They observed modeled teaching practices in videos designed to show them examples of lessons and in the written form of detailed lesson plans. Watson's (2013) results suggested that the PD had a positive effect on self-efficacy if the new material was smoothly implemented with students.

Modules are structured to take learners through the process of thinking and learning. The observations that teachers must make when encountering PD content requires them to extract observed information inductively so they systematize their future actions. Knowledge is

gained about expectations, both spoken and unspoken, through discussions and silent

observations and that information becomes a building block for teaching practice. Perspectives

and motivation may change as a result (Watson, 2013).

     Reinforcement. An important part of learning is the reinforcement one receives when

learning new things (Skinner, 1976). Tomlin and Reed (2012) argued that reinforcement is an

effective tool when challenges overwhelm a setting as learning takes place – specifically within

the special education classroom. While reinforcement is not the sole reason for performing in the

classroom, it does serve to flag a successful performance that is recognized socially. Where

reinforcement connects to teaching practice is that in this study focus group participants seek the

opportunity to know how inclusion can be correctly implemented in the general education

classroom. They seek the collaboration with their special education peers and desire to use the

information obtained. In this PD, peer-reinforcement will be available as teachers plan together

during the modules. Reinforcement for expressed ideas, feedback, teamwork, and motivation

will potentially reinforce the positive contributions of the learning process (Bandura, 1977).

     Active learning. Lastly, teachers in the project PD modules will be active in their

learning. The social learning theory posits that in order for true learning to take place, those

receiving information should not be passively engaged. Personal and environmental elements do

not perform respectively but rather regulate each other. Much of the knowledge that is gained

through directly experiencing effects is created by actions. Interacting with information extracted

through environment, cognitive thought processes, and observable behaviors within the PD

influences the attitudes of teachers going through the learning process (Schunck & Zimmerman,

2008). The positive collegial exchanges feed the impetus to remain engaged in the material in a reciprocal determinism that supports the social learning theory by delivering prospects for interactions and observations with colleagues (Bandura 1978; Schunck & Zimmerman, 2008). Moolenaar's (2012) critical analysis of social network research indicated that teachers are more likely to continue the collaborative process if they have successful interactions while building a peer interaction network through professional learning. Data revealed that through the collaborative efforts of teachers, reciprocity developed that kept mutual interests on the table. The important takeaway is that more resources, information, and support are possible, which keeps the learning process flowing and relationship-based.

Project Description

When implementing PD, several factors must be considered. After finding solutions to scheduling and organizational issues, careful consideration needs to be given to the execution of the project and evaluation process. In the paragraphs below, specific factors will be determined for the implementation of the 3-day workshop modules. The considerations discussed are: (a) possible resources and already existing supports, (b) possible barriers, (c) timetable proposal, (d) roles and responsibilities, and (e) follow-up and next steps.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Resources required for this PD project are derived from already existing resources built into the infrastructure of the school and district. The more common resources such as personnel to facilitate the modules, technology, materials, space, and time are all available without particular requirements to secure access. Instructional coaches roam the district and can present

PD any time a school requires help. The district provides the technology and tools used in the

modules on a daily basis. There is no cost to the school or user. Materials are provided through

the PD budget and schools carry a stock on hand for such purposes. The school's media center

enables PD sessions with accommodations in technology and space to gather. Technology

includes the use of a projection board (e.g. SmartBoard or Promethean), laptops for each teacher,

and iPads. These items are already housed at the school site. The administrator may use them at

any PD time that is scheduled for schools by the district or at any appointment set by the

administrator. The times for PDs to take place are once a month, during full-day PD appointed

days, and after school. Full day PDs are built into the beginning of school and fall sessions.

These sessions are the optimal opportunity for the PD project to take place. PD is often left up to

the school site. Permission protocols would only affect the dialogue between the facilitator and

the administrator and requires documentation that PD will have taken place during those

scheduled times.

Potential Barriers

The greatest threat to the PD project created from this study is the challenge of

solidifying a schedule. Cusack et al. (2012) recognized the organization process can create an

obstacle for implementing PD sessions, and time and space are components to consider. Barriers

have to be solved if planning is to be successful. The challenge of securing a timeframe that

would not be in danger of being rescheduled or changed altogether is not possible to accomplish.

The school or district has obligations to address more pressing matters at times; therefore, the

need to be flexible remains a part of the planning process. Creating a contingency-based calendar is one way to help avoid the pitfall of cancelations.

Another potential barrier relates to the process of obtaining teacher perspectives of value for the PD. If teachers are to find significance in faculty development, facilitators need to make the development appealing and full of purpose (Knowles et al., 2005). Teachers can only perceive PD as positive in light of their own pre-existing attitudes toward change (Donnell & Gettinger, 2015). If teachers know the purpose and have evidence that the development needs to occur, if the development makes provisions for a take-away, and if the development is immediately relevant to their practice because of solutions they create, then teachers value their learning and will be motivated to participate actively (Knowles et al., 2005). The PD designed for this project takes the adult learning to heart and offers modules that are free from supernumerary messages. Rather the information received requires reflection, action, and relation to the data gathered in this study. The uncertainty of the buy-in process can be overcome once teachers tie the learning to their profession in relevant ways.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Collaboration is an important component of the learning process for teachers (Fuchs, 2010; Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Knowles, 1984; Watson, 2013). There are social and circumstantial conclusions that hinder improvements in education. Challenging such barriers introduces a paradigm shift that contains the ultimate possibility of changing teaching behaviors to better approaches toward the inclusion setting (Watson, 2013). Increasing self-efficacy through persistent innovation motivated by the observational and modeled learning of a

collaborative setting allows for new behaviors and attitudes to develop in implementing inclusion successfully (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012; Watson, 2013). Research in the literature reviews, and the data gathered throughout this study indicate that collaboration is a factor that is not only a best practice in teaching, but is desirable among staff members. The modules will be presented to staff during the fall PD schedule set by the school. The purpose of this timing works with the district protocol that reviews allocations and budget from the state Movement of instructional staff ensues a transitional process to fill all classrooms appropriately. The process is not completed until 2 months into the school year. When the allocations are correct, PD sessions take place at the sites. It will be at this time that teachers will know how their teams are assembled and true work can begin.

The implementation timeline in Table 3 provides an outline for how the PD and ongoing support will manifest over a 2-year period. The initial development sessions will be a 3-day workshop. A careful review of a preliminary needs assessment will drive adjustments to the development. The purpose of needs assessments is to personalize PD since, "Training supports individual learning through specialized instruction and practice" (Gupta, 2007, p. 18). Exit tickets throughout the workshop will formatively evaluate how teachers grasp the concepts and evaluation at the end of the development will provide a summative assessment for preparing ongoing support.

Table 3

Timetable for 2-Year Implementation: Improving Factors of Inclusion

Timetable for 2 Year Implementation

September 2015

- Needs Assessment to All staff members

- Review of Data and Adjustments to Content

- Secure Resources and Plan for Contingencies

- Meet to Align Purpose of Development with Facilitator (Instructional Coach/es

October 2015

- Week One PD Workshop Modules Training

- Implementation of Collaboration PLCs

- Teacher Feedback Form After First 2 Meetings

- Share Results with Instructional Coach Team

- Plan for Ongoing Support with Instructional Coach Team

- Meet With Administration to Align Next Steps

November 2015-March 2016

- Special Education Teachers and Coach/es Meet Weekly with Teachers in PLCs (ongoing)

- Use Collaboration Form In Google Drive

- Share With Administration and Coach/es

(table continues)

Timetable for 2 Year Implementation

- Review for Recurring Themes

- Invitations for Administration to Join PLCs

- Quarterly Whole Staff PLC Meetings with Coach to Review Progress in Collaboration Efforts

- Plan for MicroLab (SRI, 2015) Developments as Necessary

- District Standard Assessments and Programs: Review, Analyze, Adjust

March 2016

- Administration Led Staff Meeting to Discuss Goals for Next Year

- Discuss Progress to Date (data, collaborative efforts, etc…)

- Communicate Administrative Goals for Coming Year

- Determine Next PD Aligned with Needs and Goals

March 2016 – May 2016

- Teacher Led Collaboration with Report to Coach Monthly

- Use of Collaboration Form in Google Drive

- Share With Administration and Coach/es

- Create a Reflection Entry to Share in Drive as a Summative Evaluation

June 2016 – July 2016

- Summer PD Offerings from District (Summer Vacation)

August 2016 – September 2016

- Allocation and Assignments: No PD During This Time

Timetable for 2 Year Implementation

October 2016 – May 2017

- Reflection Review Results and PD as Needed Based on Data

- Review Student State Testing Achievements and Highlight Areas of Need

- Plan Implementation of Amendments to PLCs Based on Schedule or Need

- Set Check-in Schedule with Coach/es

- Use of Observational Data and Feedback/Reflection Forms as Evaluative Assessment

Note. Timeline indicates a span of 2 instructional years with summer PD offered off site during the months of June through July.

The 2-year implementation begins in the month prior to the PD. A needs-assessment will be given that applies to all instructional staff members. The data will be reviewed and the adjustment to the content will be made as necessary prior to the development sessions. The resources for the workshop will be secured, and a plan for contingencies will be made. The plan will include alternative approaches to the development should resources become unavailable. Finally, a meeting will be arranged to impart the purpose of the development to the facilitator coach or coaches.

In the month of implementation, the PD will occur. The modules will transpire over a 3-day period. Following the workshop modules, collaborative PLCs will proceed for 2 meetings, then teachers will be asked to provide feedback so results can be shared with the coach or coaching team. The coach/team will make plans for ongoing support and will meet with administration to disclose supplementary steps. The support will remain ongoing throughout the implementation phases.

