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# Special Education Teachers' Voices on Co-Planning in a Suburban School District

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

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MA, Brenau University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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## Abstract

Limited co-planning between special education and general education co-teaching partners has been documented in professional literature as a significant problem. Special education teachers do not adequately co-plan for the implementation of accommodations for students with disabilities educated in the general education classroom. The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze the perceptions of special education teachers in one suburban elementary school district in the United States regarding co-planning with regular education teachers. The theory of self-efficacy was utilized as the conceptual framework to understand how teachers' beliefs and experiences influenced planning and goal setting for special education students. Research questions were designed to capture the perceptions of elementary school special education teachers by documenting their roles, beliefs, and self-efficacy for co-planning. In this qualitative case study, 8 elementary school special education teachers currently holding co-teaching assignments in a public school district were interviewed. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. School documents were also analyzed as a method of triangulation. Results were reflective of the theoretical framework in that special education teachers' believed that their co-planning experience influenced their general teaching efficacy, but not their personal teaching efficacy. They felt more prepared to teach general education students, but maintained their personal expertise in teaching special education students. The implications for social change include enhanced morale for teaching in inclusive classrooms for special education teachers, enhanced social interaction between co-teachers and students, and enhanced learning for all students including those with disabilities that might result in opportunities for educational and career advancement.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

## Introduction

Instructional planning for inclusive classrooms is critical to facilitate academic attainment for students with disabilities (SWDs). Inclusive classrooms are those in which both SWDs and their peers without disabilities receive instruction. Currently, mandates require that SWDs be assessed using the same criteria as students without disabilities (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Guckert, Thompson & Weis, 2013). The goal of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) was closing the achievement gap between SWDs and their non-disabled peers (Fowler, Hulett, & Kieff, 2009). NCLB became the impetus for mandatory administration of common assessments that require SWDs to be instructed using the same curricular standards as their peers. As a result, SWDs take the identical Georgia State standardized tests as their non-disabled peers and emphasis in the classroom has been placed on providing accommodations for SWDs to access the curriculum (Scruggs, Brigham, & Mastropieri, 2013).

Co-teaching is evidenced when two teachers, a general education teacher and a special education teacher (SET), provide instruction to all students in the classroom (Friend & Cook, 2007). Co-planning is the initial process in which co-teachers plan to instruct SWDs and their peers in the same classroom. Co-teaching requires co-planning. General education and special education co-teaching partners co-plan because they share responsibilities during co-taught assignments (Murawski & Spencer, 2011).

It is difficult to envisage effective co-taught instruction if the co-teaching partners do not co-plan. According to Bronson and Dentith (2014), co-teachers' planning time can

be used to exchange instructional ideas, curriculum development, and case review of students. Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) stated that "co-teaching is becoming an increasingly prevalent approach to collaboration designed to meet the diverse needs of all students" (p. 21). Though both teachers are viewed as co-partners in the collaborative process, there is evidence that the general education teacher assumes the leadership role in the classroom, and the SET plays a supporting role (Bryant Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012). Co-planning is necessary as it delineates the roles of the two teachers in ensuring that students benefit from the expertise of two professionals (Nierengarten, 2013; Sileo, 2011). In this study, I investigated SETs' perceptions of their involvement in co-planning.

The SET's goal in co-planning is to provide SWDs' access to specially designed instruction in the general education classroom (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011) in an effort to have SWDs meet state standards. The SET is responsible for identifying and implementing necessary accommodations for SWDs to facilitate academic success (Beninghof, 2015; Murawski, 2012). There is documentation that both special and general education teachers believe that collaborative lesson planning is necessary for successful co-teaching (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012). However, there is not sufficient evidence that best practices are occurring in the area of co-planning between general education and special education co-teachers.

Prior to inclusive classroom settings, general education teachers and SETs typically worked in isolation with little to no need to collaborate. However, the inclusive education agenda necessitates collaboration between co-teachers. Most of the learning

plans are developed during collaborative planning, and it is important for both teachers to be integrally involved (Rimpola, 2014). Moreover, the SET and the general education teacher must work side-by-side in the classroom in order for SWDs to receive the necessary individual instructional supports to be successful in mastering the general curriculum (Friend & Cook, 2012; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010). Through collaborative planning, co-teaching partners can share classroom responsibilities based on their individual areas of expertise. Common planning is therefore necessary to utilize the expertise of both teachers in the inclusive classroom (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). The SETs' perceptions are important in investigating the current practice of co-planning because they are certified to provide classroom accommodations to SWDs; further, they are also responsible for all students' mastery of the general education curriculum (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010).

## Problem Statement

The global problem is that general education and special education co-teaching partners often do not co-plan sufficiently to implement co-teaching strategies targeting SWDs (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) have observed the need for increased co-planning time for co-teachers based on their research regarding co-teaching. The concern of limited time for teachers to engage in co-planning was identified as early as 2007, when Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) published a metasynthesis that examined the co-teaching process. Subsequently, Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, and McCulley's (2012) summary of six syntheses indicated that collaborative planning for inclusive settings is "problematic" (p. 507). Based on the

findings of metasyntheses on co-teaching, co-taught instruction is plagued by limited planning between co-teachers.

Some co-teachers are provided with scheduled planning times. However, Wilson (2015) indicated that scheduled co-planning times are usually taken up with other meetings and discussions. Murawski (2011) admonished co-teachers to make at least 20 minutes available each week to co-plan despite the unavailability of scheduled common planning. SETs' efficacy for co-planning can be viewed as having a direct impact on co-planning because their beliefs and motivations can determine the extent to which they plan with co-teaching partners. A teacher's level of self-efficacy is likely to have a strong influence on that teacher's concerns for inclusive practices (Wang, Zan, Liu, Liu, & Sharma, 2012) which includes co-planning.

Besides being well educated, a teacher needs to have self-efficacy in performing the tasks associated with teaching (San, 2014). Planning is one of the tasks associated with teaching. The fact that student success is directly related to teacher self-efficacy (TSE) underscores the importance of a study that examines TSE relative to co-planning (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). An efficacious teacher will expend greater effort and persistence, and an increase in student performance results when TSE increases (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). An SET who demonstrates increased effort to co-plan for effective inclusive instruction is therefore likely to experience positive results in terms of student attainment. Thus, improved student attainment may serve as a motivator for teachers' increased self-efficacy with the goal of

producing continuous student attainment. Conversely, when co-teachers do not plan sufficiently, a lack of self-efficacy among co-teachers may exist.

The literature is clear that good working co-teaching relationships require common planning (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011; Jennings, 2012). Two-thirds of the respondents in a study on co-teaching reported that their co-teaching was representative of a successful equal partnership (Altieri, Colley, Daniel, & Dickenson, 2015). Therefore, co-teachers should be planning together to foster a healthy co-taught environment that promotes student attainment.

At the local level, SETs are not guaranteed common time with co-teaching partners (TW [Lead Teacher for Special Education], personal communication, August 20, 2014). Further, teachers rarely meet to collaborate for at least 20 minutes as suggested by Murawski (2011). Inadequate planning is counterproductive to co-teaching as many findings have revealed co-planning as a major challenge in co-teaching (Scruggs et al., 2007). In cases where special education co-teachers do not routinely co-plan with their partners, SET's beliefs and actions may be impacted negatively.

Given the importance of co-planning for co-taught classrooms, SET's perceptions relative to planning for specialized instruction to SWDs in general education settings is warranted. Attention to the issue of co-planning could prevent the usual practice of using plans designed for regular education classes in co-taught classrooms (Wilson, 2015) without much input from the SET. When SETs play meaningful roles in planning, it can increase their self-efficacy as described by San (2014). Moreover, increased self-efficacy is positively related to teacher performance (Pan, Chou, Hsu, Li, & Hu, 2013; Rimpola,

2014). SETs' perceptions may provide insight into individual teacher efficacy to plan and co-plan effectively for positive outcomes for SWDs. Further environmental factors that contribute to their beliefs can be identified.

## The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate SETs' perceptions in regard to co-planning for the instruction of SWDs and their peers in the general education classroom. This population was chosen because SETs have been observed as making a marginal contribution to co-teaching in general (Fenty & McDuffie Landrum, 2011; Friend & Cook, 2007). The conceptual framework of self-efficacy was used to guide this investigation because "self-efficacy is a personal belief in one's capability to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Artino Jr. et al., 2012, p. 31). In this study, SETs' beliefs about their ability to co-plan will be examined because their personal beliefs influence the level of commitment and confidence in their ability to co-plan. Highly efficacious teachers are more committed to the task (Wu & Wang , 2015) and use more advanced teaching strategies (Rimpola, 2014; Pan et al., 2013). SETs' self-efficacy in the area of co-planning could explain their limited involvement in co-planning.

## Research Questions

RQ1: How do elementary SETs perceive their co-planning experience as impacting their self-efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings?

RQ2: What do SETs perceive as facilitators of co-planning?

RQ3: What do SETs perceive as barriers to co-planning?

## Conceptual Framework: Theory of Self-Efficacy

The conceptual framework used in this study was Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Lenz and Shortridge-Baggett's (2002) interpretation of self-efficacy stated that self-efficacy has an influence on an individual's thinking, feelings, motivation, and actions. Self-efficacy is determined by a number of factors: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological reactions (Bandura, 1997). As co-planning requires a high degree of interaction with two co-teachers and, to a lesser extent, with other professionals, the interactions contribute directly to the experiences of the special education co- teacher.