The remaining 5 months will focus on the weekly meetings between special education teachers, general education teachers, and the coach/es. These meetings will remain ongoing. Teachers will fulfill PD module goals by using the collaboration form created in Google Drive, share all notes with administration and coaches who will review for recurring themes. Administration will receive regular invitations to PLCs and will attend as available. Quarterly whole staff PLCs with the coach/es will be ongoing to review progress in the collaboration efforts. Based on outcomes of the meetings, Microlabs (SRI, 2015) will be held as necessary so teachers can make adjustments to achieve the best possible performance. Throughout the

meetings, district standard assessments and programs data will be reviewed, analyzed, and collaborative efforts can make changes necessary to serve inclusion students.

In the three remaining months of the school year, special education and general education teachers will practice teacher-led collaboration PLCs and will report to the coach/es monthly. Teacher teams will use the collaboration form in Google Drive, share forms with administration and coach/es. They will complete a reflection entry to share as a summative evaluation. The summative information will be analyzed and used in the second year as a guide for building future support for special and general education teachers.

During the summer months when schools is not in session, the district offers PD and teachers have the option to attend or not attend. No modules will be offered at the site during the first 2 months of school while allocations and assignments happen, rather teachers will receive goal information from administration and will collaboratively work to create agendas to meet those goals in subsequent PLC work. A review of reflection information will be made with the staff and PD changes will follow as necessary. Testing data from state benchmarks will be examined. Areas of need for SNL and general students will be highlighted. A plan for amendments to PLCs by schedule or need will be discussed and arranged. When PLC schedules are finalized, a check-in plan with coach/es will be created so support will be available, but PLCs will remain teacher-led. Evaluations of the effectiveness of the PD implementation will be made using observational data and reflection forms throughout the school year. An analysis of future need will be performed using the subsequent information.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

The primary function of the PD program is to construct programs that are specifically designed to meet the needs of the recipients. For collaboration to be effective, a number of roles and responsibilities must be defined and secured. Teachers, facilitating coach/es, and administration all play an integral part of the improvement process. Each member of the development is responsible for an exclusive duty that when amassed together becomes a functional program delivering quality training and resources for all activities relating to PD.

Teachers

This workshop is designed specifically for collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers. Without participation in the modules, or implementation of the content learned, the PD goals will not be effective and improvement in the area of collaboration will be a struggle. Teachers will be anticipated to adhere to PLC schedules, implement the content of the workshops, use the technology, and follow the collaborative questioning model provided in the modules. They will be involved in planning for inclusion students by discussing individual needs for each student, interventions, and instructional structures within the classroom. Special education teachers will be responsible for collaboratively supporting general education teachers in the modification process for SNL work and environment. Regular education teachers will be expected to meet with special education teachers with data and information about their students so collaboration can be well informed.

Additionally, the teachers will be responsible to reflect on their work. Occasionally they will be required to provide feedback and write reflective pieces so evaluations changes may be

made if necessary. They will be expected to share their documentation from PLCs with each

other, administration, and coaches so support can be provided when needed.

Administration

In the beginning implementation phase, the role of the administrator will be supportive as

teachers learn collaboration. Learning from Leadership (2010) stated when administrators and

teachers divide governance of practices that is driven by the learning needs of students, teachers'

connections with one another are stronger and student performance improves. Shared leadership

promotes the development of PLCs. The administrator also has the responsibility to support

teachers in their development. Approval of site-based PD falls to the shoulders of administrative

leadership. Any endorsement of a PD program will be based on district goals and best practice.

Communicating shared core values, and a common vision for collaboration allows

teachers to take on assorted functions within teams (Learning from Leadership, 2010). For

administration, support also includes uninterrupted time and space for the PD modules, and for

teams to work together with special education. Administration will be expected to work closely

with coaches to discuss needs of the teachers, provide resources, review shared documents, and

answer all questions when attending as a guest in PLCs. During the second year, administration

will add the responsibility of outlining specific data-driven goals that need to be addressed in the

collaborative meetings.

Facilitators and Coach/es

The coach/es responsible for delivering the PD maintains the responsibility of overseeing

the PD execution and completion. Initial responsibilities will be related to building trust among

the teachers and administration. Designing team-building activities and highly engaging activities encompasses the development process. Research supports the trust factor when planning school improvements (Tschannen-Moran, 2000).

The facilitator will supervise securing resources, schedules, technology, content, permissions, and development of all learning tools. Communications in the form of collaboration with administration and any coach/es that join the development will be used to further support teachers along with any development that is subsequent to initial trainings. Maintenance communications with teachers in the form of agendas, feedback forms, reflection notes, and direct discourse will be vital to the continuance of the development and will be managed by the facilitators and coach/es.

Project Evaluation Plan

Two types of evaluation measures will be used in determining effectiveness of the PD designed for this project: (a) formative and (b) summative. Evaluations are effective when they are specifically constructed to review the development being evaluated. Planners for PD work to distinguish evaluative questions and the best way to provide solutions for meeting expected goals. Formative evaluations guide improvement and will involve gathering progress oriented data through exit tickets and feedback forms. Results will be used to make intermittent modifications to the implementation process or development needs that arise. Three questions about execution, perceptions of participants, and met goals will be the basis for all questioning on summative evaluations (Haslam, 2010). Summative evaluations will contain quantitative data such as scales or ranking systems. Reflection pieces will be ongoing and gathered from

participants to obtain more detailed qualitative data. The entries will be used to gather detailed

data about changes occurring in attitudes and practice. The summative evaluation follows the

evaluation cycle and is informative to the developer and how teachers need to be served. The

summative portion of evaluation also has implications for the facilitator's next cycle of

evaluation. Opportunities for participants to state desire for change or follow-up sessions will

also be built into evaluation.

Formative Evaluation

For PD to be truly successful, developers need to incorporate components of formative

assessment into the sessions. Recognizing and reacting to teachers' learning needs allows

facilitators/coach/es to adjust instruction conducive to understanding of the content. The

formative assessments in this project consist of exit tickets relating learned content after the first

two modules to how teachers will apply what they have learned. With each ticket, teachers have

the opportunity to provide statements that will be helpful to the facilitator during the workshop.

Throughout the 2-year implementation, feedback forms and weekly PLC forms will be used to

gather an ongoing perception of the PD effectiveness. Teacher written-response will offer the

opportunity to review understanding among the participants (Hudson, Hudson, Gray, &

Bloxham, 2013). Hudson et al (2013) stated that mentoring using PLCs and formative feedback

provides transformation through ongoing support while simultaneously gauging levels of teacher

engagement.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation will be used at the end of the initial workshop. An open-ended plus-delta response will allow teachers to freely describe the components of the PD that was effective, and what needs to be improved. Teachers may express as much or as little as they wish. Next, a 5-question Likert scale will gather data aligned to Guskey's (2000) model on five levels of information: (a) reactions of participants, (b) participant learning, (c) support and change in an organization, (d) ability of participants to apply new knowledge and skills, and (e) perception regarding student learning. The summative information will be used as a decision making tool to prevent delivering learning in a way that recycles information in an antiquated paradigm. Using old methods diminishes the results, produces high levels of frustration, and reinforces cynicism (Guskey, 2000). The evaluation will determine the worth of the development and whether benefits exist.

Project Implications

Local Community

The module-based PD workshop developed for this project was designed to prepare teachers for collaboration between general education and special education departments. The data collected from the qualitative case study research focus group found that general education teachers desired more time in collaboration with special education peers to be better prepared in instruction for inclusion students. They perceive they are unprepared and lack knowledge regarding handling SNL. The administration also conveyed through an interview that teachers need to work together to make the inclusion process work and teachers need to view SNL as

students belonging to everyone. With the collaborative process provided in the project for this study, teachers' obtaining knowledge and practice in collaboration could mean a positive step in working not only with each other, but also with SNL resulting in better instruction and student achievement.

Local Community

Locally, this project addresses the factors for what teachers perceive will bring successful inclusion to the general education classroom. While class size and increased personnel remains out of control of the schools, other matters can be more plausibly handled through the collaborative process. Teachers can then work toward discussing their students in a comprehensive manner that yields instructional change, intervention knowledge, support for planning, and an open line of communication. The possibilities for frustration stemming from low student performance diminish as support emerges through the cooperative process. Teachers receive tools to help with mastery along with verbal input from peers, modeling, and a network poised to reduce anxiety through professional sponsorship (Bandura, 1977). What this could mean for students is an expertly designed environment that is tailored to their needs with collaboratively differentiated instructional strategies purposed to increase performance.

Parents of SNL would benefit from teachers' acquisition of collaboration skills. When conferencing and working with families to care for special learners, teachers maintain the responsibility to communicate student achievement as individualized plan modifications arise. As collaboration skills increase parents will benefit from receiving clear, detailed, information about what is working with their students. The family's advantage lies in being able to richly

discuss students with confidence their student's needs are met. Skills used in the academic setting can translate to conferencing setting, which builds a bridge between teachers and families, academics, successes, or remaining goals. Armed with knowledge about student achievement, parents increase in involvement can further the achievement status of the student (Castro et al., 2015).

Administrators rely on teachers to carry out mandates and school site plans. Time to be directly involved is not always a resource leaders have. Implementing a strong culture of collaboration may alleviate administrative worry that teachers eschew the harder subjects. With PD designed to scaffold learning while instigating practice in the process, leaders benefit from the accountability required as part of the implementation. Easy access to real time updates to PLC documentation forms will be built in to the accountability measures for collaboration teams. Forms may be reviewed at any time which provides a continuous evaluation of progress, eliminates the need for formal surveys that occur only on an intermittent basis, and ensures 100% participation with no opt out. Questions posed by the teams on the forms can be answered without needing to access the leader personally, which lightens the need for personal interactions when time is strained. Additionally, leadership will build a strong portfolio for the school. Collaboration with community partners can strengthen while increasing the resources for teachers and students.