Efficacy is described as a personality trait as well as a response to a situation (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Therefore, self-efficacy can be viewed as situational. TSE is "individual teachers' beliefs about their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals" (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007a, p. 612). A number of scales have been developed to measure TSE (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007b; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Gibson and Dembo's (1984) scale was believed to focus only on belief about control of student outcomes rather that abilities to teach effectively (Avanzi, Miglioretti, Velasco, & Skaalvik, 2013).

In the quest to measure TSE over a wide range of tasks, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007b) developed scales to measure additional dimensions of TSE. Elements of recent scales now incorporate additional constructs that

are more representative of tasks teachers perform. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) listed the following three dimensions in their scale: (a) instructional strategies, (b) classroom management, and (c) student engagement. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007b) scale listed six dimensions: (a) instruction, (b) adapting instruction, (c) motivation, (d) maintaining discipline, (e) co-operation with colleagues and parents, and (f) coping with change. The dimensions of Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2007b) scale appear to be most appropriate for investigating the perceptions of SETs as it acquires beliefs on a number of tasks associated with SETs' roles.

In this study, SETs provided information on their beliefs in their ability to co-plan in order to generate positive educational outcomes in accordance with Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2007a) definition of self-efficacy. As "self-efficacy affects the effort teachers invest in teaching" (Milner & Hoy, 2003, p. 264), SETs' perceptions of co-planning will indicate how their perceptions of co-planning affect the effort they expend to provide effective co-taught instruction. Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified two factors for measuring teacher's sense of efficacy, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. Both factors align with Bandura's conceptualization of self-efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy refers to the belief that a teacher possesses the skills and abilities to bring about student learning. On the other hand, teaching efficacy considers the fact that any teacher's ability to bring about change is significantly limited to factors external to the teacher (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Participants in this study provided explanations of their beliefs regarding the role of co-planning in determining their personal teaching efficacy as well as teaching efficacy.

## Nature of the Study

This study is a qualitative case study, as this was the most appropriate method for acquiring rich, thick descriptions regarding perceptions. Merriam (2002) explained that such research is interpretive in nature as researchers seek to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research is conducted to acquire an in-depth understanding of cases and situations. The research questions were formulated to acquire a deeper understanding of co-planning through special education co-teachers' perceptions.

The dimensions of TSE measures (Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007b; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) provided the foundation for formulating the research questions. The questions were designed to seek answers about SETs' beliefs in their ability plan to achieve their goals for co-taught instruction. The course of action taken to achieve those goals is noteworthy (Bandura, 1977), hence the questions also investigated the impact of co-planning on meeting SETs' established goals for co-teaching.

An understanding of co-planning was explored by interviewing elementary SETs who co-teach. Creswell (2012) explained that qualitative research uses participants' words. The participants' words were captured during the interviews. The exact words of the SETs are important in an environment where SETs seem to have little co-planning opportunities with their co-teaching partners. The SETs' perceptions were examined to provide answers to the research questions.

The complexity of the problem of co-planning cannot be thoroughly understood using the quantitative approach. Using a quantitative approach requires the use of standardized measures. Patton (2002) pointed out that standardized measures limit the varying perspectives and experiences to predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned. In addition, quantitative research identifies a few variables to answer narrow questions (Creswell, 2012). The quantitative approach would not have provided the depth of information required in this study. The SETs' voices of their perceptions provided detailed information on their beliefs in their ability to co-plan. Determining the SETs' perceptions was necessary in order to find out their beliefs regarding co-planning and the supports that guide them through the co-planning process. I provide more detailed information on the methodology in Chapter 3.

## Definition of Terms

The listed terms will be used in accordance with the definitions provided.

*Special education teacher:* A teacher who is "tasked with coordinating and planning for specially designed instruction that is both aligned to the general education curriculum and individualized to meet each student's unique learning needs and goals" (Petersen, 2016 p. 20).

*General education teacher:* A teacher who is certified to provide core instruction to all students in a classroom as well as interventions in conjunction with collaborative teacher teams (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012).

*Co-teachers:* A general education teacher and an SET, both trained to share the planning, instructing, and assessing of SWDs and their typically developing peers in the regular education classroom (Murawski, 2010).

*Co-teaching:* "When general and special education teachers work together in the same classroom, which incorporates students with disabilities with their typically developing peers" (Shoulders & Krei, 2015).

*Co-planning:* Careful planning of lessons that require the co-teaching delivery system with both teachers defining and establishing their support responsibilities for students (Curry School of Education, University of Virginia, 2012).

*Student with disability/ies:* Student with "mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] Amendments, 1997, p. 9).

*Students without disabilities:* Typically developing peers of SWDs (Shoulders & Krei, 2015).

*General education classroom:* A classroom that is the least restrictive setting for SWDs that offers the correct supports and instructional techniques to help SWDs achieve success (Murawski & Spencer, 2011).

*Inclusive education/inclusion:* The practice of placing SWDs in the general education classroom where they receive instruction with all the supports and services in place (Murawski & Spencer, 2011).

## Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

### Assumptions

In conducting this qualitative study, I assumed that the teachers were knowledgeable of co-teaching best practices because they were all certified educators. Another assumption was that teachers would have a collective reflection of their experiences throughout their co-teaching tenure at their respective schools. I also assumed that all participants were truthful in providing perceptions during the interviews. This assumption was made because participation was voluntary with no consequences for nonparticipation.

### Limitations

The sample of SETs from elementary schools in one suburban district restricts the generalization of findings to other suburban school districts with a special education student population. Further, generalization is not applicable for other districts, especially those that may have full inclusive practice or no inclusive practice. Limiting the study to perceptions of co-planning may not result in a complete understanding of the co-planning problems. Moreover, the use of only SETs as participants may be too narrow to adequately examine the problem. Archival data sources in the form of lesson plans, schedules, and school improvement plans were also analyzed to gain a deeper insight of co-planning.

## Scope

I investigated special education co-teachers' perceptions of co-planning in an attempt to gain an understanding of their self-efficacy for co-teaching. Participants' beliefs in their ability to plan for effective co-taught instruction are a focus of this study. Further, I investigated participants' goals and external sources that impact those goals. Co-planning is considered as the course of action taken to achieve set goals for co-teaching. The participants did not include any professionals who were responsible for providing support to SWDs. The problems relating to the practice of co-teaching were not emphasized in this study.

## Delimitations

I assumed the population of SETs in a suburban school district in Northern Georgia to be representative of the professionals who could best provide information regarding the co-planning problem. An investigation of self-efficacy in co-planning did not allow me to present a first-hand account of the co-planning process. The teachers were interviewed rather than observed because observer effect (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) can alter the behavior of participants in the presence of the researcher. Due to time constraints, I was unable to immerse myself in the environment for numerous observations to reduce observer effect. In addition, teachers' motivations, feelings, and actions may have been influenced by their overall feelings regarding co-teaching rather than any factors in the work environment. Personal relationships and interactions with co-workers and administrators may also account for biased data pertaining to participants' self-efficacy. For example, a participant who has had conflict with a co-teacher or

administrator may have only provided negative responses regarding their capabilities and motivations.

## Significance of the Study

In 2011, the State of Georgia reported that 68.1% of all SWDs were taught in classrooms with their general education peers (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], n.d.b). Therefore, investigating SETs' experiences and perceptions regarding co-planning with general education teachers to instruct SWDs in inclusive environments is warranted. As discussed in this study, studies on co-planning are limited. The majority of literature currently documents SETs and general education teachers' attitudes and perceptions as they relate to inclusive education and co-teaching (Bargerhuff, 2013; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014;); however, SETs' perceptions of co-planning practices and the impact thereof is lacking. Similarly, on a local level, there are no publications discussing SETs' involvement or perceptions in the co-planning process.

In co-teaching, co-planning is designed for the SET to provide supports (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011); hence, the data collected in this study may promote increased awareness of SETs' perceptions of co-planning for SWDs in the general education classroom. Understanding co-planning from the SETs' perceptions may lead to increased fidelity of practice in co-teaching. Moreover, SETs and general education teachers may share responsibilities more equally as they plan to provide supports to SWDs.

Data obtained from this study may be used to promote an increased awareness of collaborative practice of co-teaching based on the participants' voices and insights. Sileo (2011) reported that effective communication in co-planning is important in building professional relationships and shared responsibilities in which a variety of co-teaching models are used. Currently, the SET often has the role of aiding the general education teacher rather than that of an equal partner in the co-teaching model (Ashton, 2014). This study's data may provide critical information to enable co-teaching teams to deliver effective instruction as a result of the co-planning process.

Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) purported that students will benefit from instructional techniques and classroom activities that meet their needs when adequate co-planning occurs. Murawski (2012) stated that the shared expertise benefits both students and teachers. The results of this study may lead to increased co-planning for differentiated instruction and the use of a wider variety of co-teaching models. The use of various models may improve the quality of instruction students receive from two certified professionals. Ultimately, an improvement in co-planning could result in educational attainment of SWDs because teachers will be more equipped to plan for tiered instruction that addresses the needs of all students.

I chose SETs to participate in this study because the literature has identified the need for SETs to play a more meaningful role in co-teaching (Friend & Cook, 2007). Further, the SETs' expertise is required to meet the needs of SWDs in the general education classroom (Friend & Cook, 2007; Murawski & Spencer, 2011). The SETs who do not plan with their co-teachers are apt to develop a feeling of incompetence in the

delivery of differentiated instruction due to lack of preparedness. Further, in accordance with the conceptual framework of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1971), a negative experience with co-planning is a factor in reducing SETs' enthusiasm for co-planning. This study was designed to bring awareness to SETs' perceptions regarding their capabilities and motivations to co-plan. It has the potential to be a mechanism for creating an atmosphere where the SET's integrity will be preserved. A positive co-planning environment is advantageous to schools and school districts in the form of increased teaching efficacy and professionalism.

Most professional educators are assumed to be committed to student success (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain & Shamberger, 2010). In co-teaching, the effectiveness of the student-teacher engagement is highly contingent on the SETs' ability to meet the needs of SWDs in the general education classroom (Metcalf, 2011). As self-efficacy influences a person's actions (Lenz & Shortridge-Baggett, 2002), the special education co-teacher's level of self-efficacy will determine the extent to which SWDs' needs are met in the general education classroom. Information on SETs' self-efficacy is important in making a determination on SETs' levels of commitment to prepare SWDs for college and careers.

## Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study. The remainder of the study is organized into literature review, research method, results, and discussion. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature dealing with the historical background and pertinent concepts associated with co-teaching in general and co-planning in specific.

Chapter 3 delineates the research methodology of the study. The criteria for sample selection, manner of data collection, and additional procedures are described. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 contains conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings. A list of references and appendices follow the numbered chapters at the conclusion of the study.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

The problem that prompted this investigation is that SETs and general education teachers do not plan sufficiently to instruct SWDs in the general education classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate SETs' perceptions regarding co-planning for the instruction of SWDs and their peers in the regular education classroom. This review addresses literature pertaining to co-planning and co-teaching and examines their interrelated nature.

The discussion begins with the historical context of inclusive practices relative to co-teaching, followed by legislation that paved the way for the present-day placement of SWDs in the least restrictive environment (LRE). I present specifics of co-teaching, its benefits and barriers, and the importance of collaboration and co-planning for effective co-teaching practices. I examine co-planning for twenty-first century classrooms with tiered instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as focal practices. The review continues with the role that school administrators play in promoting co-planning. I present research findings pertaining to perceptions that have implications for co-planning. I outline the conceptual framework upon which this study is based, TSE, and highlight research relevant to TSE and performance. Finally, I present the research methodologies utilized to study co-teaching, followed by the different methodologies used to study various components related to co-teaching. These components include: attitudes, self-efficacy, motivation, educational placement, and achievement.

An electronic search of databases available in the Walden University Library for peer reviewed journals was conducted. The following multidisciplinary and education databases were accessed: Academic Search Complete and Proquest Central; as well as the education databases of Education Research Complete; ERIC; and SAGE Premier. The keywords *co-planning* and *perspectives* revealed few articles, of which most were unrelated to my topic. Subsequently, I widened my criteria to include the following terms: *co-teaching, co-teacher, inclusion, learning disabilities, students with disabilities, inclusive education, special education,* and *inclusive classrooms*. Terms were searched individually and in various combinations via Boolean searches containing two or three terms. By widening my search criteria, I was able to obtain more documented literature relating to co-planning and co-teaching. In a similar manner, I used the mentioned databases and Boolean searches on *self-efficacy* and *teachers* and *self-efficacy* and *teaching*.

I used the WorldCat electronic catalog to locate books written by experts in the field of co-teaching, inclusive education practices and UDL. I made a note of the book references in some of the journal articles, and used WorldCat to identify nearby libraries that housed those books. I visited three libraries and used the available books as reference since I was not eligible to check them out of the libraries. My course texts from Walden also provided valuable information for this review. In addition, I purchased three books from the Amazon website, as these books were well documented in a number of the references of published work. The books purchased were unavailable both electronically and for loan at the libraries I visited.

## Historical Context

### Advocacy

In the United States, education of SWDs has received a great deal of attention within the last century. SWDs were segregated in the 1800s and early 1900s; *mainstreaming, normalizing* and *full inclusion* are terms that were later introduced to refer to the integration of SWDs in general education settings (Osgood, 2005). In the early twentieth century, there were low expectations for SWDs; hence, SWDs were segregated from the general education population (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). As a result of SWDs' parental opposition to segregation, advocacy efforts for including SWDs in general education schools and classes (Florian, 2007) created the awareness of the need for inclusive practices. It appears that mainstreaming, or integration into schools with the general population, was insufficient. Osgood (2005) noted that inclusive education was intended to change the interface of the classroom.

As inclusive practices became more common in the 1960s, evidence-based practices were lacking (Florian, 2007); hence, SWDs were not adequately served. Current policies require the use of evidence-based practices to address the needs of SWDs. Coyne, Carnine, and Kame'enui (2010) argued that diverse learners have unique characteristics and agreed that the use of effective teaching strategies will increase the earning capacity of diverse learners, including SWDs. In that regard, laws and policies now make provision for the unique educational needs and overall positive school experience of SWDs. These laws will be discussed forthwith.

**Legislation**

The ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) court case resulted in the abolition of the separate but equal segregated approach to schooling and provided precedence for improved special education services. However, it was not until 1975 that major legislation was enacted to assure the right to equal educational access for SWDs. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA, 1975) of the United States stimulated the conversation regarding the education of SWDs (Florian, 2007). As a result of legislation, "special education is an integral part of the total educational enterprise, not a separate order" (Council for Exceptional Children, 1997 para. 1). Subsequent legislation (IDEA and NCLB) has reflected the Council for Exceptional Children's (1997) belief regarding special education and protects against segregation with regards to the provision of special education services.