Community partners invest time and money into the academic settings of school districts. The purpose of community partners is to support schools in the endeavor to increase college and career ready students that become members of the workforce. The goals for some community

partnerships often include creating a stronger community through education and maximum achievement. With teachers who collaborate, SNL student achievement has been shown in research to advance (Huberman et al., 2012). Student achievement may increase the likelihood that learners will be capable of entering the community, as active and productive members who contribute needed skills.

Far-Reaching

In a shared setting teachers need a network that supports their pedagogical development. Efforts in PD, if research-based and grounded in data, carry potential for improving factors for successful teaching for special students. The work presented here is foundational to building teamwork and collaboration. Research supports the idea that collaboration will only mature if the implementation is ongoing (Friend & Barron, 2015). Benefits from the modules in this project will be positive for SNL at the school, but the practice of collaboration will generalize to any of the student population at the site. In a more far-reaching context, all schools can benefit from the practice of collaboration and following a protocol for supporting implementation.

The data in this research likewise justifies a stronger response from the site and districts across the state to keep students college and career ready (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014a, 2014 c, 2015). A collaborative ethos inspires actions oriented to a growth mindset (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Moolenarr et al, 2012). If teachers view working with inclusion students as more of an alliance than a division between departments, students will no longer be viewed as belonging to just one, but to all who are responsible for delivering instruction. Moreover, the instructional practices that emerge from the relationships built through

collaboration will be appropriate for any educational setting or department. Students directly benefit from teachers prepared to know who they are and deliver the instruction they need. Student achievement has the potential for gains otherwise impossible in their current setting.

Conclusion

Developing rich PD requires facilitators to know the needs of their teachers. Using data to identify the areas of potential allows the creation of targeted improvement strategies in an environment conducive to highly engaged adult learners. Research in the literature review supports modules with embedded activities that scaffold learning as confidence is developed in the classroom and reflection deepens. Protocols to focus communication of content help teachers learn, retain, and use newly formed skills.

The project for this study was developed based on the research data. A 3-day PD was developed because general education teachers stated they desired collaboration and knowledge for assisting students of inclusion in their classrooms. Administration desired the collaboration between general education and special education teachers so they understand what instructing inclusion students entails from a managerial and philosophical vantage point. Document review of site plans for improvement listed no specific interventions or improvement plans specifically related to foster this type of networking. Using the qualitative data obtained in the study, a more detailed solution to collaboration was achieved through project development that would be supported over a 2-year implementation period.

The project contains goals and descriptions of timelines to outline the steps of the program. Evaluative measures were built into the project so the development remained need

specific. Implications for the project reach into not only teachers and administration, but also parents, and community partners. The boons for local community are many, but advantages also could potentially assist a more far-reaching context where practices of collaboration, if generalized, could profit students in larger settings within other districts or states.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The next section outlines how the project's strengths address the problem and what limitations might be present. Recommendations will be offered for remediation of the limitations as alternative solutions. The following sections will discuss what has been learned in the project development and how changes have taken place throughout the study in areas of scholarship, being a practitioner, and project developer. In the final paragraphs, social change will be addressed in the context of the project and implications for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

The strength of the project fundamentally addresses the data gathered in this study. Teachers in the focus group indicated training and collaboration with peers are factors needing improvement to better understand how to instruct inclusion students in their classrooms. They stated there are some barriers, such as time, that results in division from their special education colleagues, which leaves them harboring the sense they are unable to care for SNL to the fullest extent possible. While there are factors, such as class size or added personnel, remaining out of the control of this project, other factors can be influenced and improved upon. The strength of the project rests in building increased collaboration into already existing systems within the site. There is no cost to the school, and facilitators/coach/es can be accessed at any time since they are already a part of the support system within the district. The primary function of the coaching staff is to facilitate PD as needed. Collaboratively building strong connections between special

education and general education provides peer training by using the expertise of the special education staff. The staff has the background of education and experience that can be shared with general education teachers. The project also opens the lines of communication through organized meetings. The collaborative planning and questioning framework was previously not in place. The project provides the use of newly acquired skills through a protocol for discussion that is focused on data both concentrated and IEP driven. Considering the planning process allows the discourse to revolve around modifications and interventions not previously examined at deep levels. The project also meets the administrative expectations for collaboration and discussion about SNL in a manner that is deep and academically informative.

Veisi, Azizifar, Gowhary, and Jamalinesari (2015) researched teacher relation of empowerment to self-efficacy. Their findings indicated that there is a correlational link between collective contribution and a sense of self-efficacy in teaching (Veisi et al., 2015). Experience was not a considerable factor (Veisi et al., 2015). The results significantly revealed data regarding teachers' need to feel empowered for self-efficacy to improve (Veisi et al., 2015). In PD terms, a sense of autonomy while being a part of the collective is the goal of collaboration. Collaboration has the power to build teachers' sense that they are contributing to SNL students' success in the general education classroom (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). A strong PD program with professional growth as the outcome will help to augment teachers' sense of self-efficacy in the classroom while allowing them to remain autonomous.

Limitations

The focus of this study was on general education teachers' perceptions with factors of inclusion in the general education setting. However, the complexities of the inclusion process are not individual to a single sect of education. The coping mechanisms used in working with SNL extend to all areas of the academic setting. Therefore, exploration of services in alternative settings such as enrichment programs is warranted. Glazzard (2011) stated that there is a division among educators regarding interpretation in inclusive practice. Glazzard also stated that as some stakeholders in leadership define inclusion implementation as a strategy-based solution, others declare more pragmatic solutions such as resources, collaboration, and training to provide support. The results of this study's data indicated that there is a variance in interpretation between the administrative side and the reality of classroom practitioners. Data obtained in this study might indicate a different outcome if a universal understanding of inclusion was explored prior to the research.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

This study used focus group, administrative interviews, and document analysis data to determine the topic of the project. Teachers were very forthcoming with their insights into their practice; however, more detail may be needed to determine additional issues needing addressed. Women were the only participants of the focus group. Male teaching staff declined the offer. While the data resulted in findings that agreed with other research, it would be beneficial to obtain data from special education teachers, male instructors and secondary grade levels. Obtaining data from multiple schools would provide a broader view of the problem and would

offer an opportunity for more male input. Multiple interviews designed to capture perceptions from varying grade levels would also yield deeper data on the topic of inclusion. In addition to increasing the data obtained from higher performing schools, including lower performing schools may result in meaningful data as well.

A second approach to exploring perceptions would be to include observational data. Teachers often do not implement the content presented in PD and perceive that factors prevent them from doing so. Observational data would strengthen PD to collaborate targeted ways around perceived barriers so the resistance to implementing content might wane. Reviewing observational information with teachers would draw them into the solution process and give them ownership of their development. Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015) posited that teachers are more involved in continuous development when they participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of PD that requires buy-in.

Thirdly, peer coaching and observation offers a viable solution at the completion /implementation phase of data driven professional development to increase the capacity of meeting SNL needs. While not directly collaborative in a controlled setting, peer observations offer a plausible solution to increasing awareness of what works in the inclusive classroom. The results of this study indicated general education teachers desired the assistance of their special education colleagues. Employing the special education teacher as an observational teaching model or coteaching advisor builds a cooperative environment in which general education teachers are supported when working with SNL. The opportunity to see strategies in action provides a toolbox to draw from when planning for instruction.

In summary, teachers who engage in peer coaching increase in professional reflection (Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2013). They flourish in their practice when they receive suggestions from peers that allow them to re-define their methodologies in the classroom (Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2013). In turn, teachers develop relationships with peers and are motivated to improve their practices (Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2013). The counterpoint to this approach is the training necessary for learning the observational procedures so the result is meaningful and sustainable (Thomas, 2013). Schools that have the time and resources to allow teachers to engage in this form of collaboration may increase capacity with general education teachers.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

From the beginning of this study/project until now, I learned a number of lessons relating to what scholarship truly means in the areas of (a) project development and evaluation, (b) leadership and change, (c) analysis of self as scholar, (d) analysis of self as practitioner, and (e) analysis of self as a project developer. The amount of work that I contributed to a well-written and well-designed study was far beyond the process of compliant paper generation. A developed purposefulness occurred over time as feedback grew. My reflections over the process of the study brought a realization that research only improves as the researcher devotes time to the problem. To enter into a doctoral study was not an effortless venture and one should not assume the faculty to complete the process with ease. The completion of the study consumed time, required disciplined effort, and great sacrifice.

Fear was also a part of the participation in research. Facing small defeats and processing doubt proved inevitable, but how I confronted the encounter made all the difference in determining continuance with the program. Instructional and peer support was available to me at all times. A number of questions were answered that alleviated seemingly impassible controversies appearing in methodology. When my emotions ran high, instructional personnel provided a listening ear. When my family was not there, others with experience were. Support made the battle more meaningful.

The overall lessons I learned was that scholarship must be just as much a team effort as an individual product and that wisdom was available if sought. Feedback was not the enemy, but was embraced. Research required review, and in this study, evidence emerged that the review process was a tool to be desired. Once I accepted that facet of the doctoral journey, the realization came that the effort put into the project study would be what came out of it and in the breaking moment, the choice was to dive deeper and carry on.

Project Development

The lesson of the project development evolved as time progressed. The project in the beginning seemed to be a flat creation consisting of a timeline and a list of ideas, but it quickly advanced into a layered concept with deep reflection. Concern for the participants was the driving force for every project piece. Using data in developing the project in a way participants of the study communicated they needed to be understood ensured the integrity of the development. As a coach for the district, facilitating PD that proves meaningful to teachers means incorporating all levels of learning in multiple modes. Building a program within a

theoretical framework created a set of actions for teachers that have significance and are global within their setting. The potential for expanding the program to other settings was also necessary. That is when technology was incorporated. I also learned that evaluation was important to the ongoing success of the professional content (Guskey, 2000). A lack of embedded PD evaluation creates a dilemma of inadequate training and expands the shortage of teachers' confidence that it can support classroom improvement (Harris, Cale, & Musson, 2012; Lee et al., 2011). In this project, evaluation was woven into the implementation design with multiple formative and summative evaluation analyses opportunities to determine next steps in the care for the needs of teachers.

The planning process for the PD project used a number of managerial skills that were time consuming and the preparation was not there. The process failed to form until the vision for the project was dissected. Questions were developed and then answered about how the vision would be accomplished. Once the revelation of the intricacies became apparent to me through reflection, a detailed plan began to form and more teacher centered activities emerged.

Ultimately, the lesson I learned was that it was difficult to develop a project that would be available to change. No positively influencing PD can remain rigid when needs change from time to time. The concept of collaboration had to be malleable throughout the modules because no circumstances will be exactly as one thinks they should be. There had to be consideration for variables. Requirement for flexibility inspired the idea of using structure protocols to give teachers the focused time they desired to speak with one another and plan. The PD design quickly arose as a project not to impose control over teacher practice of inclusion, but to provide

empowerment in implementing inclusion. The only way for the empowerment to come was to let teachers have contact with collaboration and develop it the way it made sense to them--together. Learning to design for the control to be placed in others hands was difficult, but rewarding.

Leadership and Change

Through the project development, my comprehension of the fact that leadership requires flexibility grew. Since the beginning of the journey, changes were rapid in the site of study with regard to policies, governing leadership, and staff capacities. Being in a leadership position reinforced the need to be prepared to keep up with that change. When the project study began, I made an assumption that my leadership skills were already in place and the task of being an expert was already fulfilled. What I learned throughout the project was that even though an individual possesses a natural leadership quality, leadership does not naturally reach perfection. Leaders undergo development every day, and from a personal perspective, good leaders use that development to empathize with those they lead. An effective leader creates a map for an individual context and will commit to the cause of supporting achievement goals for teachers and students (Peterson, Frankham, McWhinnie, & Forsythe, 2015). Therefore, a leader that is not prepared for change will not lead effectively (Peterson et al., 2015). Reflection reiterated that leading means to avoid reacting with scripted behaviors according to tradition or mandate. Reaction does not mean one successfully progresses towards the goal. The conclusion that I drew from the doctoral experience is that leadership requires deep thought about the needs of those led in terms of resources, goals, and what can be done versus what cannot.

Scholar. As a scholar, my skills throughout the project study grew in the areas of reflection and research. Reflecting on data to improve the local setting through project development taught me there was importance to finding support in other research prior to development to meet needs of participants. I learned lessons in objectively observing data through reviewing the work of others. Another lesson learned was research begets new research. Producing a study that holds potential for future exploration was my goal as a scholar. Prior to the project study I was focused on completing the task outlined by the coursework; however, as time moved forward, greater implications were considered and goals changed to develop a project that would merit further investigations and projects. This lesson deepened the meaning of scholarship in seeking the doctoral degree.

Being a scholar requires a relationship with other scholars. Allowing others to be a resource was one of the greatest lessons I learned. The exchange of ideas, the questioning and feedback, the resourceful wisdom, and the association with those likeminded in the process was difficult in the beginning of my doctoral studies, but in the present time it proves invaluable. The acknowledgement of expertise from others adds to the repertoire of support necessary to continue learning in a scholarly fashion.

Practitioner. My role is that of instructional coach for the district. Before entering doctoral candidacy, coaching played an evaluative function that merely offered what should and should not be done as a practitioner in a classroom. Time progressed and the requirements for the project study coursework aligned with changes taking place in education. Reflective questioning contributed to the contexts of work. Relating material from what was learned in scholarly

activities to my interactions with teachers created the purpose of highlighting professional gaps and questioning those things that have been taken for granted in teaching. My sense of investigation grew also. Using evaluation with mentees and viewing personal profession through the eyes of others provided a chance to research relevancy to the practices of coaching. Other research in the form of literature reviews added to the adapted frameworks used with teams. Frameworks stemming from research led to developing evidence of best practice through the use of data. As a result, teachers began to operate at more advanced levels of practice in the classroom and my position of coaching changed to a series of next steps and follow-up to continue the growth set in motion. The newly implemented concepts of collaboration learned in my coursework deepened the reflective process and moved personal practice from away from assumptions and into examining particular aspects of work and how to keep it teacher oriented.

Project developer. The goal for my project development was to spotlight teachers' needs at the forefront of the design. Collecting and using data to build activities that related to the teaching practice, and using the data in relevant ways required that I be in command of the content. Diezmann et al., 2007 stated that professional learners change because of professional activity. In developing the project, I experienced changes also. These lessons were intentional and unintentional (Diezmann et al., 2007). Intentional learning took place as the content was tiered for presentation. Knowing the content expertly was required prior to the beginning of the project. Researching best practices for teacher learning also required a solid knowledge of theoretical basis to frame the development. What I unintentionally learned was that the process

of a team collaboration was deeply missed which resulted in the professional understanding that teams of developers might work together better than a single individual designing the PD plan.

At times, the project appeared as lists of activities and transitions and nothing more. When reviewing the modules for content coverage; however, I discovered that to plan an effective PD I had to bring learners' personal needs to the planning table. I generated a series of questions to increase connection between teachers and the content. The planning process reinforced my background knowledge that teachers needed to be viewed as people to be engaged collaboratively and not just participate as attendees to absorb information. Remaining conscious of this, strong inquiry in the design stages resulted in developed sessions poised to draw teachers into the content while supplying them with opportunities for take-away actions that otherwise might have been missed.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The importance of this work socially relates to the general education classroom and inclusion students. The data gathered in the study identified factors teachers and leadership perceived would make inclusion implementation more successful. The project was designed in response to the teachers' and leader's perceived need for collaboration and training in how to serve special needs students. Locally, the design became a PD that would serve across many sites to increase partnership in planning between general education and special education teachers. As state data has indicated, SNL scores merit a deeper look and stronger collaboration with special education experts carries potential for strengthening general education teacher learning for how to approach students' individualized needs.

In larger context, students may benefit from increased self-efficacy in the classroom through better performance (Carter et al., 2009). The potential for far reaching social change comes when students receive best practice instruction in a way that adapts to their academic and social needs. Vygotsky (1978) theorized when students experience an environment that is collaborative and learner driven they increase in skills to function independently. Students that obtain skills to respond metacognitively with abilities to transfer knowledge may also then perform successfully in the classroom and potentially in workforce situations (Mogonea & Mogonea, 2013).

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Reflecting on this work deepened my conviction that teachers who work with students of inclusion necessitate a collaborative environment supporting their efforts with SNL. By examining how adult learning works, I reflected on the purpose of the study and its results. Ruminations upon any program makes the program approachable and affirmed in its function; however, until the voices of the teachers are heard and deeper examination of existing themes are made, the affirmation survives only in theory (Knowles, 1984). In keeping with adult learning theory, Knowles (1984) stated what works best for teachers needs to be provided by teachers. Building capacity is only as good as the engaging aspects that the developers for PD bring to the table. To fully engross teachers in a development that is meant to systemically treat ailing factors for practice, teachers must provide the input for what they need and they must be heard if true change is viable.

Implications

The results of the study indicated that a lack of controllable factors leaves teachers with a paucity of backing in successfully achieving their goals for inclusive students. A principal factor of collaboration emerged as an influence for efforts in working with SNL. Teachers and leadership perceived an absence of partnership that contributed to the belief they were without support and relationship (Avramidis, 2000; Fuchs, 2010). Furthermore, communication among general education teachers and special education faculty was deemed important to remain connected to students. Interview results confirmed the perception that more collaboration and improved interactions on behalf of teaching practices and the students were necessary; therefore, more needed to be done to facilitate the structure for collaboration and philosophy in order to satisfy leadership directives.

Qualitative aspects of this study provided the opportunity for teachers to communicate in a safe zone where they were allowed to express their perceptions about inclusion. Using the focus group format permitted the exchange of ideas, the drawing of input, emergence of themes, and interaction through communication with and between peers. Bandura (1994) stated social networking among peers was important in the concepts of social learning theory. The environment, behavior, and personal elements perform as cooperative determinants that influence in a bidirectional fashion. A relational trust strengthens the interactive process through dialogue and free response, and problems require a collective effort to implement solutions if change occurs (Bandura, 1994; Newton, 2010). Using the focus group and semistructured interviews in the methodology related to the individual need for solving a problem within a

unified effort (Bandura, 1994). The social aspect of networking potentially benefits the

functioning of organizations and in the educational context promotes change and reform in

education (Moolenaar et al., 2012; Penuel et al., 2010).

Future Implications

  Future implications for this study include the need for further research on the remedial factors of inclusion and their impact on student achievement. Fuchs et al (2014), stated that due to the continued lagging performance of SNL, interventions need to intensify on the curricular level. General education teachers offer on-level curriculum with accommodations, but accommodation does little to close the achievement gap for lower level learners when holes are present in fundamental concepts (Fuchs et al., 2014). General education teachers may confuse curricular exposure for serving inclusive learners. A misconception of the IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2002) nuances of access ultimately places students in a higher restriction for learning than the LRE they require as a right (Fuchs et al., 2014). Data-based instructional strategies that minister to students' specific deficits must be grounded in the general education inclusive setting so access is granted in what otherwise is restricted by the misinterpretation of what access really means (Fuchs et al., 2014; Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2014). By increasing the opportunity for collaborative efforts with special education peers, general education teachers receive less fragmented experiences with inclusion concepts so that they obtain skills to provide general curricular access to SNL centered in student outcome data (Fuchs et al., 2014; Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2014). Moolenaar et al (2012) stated social theory supports the notion of collective efficacy that emanates from shared perspectives and the desire to accomplish collective ambitions. Coexisting with that thought, learning, and the operative nature of groups that roots itself in an organized fashion to produce results binds the belief that positive effects on students are inevitable. The relationship of advice that develops between collaborative partners creates

patterns of exchange supporting a common decision-making process. Student achievement may conceivably be affected (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Moolenaar et al., 2012).