IDEA and NCLB mandated that SWDs have access to the same quality of education as their peers (Fowler et al., 2009). "IDEA is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation" (USDOE, n.d.a, para 1). IDEA governs how special education services are provided to SWDs (USDOE, n.d.a), including placement in an LRE. The LRE requirement was intended to prevent discrimination by ensuring that SWDs receive instruction with their peers as SWDs have a constitutional right to public education (Fowler et al., 2009). Legal decisions from prominent court cases regarding placement of SWDs such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954); *Pennsylvania Association of Retired Citizens v. Pennsylvania* (1972); and *Mills v. Board*

*of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972) paved the way for the LRE mandate (Fowler et al., 2009).

NCLB (2002) was aimed at reducing the achievement gap. States, districts, and schools were now held accountable for the progress of all students including SWDs. NCLB mandated that states set high curriculum standards and define the annual year progress (AYP), or proficiency level, required of all students annually. Students who did not meet AYP for two consecutive years were labeled as in need of improvement, a status that incurred penalties (Fowler et al., 2009). Before the implementation of NCLB (2002), SWDs were not factored into the overall progress of schools.

**Least Restrictive Environment**

In the United States inclusive efforts are geared to educate SWDs in regular classrooms (Florian, 2007). As such, LRE dictates that a range of placement be considered for all SWDs beginning with the regular education classroom (Fowler et al., 2009). EHA was designed to protect students regardless of the nature of the disability; hence, all thirteen categories of disabilities are equally important (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). IDEA (2004) requires that each student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that allows the student to be involved in the general curriculum; moreover, that student should make progress (USDOE, 2006).

In 2013, 67.8% of students with a specific learning disability in the United States spent more than 80% of the school day in an inclusive setting. Students with intellectual disabilities and/or multiple disabilities did not spend as much time in the regular education classroom. The percentage of those students who spent more than 80% of the

school day in the regular education classroom were 16.8% and 13.3% for intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities respectively for the corresponding period (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics [USDOENCES], 2016). While the general education classroom is the least restrictive environment, students may be educated in separate classrooms or schools when the nature or severity of their disability does not allow them to benefit from instruction in the general education classroom, even with the provision of supplementary aids (Fowler et al. 2009). The fact that a majority of SWDs spend more than 40 % of the school day in general education classrooms (USDOENCES, 2016) is an indication of the need for co-planning and co-teaching.

## Co-Teaching

It is reported that 80.9% of all SWDs nationwide spend more than 40% of the school day in general education classrooms (USDOENCES, 2016; thus, co-teaching and co-planning are warranted. Co-teaching is widely discussed and researched by a number of experts in the field (Conderman & Bresnahan, 2007; Conderman & Hedin, 2012; Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012; Friend & Cook, 2007; 2010; Murawski, 2012; Ploessl, Rock, Schoenfeld, & Blanks, 2010; Scruggs et al., 2007). In schools, co-teaching is designed to meet the needs of SWDs who are instructed in general education classrooms (Hang & Rabren, 2009). Further, co-teaching is becoming "an increasingly prevalent approach to collaboration designed to meet the diverse needs of all students" (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011, p. 21). According to Friend and Cook (2012), co-teaching "is a service delivery option for providing specialized services to SWDs or other

specialized needs while they remain in their general education classes . . . co-teaching involves two credentialed professionals-two teachers" (p. 163). The model of instruction is viewed as beneficial to both students and teachers (Conderman & Bresnahan, 2007) and the expectation is that the SET and the general education teacher's shared expertise would benefit all categories of students in the classroom (Friend & Cook, 2012; Murawski, 2012).

On the contrary, Tremblay (2013) contended that there is not sufficient empirical evidence to justify co-teaching as being beneficial to students. Tremblay (2013) conducted a comparative analysis of co-teaching and solo-taught, or self-contained models, in a French community. Two hundred and fifty-eight students enrolled in grades 1 and 2 participated in the study that included both students with and without disabilities. All of the SWDs had a learning disability (LD). The comparison was made using the participant's grade 1 and 2 achievement scores. Tremblay's (2013) results demonstrated that students with learning disabilities who were co-taught did not attain a higher level of achievement than those who were solo taught. Tremblay's study only contained participants with an LD, which does not correspond to the range of disabilities of SWDs who are co-taught.

In concurrence with Tremblay's (2013) findings, McLeskey and Waldron's (2011) summary of research findings led them to conclude that full inclusive education for SWDs is insufficient to meet the needs of most elementary students with LD. However, McLeskey and Waldron's (2011) conclusion can be expected to bear similarity to Tremblay's findings because of the participants in their studies. Similar to the

participants in Tremblay's (2013) study, Mcleskey and Waldron's (2011) summary only considered students with LD while disregarding other disability categories. Despite findings that do not justify co-taught placement for students with LD, co-teaching was designed with the best interest of SWDs in mind.