Scope of Research

The scope of research performed in this study was isolated to general education teachers using local and state data for SNL and literature reviews supporting need for the study. Teachers' and leadership perceptions were recorded and transcribed. Analyzing themes identified factors most impacting to successful inclusion implementation. The project for the study addressed desired factors of collaboration with peers, and training through teamwork with special education teachers. Collaborative training potentially offers solutions to controllable factors at the school level and was chosen for the follow-up and future research implications. Correlational research and the possibility of experimental research between collaboration and improvement in student achievement and/or teacher self-efficacy is plausible to address the study's problem further.

Application to Education

Educational application for this project rests in the initial PD on collaboration and the scaffolding potential it carries for teachers' teams at any level. No PD should be considered a stand-alone project; therefore, through the design plan and evaluation process supplementary steps to higher levels of collaboration can be developed over time. Collaboration maintains teacher development, but only if collaboration is consistently applied across teams (Kuusisaari, 2014). The educational application of this project begins all teachers in the development with a framework of collaborative questioning regarding IEP students and does not leave teachers with a ready-set-go mentality. Support systems are built into the project and the collaborative effort

involves administration so a consistent communication operates among staff. The project also brings staff together as a whole to allow larger setting professional learning community discussions about the collaborative process. Through the feedback that evaluation brings, and through communication efforts with the facilitating coach/es calibration in further development can be provided as necessary.

Conclusion

Data from a qualitative case study revealed teachers perceived they lacked the ability to collaborate with peers, and that working with inclusion students was a situation they were not prepared for. In the previous section, a project study was completed with the purpose of developing collaboration skills among general education teachers implementing inclusion in their classrooms and their special education peers. In this section, the strengths and recommendations for the project were discussed, and the potential impact on social change was examined in the context of SNL prospective contributions to the workforce through better student achievement. Implications and future research were made and analysis of personal growth was discussed in reflection of the doctoral study candidacy process.

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Appendix A: The Project

Improving Factors of Inclusion
PD in Three Parts
Module Agenda

Day One	Content & Protocols
8:30 – 8:55	**Welcome** **Pre PD Survey** **Norms** **Introduction and Research Support PPT**
8:55 – 9:10	**Sphere-of-Control Model** **Barriers or Bridges Protocol:** Participants reflect on attitudes or personal perceptions regarding barriers or facilitators in their own work (see following pages for protocol descriptions).

9:10 – 10:00	**Participant Question Chart:** Teachers may use sticky notes on chart to record ongoing teacher questions about inclusion
	Read: Teacher jigsaw article (iPad) read and share out at tables. Popcorn discussion to transition to slide
	Inclusion - What It Is and What It Is Not
	   • **History**
	   • **Inclusion Laws**
	   • **Inclusion As a Practice**
	   • **Who is Responsible**

10:00 – 10:15	**Break**

10:15 – 11;30	**Components of Collaboration** (PPT)
	   • What is collaboration? PD Video on collaboration (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po40I4c94R0)
	   • Preplanning
	   • Classroom Teacher
	   • Special Ed. Teacher

11:30 – 12:30	**Lunch**
12:30 – 2:30	**Chalk Talk Protocol:** Silent reflection about components of Preplanning (formative assessment) **Discussion**
2:30 – 3:15	**Components of Collaboration** (PPT) • Collaborative Planning
3:15-3:30	**Closure, Exit Ticket, and Hook**

Appendix A: (continued)

Pre-PD Survey

Teachers are divided into table group. Each table is given a set of colored sticky notes. Red is for not confident at all. Orange is for somewhat confident, but not very sure. Yellow is for somewhat confident with support, and green is for strong confidence.

Each table will move to 4 blank chart paper boards positioned around the room with survey questions posted and will place the appropriately colored notes pertaining to personal response onto the charts. Participants will then return to their seats.

Results will be tallied and recorded. Results will remain up the entire session until the final post-PD survey is completed.

Questions for the Survey:

1. I know how to use the goals and objectives for all my SNL.

2. I have a plan to collaborate frequently about my SNL.

3. I am able to create time to collaborate.

4. I have a format I follow for collaborative discussions.

Appendix A: (continued)

Improving Factors of Inclusion Through Successful Collaboration
Module 1

Appendix A: (continued)

Welcome

- Norms:

- Active Listening

- Equity of Voice

- Respect Perspectives of Others

- Assume Positive Intent

- Monitor Use of Electronics

Appendix A: (continued)

The Perceptions of Inclusion Factors in an Inclusive Classroom by General Education Teachers and Administrators

Data Background for the Study

1. Disabled students (48.6% statewide) struggle in reading and 46.2 % failed to meet state standards on the OCCT (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014)

2. As much as 51% scored in the bottom quartile which is in the bottom 25% quartile for growth.

3. IEP student scores are now included in overall OCCT reporting (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2014).

Appendix A: (continued)

Qualitative Data Analysis

- Through a focus group discussion, teachers provided specific factors regarding inclusion and serving special needs learners in their classrooms. The themes identified in the study were:

- **Structure/Methodology**

- **Resources**

- **Training**

- **Collaboration**

- **Self-efficacy**

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Activity
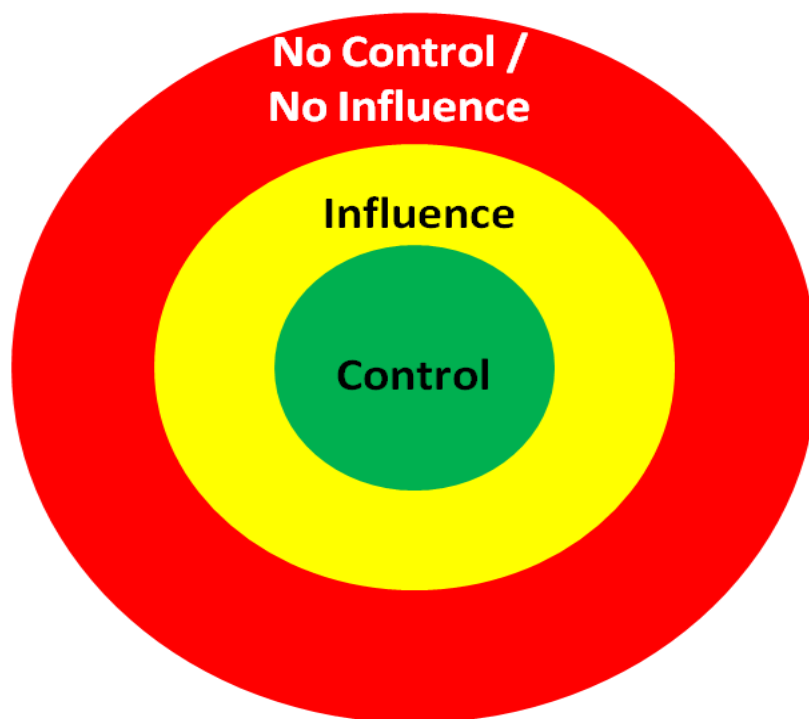
Barriers or Bridges
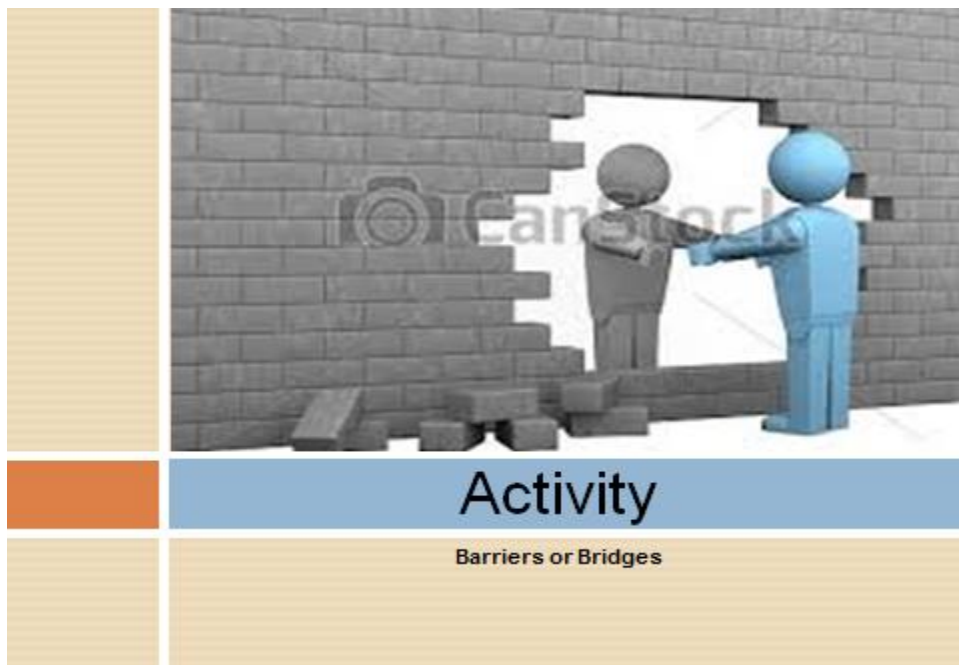
Appendix A: (continued)

Barriers or Bridges Protocol Instructions Handout

Many barriers create frustrations in education. They are easily identified. It is important to identify the solutions to eliminate those barriers. We may not be able to weaken the walls created by factors outside our sphere of control, but we can create windows of opportunity that are within our influence. The smallest beam of light can enlighten and empower. Collaboration and communication are the supports used to reconstruct the wall into successful learning experiences of diversity, equity, and meaning for special needs learners.

Purpose: The activity is used to focus what is important in perspective. It reminds participants that relationships are required to build change that is meaningful and sustainable. The product becomes a reminder for the work that teachers are doing throughout the modules.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials:
- Markers
- Two lunch bags participant

Procedures: Participants receive 2 paper bags each. On one side of a bag, participants write one barrier that faces their inclusion practice and on the other side of the same bag the participants write one success with inclusion. Open both the bags. Take the blank bag and slip it into the bag that has the written responses. This will be a brick. Now the participants will build a wall out of the bricks they have created. Barriers will be sorted on one side of the wall and bridges will be built on the other. Briefly share the bridges and barriers.

Closure: At the end of the modules, participants may destroy the bricks with barriers, open windows of opportunity, or build doors. Teams may also discuss further action plans based on the activity as well.

Note: Adapted from School Reform Initiative (SRI). (2015). *Protocols*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/

Appendix A: (continued)

Jigsaw

Read. Reflect. Discuss.

Wolf, P.S., & Hall, T.E. (2003). Making inclusion a reality for students with severe disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children 35*(4), 56-60. Retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdesped/download/pdf/ssn_article_makinginclusionareality.pdf

Appendix A: (continued)

What is Inclusion?

- ☐ A commitment to education to the maximum extent appropriate
- ☐ BRINGING support services to the child
- ☐ A right to education (free and appropriate) (IDEA, 2004; FAPE)
- ☐ A least restrictive environment that meets unique needs.

U.S. Department of Education. (2008). *Education and inclusion in the United States: An overview.* Retrieved from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/usa_NR08.pdf

Appendix A: (continued)

Inclusion

What it IS	What it is NOT
General Education for Special Needs Learners	Not a Separate Category for IEP Students (those kids).
A Legal Right for Equality (IDEA, 2004)	A separation between departments (GE and SPED)
A Collaborative *Opportunity* to Help ALL Students	Not Permission for Low Expectations
A Model for Lifeskills	A Relaxed Accountability
A Consideration for Disability	Excused Because of Funding
A Success Story	Pullout for Convenience

Who

Appendix A: (continued)

Collaboration

Appendix A: (continued)

Components of Collaboration

- □ Collaboration Is:
- □ Voluntary
- □ Based on Parity
- □ Mutual Goals
- □ Shared Responsibility
- □ Shared Accountability
- □ Shared Resources
- □ Emergent

Appendix A: (continued)

Collaboration

- Pre-Planning for Classroom Teacher

- Roles and responsibility
  - Who and what

- What questions need to be asked about the student?
  - Curriculum
  - Rules
  - Instruction
  - Materials
  - Environment

Prater, M.A. (2003). She will succeed: Strategies for success in inclusive classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children* 36(5), 58-64.
Wolfe, P.S., & Hall, (2003). Making inclusion a reality for students with severe disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children* 36(4). 56-60.

Appendix A: (continued)

Collaboration

- Preplanning for Special Ed. Teacher

- IEP objectives
- Adaptations for Need
  - Cognitive
  - Motor
  - Communication
  - Social
- Adaptation for Curriculum
  - Materials
  - Time Requirement
  - Product

Appendix A: (continued)
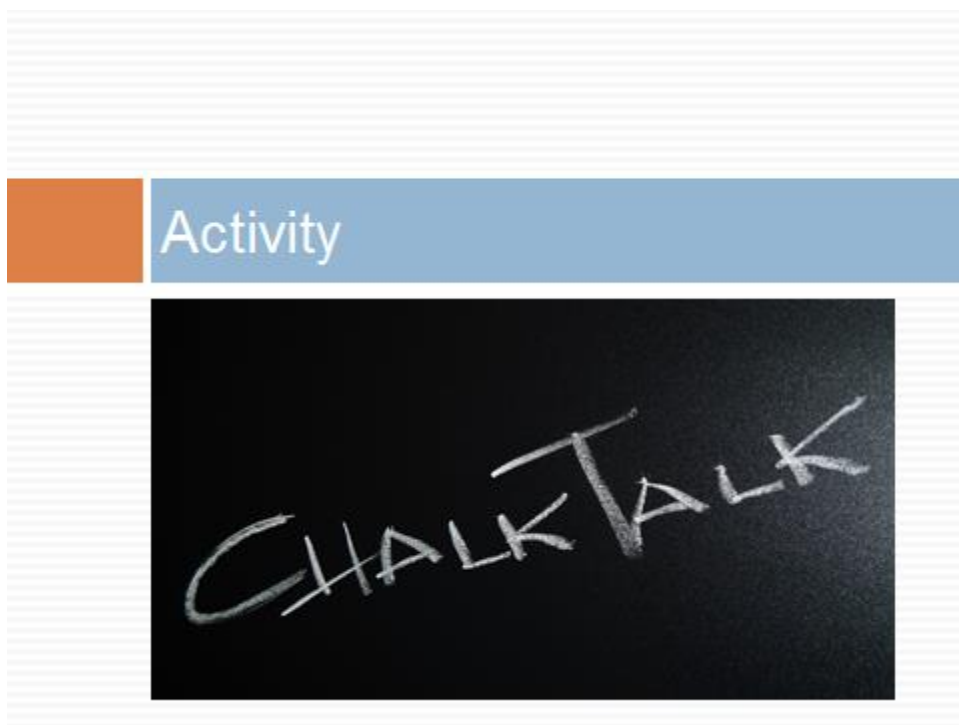
Appendix A: (continued)

Chalk Talk Protocol Handout

Reflection is important to the practice of teaching or effectiveness to any job performance. The opportunity for contemplation offers the opportunity for us to speak without interruption. This activity is called Chalk Talk and is a silent reflection process.

Purpose: The Chalk Talk protocol is a way to silently reflect, create ideas, assess learning, take action in project development, or work on solutions to problems. Any group may participate and because it involves silence, it changes the dynamics of the contemplation process.

Time: Varying

Materials: Chart paper. Writing utensils.

Procedure: Divide participants into groups. One chart paper for each group placed on the table. Establish the procedure as a silent activity. Explain that words or graphics may be added to the Chalk Talk to emphasize points or describe thoughts. Comments may be added to confirm or add to others' thoughts. Connections may be made with lines connecting thoughts. The facilitator may use a non-verbal finger to lips to begin the activity.

Write each group's relevant question on the chart papers for reflection. Begin with a what, who, how, etc… question.

Each group spends the allotted amount of time (using a timer) writing silent reflections in response to the questions. When time is up, groups rotate to another table to reflect on the next question. Continue the rotations until all groups have reflected on each point.

Closure: When it is done, it is done. Close with connections, new revelations, common themes and a discussion about next steps.

Note: Adapted from School Reform Initiative (SRI). (2015). *Protocols*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/

Appendix A: (continued)

Collaboration

Classroom and Special Ed. Teachers Planning Meeting

- Curriculum
  - Objectives
  - Unit analysis
  - IEP
  - Communication about student progress
- Rules
  - Student accountability
- Instruction
  - Information presentation
  - Individual or group
  - Assessment
- Materials

- Environment

Appendix A: (continued)

Closure

□ Exit Ticket

Briefly answer each question using one or two full sentences.

What is inclusion to you?

List one question you will ask yourself during the preplanning phase of collaboration.

Appendix A: (continued)

Exit Ticket Module 1
Briefly answer each question using 1 or 2 full sentences.

What is inclusion to you?

List one question you will ask yourself during the preplanning phase of collaboration.

Please provide a plus/delta analysis to today's module.

Areas that met your needs:	Areas to be improved:

Appendix A (Continued)

Improving Factors of Inclusion
PD in Three Parts
Module Agenda

Day 2	Content & Protocols
8:30 – 8:55	**Welcome and Norms** **Team Building Activity – Circle Clap**
8:55 – 9:10	**Review of Module 1**
9:10 – 10:00	**Ping Pong Collaboration Protocol:** • Time and Collaboration • Debrief
10:00 – 10:15	**Break**
10:15 – 11;30	**Resource Protocols for Collaboration:** • Standards in Practice • Examining Assessments
11:30 – 12:30	**Lunch**
12:30 – 2:15	**Technology Tool and Collaboration** • Google Docs and Drive • Teacher Accounts • Navigation of Google • Demonstration/Interaction Live Collaboration • Google Hangouts
2:15 – 3:15	**Practice Using Google Tool** • Create a Collaboration Form Grade Levels • Special Ed teachers float
3:15-3:30	**Closure, Exit Ticket, and Hook**
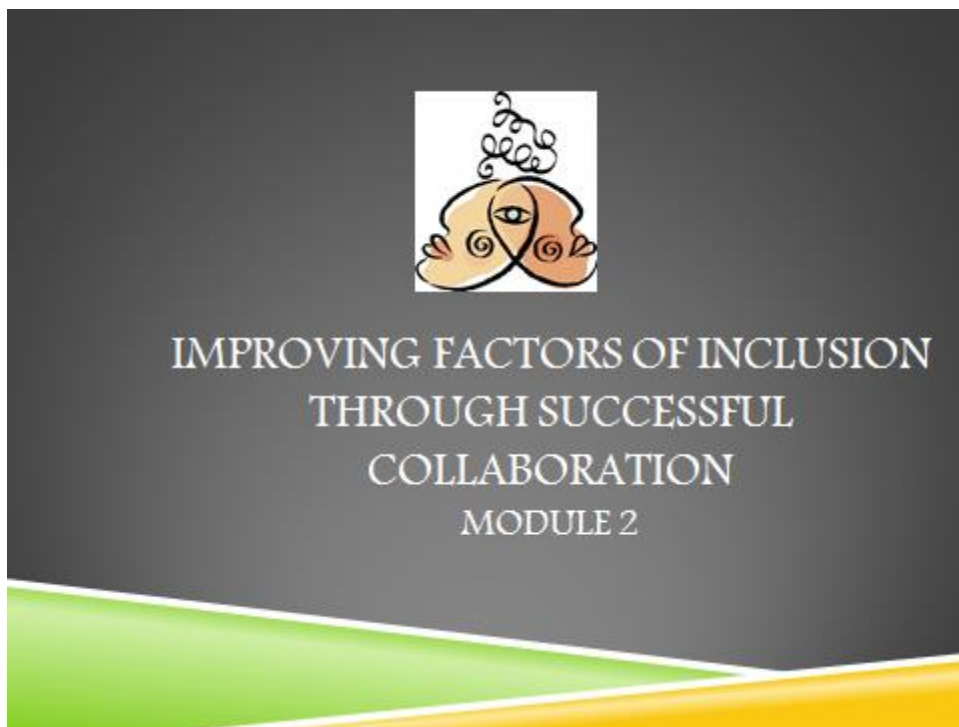
Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A (Continued)