There are various models of co-teaching that are designed to cater for students' needs and teacher expertise (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011; Friend & Cook, 2007). Six models of co-teaching have been identified as follows: (a) station teaching, (b) parallel teaching, (c) alternative teaching, (d) team teaching, (e) one teach/one assist (OT/OA), and (f) one teach/one observe (OT/OO; Friend & Cook, 2007; 2012). In station teaching, students rotate among stations, two of which are facilitated by the co-teachers. Parallel teaching is evidenced by two teachers teaching the same content at the same time. In alternative teaching, one teacher provides small group instruction while the other teaches a larger group. In team teaching, teachers deliver content together in a whole group setting. OT/OA and OT/OO models involve one teacher performing a leading role while the other performs various tasks (Jennings, 2012) based on students' needs. Additionally, all models can facilitate student needs with each teacher making a meaningful contribution to instruction (Jennings, 2012; Ploessl et al., 2010; Murawski & Spencer, 2011). In some models the student ratio is decreased, while in others, one teacher has the opportunity to address the wide range of student needs.

Co-teaching of SWDs does not only apply to instruction. Friend and Bursuck (2006) purported that inclusive education is a blend of physical, social, and instructional programs. There is evidence that teachers may have to devote a great deal of classroom

time to behavior (Glazzard, 2011). Glazzard's (2011) qualitative study sought teachers and teacher assistants' views regarding the barriers of co-teaching. Glazzard reported that teachers require peer support for addressing adverse behaviors of SWDs. All participants indicated the need for support in the area of addressing behavior. Solis et al. (2012) echoed the need for behavioral supports based on their synthesis of inclusive practices and co-teaching. In co-teaching, the SET's "primary role is to ensure that students with disabilities needs are being met and that their accommodations are being implemented" (Leader-Janssen, Swain, Delkamiller, & Ritzman, 2012, p. 113). Leader-Janssen et al. (2012) suggested that a great deal of support is required to address student behavior when SWDs are placed in general education classrooms.

Behavior seems to be secondary in discussions or research on co-teaching. Currently, studies and guidelines address mainly instructional, relationship, and attitudinal concerns. Some researchers have studied the strategies used during co-teaching (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Casale-Giannola, 2012; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011; Friend & Cook, 2007; Jennings, 2012; Johnson & Brumback, 2013; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010; Metcalf, 2011; Moorehead & Grillo, 2013; Murawski & Spencer, 2011; Nichols & Sheiffield, 2014; Pugach & Winn, 2011). The knowledge base on co-teaching rather than co-planning has therefore been well documented and attention has been given to the benefits and barriers associated with the model. Despite extensive documentation and the fact that co-teaching has been in place for some time, there is no consensus on some aspects of co-teaching such as skill sets needed, teaching methodologies, and link to student achievement (Brinkmann & Twiford , 2012). Such

ambiguity is evident in the reported benefits and barriers of co-teaching presented in this review (Friend & Cook, 2007; Jennings, 2012; Johnson & Brumback, 2013; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010; Metcalf, 2011; Murawski & Spencer, 2011; Nichols & Sheiffield, 2014; Pugach & Winn, 2011).

**Benefits of Co-Teaching**

Advocacy for inclusive education prompted the inclusion of SWDs in general education classes and the need for co-teaching. In the United States, LRE and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) are safeguards for ensuring that SWDs receive education suited to their needs (Fowler et al., 2009). Advocates believe that a co-taught setting is suitable for providing individual needs for a number of SWDs. At present, co-teaching is widely practiced (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011) and a number of benefits have been identified. Friend and Cook (2007) noted that with co-teaching, all students are taught using the same curricula. This implies that students who are taught in resource rooms are at a disadvantage in terms of access to the general education curricula. Fenty and McDuffie Landrum (2011) offer an explanation for the curriculum access of SWDs in a co-taught setting. They explained that SWDs have access to the general education curriculum because they are instructed by both a highly qualified general education and an SET. The two teachers are required to co-plan for instruction.

According to Friend and Cook (2012), only SWDs who are placed in inclusive settings benefit from the expertise of two teachers. Friend and Cook (2012) provided an explanation of this benefit by stating that the rationale for co-teaching is high quality instruction for SWDs. In agreement with Friend and Cook (2012), Florian (2007)

purported that many of the strategies used in general education classrooms are also suggested for use with SWDs; hence, there is no justification for placing students in special classes that employ special strategies.