Circle Clap Team Building Activity

Circle Clap

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to create synergy between peers. The activity inspires participants to use creativity, focus on goal-setting, use peer cooperation and unity. This activity is for fun.
Procedures: Standing in a circle, people prepare their hands to clap simultaneously with their neighbors. The goal is to create the sound of one single clap.
Time: 10 minutes

Materials: 8 or more people

Debrief of activity: 5 Minutes

Activity taken from http://www.playmeo.com/team-building-problem-solving-activities/circle-clap

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)
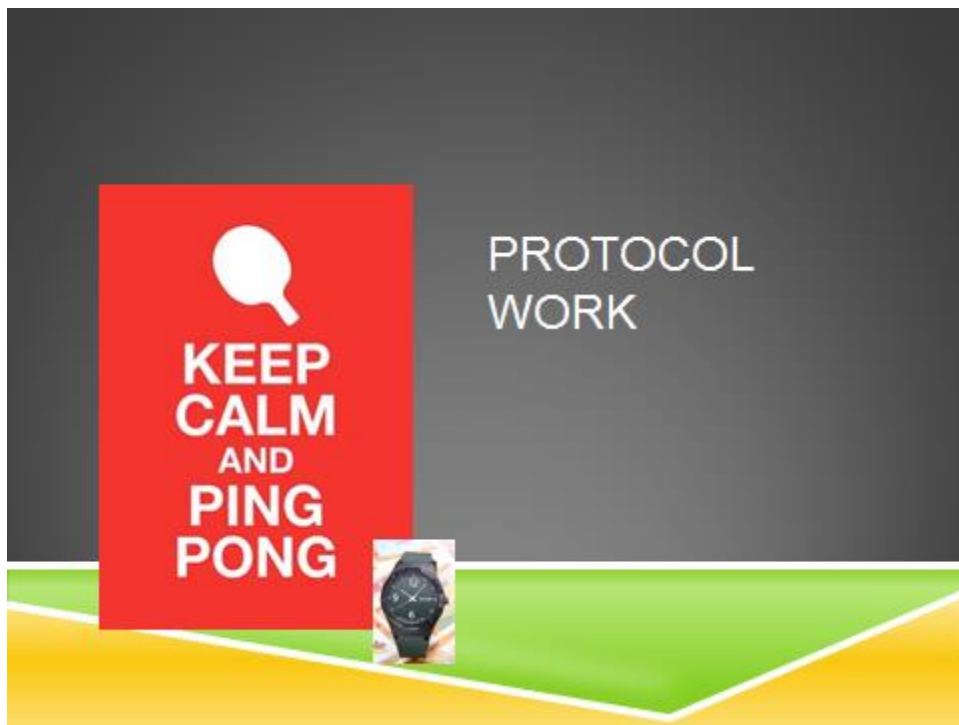
Appendix A (Continued)

Ping Pong Protocol Handout

Purpose: The aim of this protocol is to provide a protocol for a group having an essential conversation about an issue that all members are facing together. The protocol is centered around self-reflection and an intent to improve. The result is a set of next-step actions.

Materials: Sticky notes, pens

Procedures:

The issue is stated. It may also be posed in the form of the question. The facilitator may provide the topic or the group may generate it. **3 Minutes**

Each member writes about the problem from a personal view. Each "big thought" about the topic is written on a separate sticky note. **2 Minutes**

Each person in the group has one minute to explain their thoughts and approaches to the problem. After each presentation, clarifying questions may be asked of the writer. Sort the sticky notes into trends to discover patterns. **5 Minutes**

Probing questions may then be asked of any of the group members. Each person in the group should have a chance to respond to at least one probing question. **8 Minutes**

The group then has a discussion to fuse the thoughts generated during the above steps. **4 Minutes**

Next-steps are created and charted. Connections to how the steps were created should be made. **8 Minutes**

Debrief **4 Minutes**

Note: Adapted from School Reform Initiative (SRI). (2015). *Protocols*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A (Continued)

Standards in Practice Protocol for Collaboration Handout

Purpose: The purpose for using the standards in practice protocol is to evaluate the effectiveness or design of an assignment and collaborate about the implications for instruction

Roles: Facilitator, Recorder, Timekeeper

Procedures: Every group member of the team dies the assignment as delivered to students. Create a scoring guide based on standards and the assignment. Score the student work using the guide. Ask the following questions:

- What does the student work show us about students' learning?

- What do students know, and what are their capabilities?

- Was the assignment designed to support student knowledge and higher level thinking? Did they have to USE the skills necessary to complete the task?

The recorder records the group's answers to this question:

- What needs to happen in the classroom so that all students can do this and similar tasks well?

The group then carries out an action plan.

Note: Adapted from School Reform Initiative (SRI). (2015). *Protocols*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/

Appendix A (Continued)

Examining Assessments Protocol for Collaboration Handout

Purpose: To evaluate assessments and their value. To discuss implications.

Preparation: Set time limits for each group member. Set norms.

Procedures:

- Individuals in the group provide a small description of an assessment's purpose or context. Clarifying questions may be asked.

- As members review the assessment, they are asked to consider what they see.

- During this section, the group gathers information from the assessment. Members do not describe what they see – but DO NOT make judgments about the quality, nor do they attempt to interpret. If an interpretation arises, the facilitator must ask the member to cite the evidence that the interpretation is based on. Observations may be listed on chart paper for ease. Interpretations should be kept in a separate list for later discussion.

- As a mock activity, group members themselves then complete part of the assessment

- The facilitator then asks the question from a pupil's perspective: how does this appear to the student? What do they see?

- The facilitator asks next: "If this assessment was completed successfully by a student, what would it tell us about what this student knows, understands, and is able to do?"

- During this time, the members attempt to make sense of student tasks. The group should then locate as many combinations as possible. Members my then ask questions of each other to open up perspectives.

- The facilitator asks: "What are the outcomes of this work in reference to your teaching, learning and assessment? AND What impressions do you have regarding your own practice in the classroom?

- As a group share your learning

- Debrief the process and plan for next step improvements

Note: Adapted from School Reform Initiative (SRI). (2015). *Protocols*. Retrieved from
http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Exit Ticket
Briefly answer each question using one or two full sentences.

List three ways you can collaborate when time is a barrier.

List one protocol you feel would be beneficial to use during PLC collaboration about your SNL.

Appendix A: (continued)

Exit Ticket Module 2
Briefly answer each question using one or 2 full sentences.

List three ways you can collaborate when time is a barrier.

1.

2.

3.

List one protocol you feel would be beneficial to use during PLC collaboration about SNL.

1.

Please provide a plus/delta analysis of today's module.

Areas that met your needs:	Areas to be improved:

Appendix A (Continued)

Improving Factors of Inclusion
PD in Three Parts
Module Agenda

Day 3	Content & Protocols
8:30 – 8:55	**Welcome and Norms** **Team Building Activity – Raise the Yardstick** www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/heliumstick.html **Debrief**
8:55 – 9:10	**Re-Cap of Module 2**
9:10 – 10:15	**Form Report Out** • Teachers Share Google Module 2 Contents With Presenter and Present to Group • Vertical Alignment Feedback Whole Group
10:15 – 10:30	**Break**
10:30 – 11;30	**Generate Preplanning/Planning Questions:** • C.R.I.M.E. Review • Content Planning Tool Resource and Modeling using CRIME • Teachers spend time discussing with peers the questioning process and determining what questions will suit the needs of the planning process.
11:30 – 12:30	**Lunch**
12:30 – 2:15	**Mock Scenario (protocol)** • Teachers will use their developed questions to complete a mock plan for a student through role play discussion. They will use the content planning tool. • PreK-2 with one special education teacher • 3rd – 5th with another special education teacher • Facilitator works the room to support **Debrief and Report Out**
2:15 – 3:15	**Future Steps and Action Plans (PLCs)**
3:15-3:30	**Closure and Evaluation**

Appendix A (Continued)

Improving Factors
of Inclusion
Through
Successful
Collaboration
Module 3

Appendix A: (continued)

Welcome

Norms:

Active Listening

Equity of Voice

Respect Perspectives of Others

Assume Positive Intent

Monitor Use of Electronics

Appendix A: (continued)

Activity

- Helium Stick

Retrieved from: www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/heliumstick.html

Appendix A: (continued)

Review

- Time is a barrier in collaboration

- Protocols can keep us on track and help communication flow

- Technology is already a resource in our toolbox

- Technology is a strong tool to use with collaboration

Appendix A: (continued)

Collaboration
Forms

© Can Stock Photo - csp1879238

Appendix A (Continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Curriculum

Rules

Instruction

Environment

Materials

ME

Prater, M.A. (2003). She will succeed! Teaching Exceptional Children, 35, 5, 58-64. Retrieved from http://www.casenex.com/casenex/cecReadings/sheWillSucceed.pdf

Appendix A (continued)

Content Planning Tool Using CRIME Questions Handout
Sample

		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Preplanning	Activity					
	IEP Objective					
Planning	Level of Adaptation					
	Support from Special Education Teacher					

Note: Adapted from Wolfe, P.S., & Hall, (2003). Making inclusion a reality for students with severe disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 35*(4), 55-60. Retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdesped/download/pdf/ssn_article_makinginclusionareality.pdf

Appendix A: (continued)

Mock Scenario
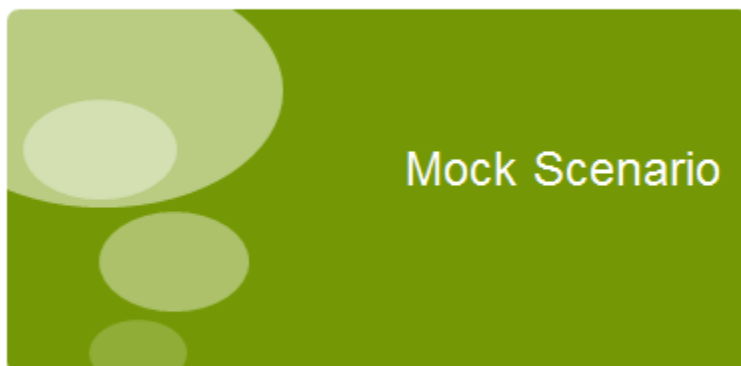
Appendix A: (continued)

ACTIVITY

	Preplanning		Planning	
	Activity	IEP Objective	Level of Adaptation	Support from Special Education Teacher
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				

Appendix A: (continued)

Mock Scenario Protocol Handout

Purpose: To open dialogue in a collaborative manner and to evaluate personal preparation to conduct collaborative conversations about SNL and inclusion in the general education classroom.

Materials: Previously generated questions; timer

Time: 60 - 90 minutes

Procedures: Each group will have 10 minutes to silently read the scenario. An additional 15 minutes will be provided to the group so they may discuss the scenario. They may add to the scenario or use it as is. **25 Minutes**

When the timer is up, each teacher will have one minute to ask a preplanning question that an appointed recorder will chart. **10 minutes**

The special education teacher will also add his/her preplanning questioning to the chart.

The person with the shortest hair will begin and the turns will go clockwise.

When all questions have been asked, each teacher will have the opportunity to add to the set of questions, or will have the opportunity to pass. **10 Minutes**

When all questions have been recorded, the group will move into the planning phase using the content planning tool handout. **30 Minutes**

Debrief: 15 Minutes

Appendix A: (continued)

INCLUSION MODULE -ASSESSMENT
Case Scenario

Maria is the teacher of a general education classroom. She has three special education inclusion students. Luke is a student in third grade whose favorite subjects are science and math. His special interest is in the atmosphere and is very knowledgeable about the origins of weather patterns from watching various weather programs. Reading scores are inconsistent, but he is passing math. He gives the impression he is capable in reading, but levels vary from day to day. In addition, he possesses challenges in the social arena with communication skills. Luke's greatest challenge is interacting with his peers and at times other boys in the classroom bully him. His behavior is strange and they further irritate the relationship he tries to build with his peers. As an example, he polices students when they fail to follow classroom rules. He is also incapable of relating to their interests and will only discuss the weather patterns he is interested in. He is diagnosed with a high functioning autism.

Luke is in full inclusion with his peers. He also receives additional speech services during the week. His behavior issues are escalating in the general education classroom and he is growing more verbally aggressive. Luke is rule oriented when assigned group-work and he insists on dominance over the project. He is often excluded. He is good about completing his work with a one-on-one paraprofessional.

The school has a self-contained classroom that serves kindergarten through 10 years of age. Luke's parents believe firmly that he belongs in the general education classroom. Maria has concern that her students need to show improved annual testing results. She has little time to attend to Luke. She maintains that Luke's behavior is affecting other students' abilities to learn.

Note: Adapted from: University of Northern Colorado. (n.d.). *Inclusion-module assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.unco.edu/cetl/TracyMueller/Inclusion/Assessment_CaseStudy.pdf

Appendix A: (continued)

Reflection

Reflection
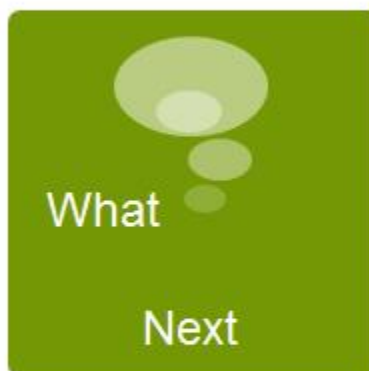
Was this harder than you expected?   Easier?

Reflection

What did you do when you experienced a challenge?

Reflection

What steps will you take in the future to avoid challenges or to maintain cohesion?

Appendix A: (continued)

Appendix A: (continued)

Future Steps

Action plans

Appendix A: (continued)

Post PD Survey Activity

Post PD Survey

Just as before…

Teachers are divided into table group. Each table is given a set of colored sticky notes. Red is for not confident at all. Orange is for somewhat confident, but not very sure. Yellow is for somewhat confident with support, and green is for strong confidence.

Each table will move to 4 blank chart paper boards positioned around the room with survey questions posted and will place the appropriately colored notes pertaining to personal response onto the charts. Participants will then return to their seats.

Results will be tallied by the facilitator and recorded to determine the confidence level of teachers after the PD

Questions for the Survey:

1. I know how to use the goals and objectives for all my SNL.

2. I have a plan to collaborate frequently about my SNL.

2. I am able to create time to collaborate.

4. I have a format I follow for collaborative discussions.

Appendix A: (continued)

Evaluation

Appendix A: (continued)

Exit Evaluation Ticket Handout

Use the plus/delta evaluation form to tell about your experience, and offer what worked for you or what needs improvement. Thank you for your participation in the modules. What you present here will help determine next steps for ongoing PD in this area. Thank you for your time.

In order to help determine next steps and planning for ongoing PD in this area, please rate each question below.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree, 5 = don't know

This PD addressed concerns for inclusion factors within my influence

1   2   3   4   5

 I feel I have learned the preplanning and planning CRIME method and I more confident that I can collaborate with my peers

1   2   3   4   5

I find the tools and protocols effective and useful for collaborative work with my peers

1   2   3   4   5

I have a full understanding of how to use the collaborative planning process learned in this workshop

1   2   3   4   5

I can use the collaboration process to review student achievement and make instructional adjustments

1   2   3   4   5

Are there any other thoughts you would like to share about this PD? If you feel you need immediate contact or require one-on-one time, please leave your email address and a coach will be happy to help.

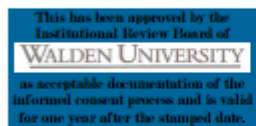Appendix B: Focus Group Guiding Questions

To better understand your history with teaching, can you describe your experience with teaching and the inclusive classroom in terms of degrees held, years' experience, and when you first began to encounter special needs learners included in general education?

1. Describe the barriers or facilitators you experience when implementing inclusion in your general education classroom. Why do you believe these to be positive or negative?

2. What do you believe are the greatest influencing factors when successfully implementing inclusion in the general education classroom? How do these factors affect the context of the classroom setting?

3. How would you describe your attitudes toward inclusion, and why are these attitudes formed?

4. How do you perceive your effectiveness when implementing inclusion in the classroom?

5. How would you like to see inclusion implemented in the general education classroom?

Appendix C: Administrative Interview Guidance Questions

1. To better understand your history with administration, can you describe your experience with teachers and the inclusive classroom, your degrees held, years' experience, and when you first began to encounter special needs learners included in general education?

2. How do teachers experience the inclusion process in the general education classroom from your administrative perspective?

3. How do you determine the factors that are necessary for successful implementation of inclusion? Why are these factors important?

4. How do you as leadership support the inclusion model in general education classrooms? Do you perceive teachers to believe they are well prepared for inclusion in their general education classrooms? Why?

5. How would you like to see inclusion implemented in a general education classroom?

Appendix D: IRB Approval for Study

This has been approved by the
Institutional Review Board of
WALDEN UNIVERSITY
as acceptable documentation of the
informed consent process and is valid
for one year after the stamped date.

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Appendix E: Permission to Use School for Study

Re: case study

Sent: Monday, July 07, 2014 8:50 AM

Yes, we will help you with your study

Sent from My IPhone

> On Jul 6, 2014, at 4:08 PM,

>
> I am currently building a proposal for my university. I am using a qualitative methodology to discuss the perceptive influences with teachers regarding self-efficacy and teaching inclusive students.
>
> I would like to use your school for a case study involving a teacher forum, administrative interviews (e.g. counselor, principal, etc...), and a document review process (professional development and other public information), to include in my study. The research is qualitative in nature and will be submitted for proposal to my committee pending an agreement to use your school.
>
> I chose your school due to district teacher expressed concerns I received as staff development teacher and because the demographics of the school are rapidly changing. The teacher qualifications also range between bachelors, masters, and doctoral degree levels which would give the study a rich spectrum of information. If I may receive permission, it will be included in my proposal to the university and to the district.
>
> The timeline for the process will be forthcoming, but should begin in the near future after all pending requests have been addressed. If you have further questions, please feel free to let me know.
>
> I thank you for your time and consideration,
>
>
>
>
>