Co-planning is necessary because SWDs who are placed in general education classrooms require supports to enable them to access the general curriculum (Murawski & Spencer, 2011) or State standards. Some experts believe that if students are provided with supports to cater for their unique needs, they will be successful (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011; Cornelius, 2014; Friend & Cook, 2007; 2012; Jennings, 2012; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010; Metcalf, 2011; Moorehead & Grillo, 2013; Murawski & Spencer, 2011; Narkon & Wells, 2013; Sailor & McCart, 2014; Scruggs et al., 2012). On the contrary, it has been reported that the standards agenda is instead a barrier to effective inclusive education or co-teaching. Glazzard (2011) conducted focus group interviews with teachers and teaching assistants at one primary school in the north of England. He examined teachers and teaching assistants' perceived barriers to effective inclusion of SWDs in that primary school. Glazzard (2011) reported that the standards based curriculum is a *one size fits all* approach. Glazzard also stated that the participants (teachers and teaching assistants who worked in SWDs in the general education classroom) viewed the standards based agenda as a major barrier to inclusive education.

In view of the findings, Glazzard (2011) concluded that "the current system of judging all children by the same normative standards is outdated" (p. 62). He further stated that "the problems arise fundamentally because we are trying to force all learners to reach the same standards and subject them to the same pedagogical processes" (p. 62),

Glazzard's (2011) conclusion regarding the *one size fits all* standards agenda failed to consider the importance of supports in enabling SWDs to meet or exceed the standards.

Besides instructional benefits, other benefits of co-teaching SWDs are also noted in the literature. Fenty and Mc-Duffie-Landrum (2011) examined how teachers collaborated during instruction within a single classroom in elementary, middle, and high school level. They reported that SETs and regular education teachers were in agreement regarding the benefits of co-teaching: 1) all students in the classroom were supported, 2) teacher's personalities determined to what extent each supported the other in the classroom, 3) increased differentiated instruction was observed, and 4) co-teaching enabled the ability for needs of individual student's personalities to be met. The benefits of differentiated instruction contradict Glazzard's (2012) findings of the *one size fits all* approach to co-teaching. Graduates of a teacher preparation cohort who received training in collaboration reported that they frequently planned for specific accommodations, curricula modifications, and behavior supports of identified students (Altieri et al., 2015). Therefore, there should be no *one size fits all* approach in the inclusive classroom if co-planning addresses the needs of individual students.

Additionally, researchers have concluded that in co-taught classrooms, students benefit from the practice of co-teaching where there is one certified general education teacher and one certified SET in the general education classroom (Adesola, 2012; Chapman & Hyatt, 2011; Fattig & Taylor, 2008; Friend & Cook, 2007; 2012; Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015). When two teachers are in one classroom, the student-teacher ratio is lowered (Adesola, 2012) providing a greater opportunity for students to have direct

attention from a teacher. Fattig and Taylor (2008) stressed the importance of the two teachers "designing curriculum to meet a greater variety of student needs" (p. 30). Chapman and Hyatt (2011) concurred that co-teachers should examine their instructional strategies beforehand, suggesting the need for co-planning.

Co-planning may be viewed as playing an important role in the education of students with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder (HFASD). According to the USDOENCES (2016), 91.2% of all students with Autism spend some portion of the school day in the general education classroom. Co-planning for SWDs in the general education classroom is therefore likely to include accommodations for students with HFASD.

Students with HFASD have social deficits and educators believe that co-taught instruction is socially beneficial for them as they model appropriate behavior in co-taught settings (Sansosti & Sansosti, 2012). Sansosti and Sansosti (2012) conducted a qualitative case study on inclusion of students with HFASD in a west central Florida school district described as "mid-sized suburban fringe/rural" (p. 919). In addition, participants of Sansosti and Sansosti's (2012) stated that social and communication skills of students with HFASD increased when placed in the general education setting. The increases in social and communication skills were mainly attributable to peer modeling rather than co-planning for supports or co-teaching. Given this finding, additional supports may be necessary only for academic rather than social skills. On the contrary, Reed, Osborne, and Waddington's (2012) quantitative study with student participants prompted the

researchers' recommendation for special school placement for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Reed et al.'s (2012) study was conducted to determine social and behavior outcomes of students with ASD who were placed in mainstream and special schools. The participants were selected from various geographical areas in the United Kingdom (UK). There were 140 students with ASD, 54 enrolled in mainstream schools and 86 enrolled in special schools. Data were collected using the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS). Their study results prompted them to recommend special schools because ASD require more support than students with other disabilities. Reed et al. did not take into consideration any supports that could be provided by co-teachers to expose students with ASD to the general curriculum and peers in the general education classroom. It should also be noted that the recommendation was premised by behavior data on conduct and hyperactivity.

While data for Reed et al.'s (2012) study justified special school placement for students with ASD, the data on social skills revealed that mainstream placement is advantageous. Reed et al. did not seem to consider social skills as an important factor for determining placement of students with ASD. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC, 2014), one in 68 children aged eight years in the United States is diagnosed with ASD. Therefore, it is likely that SETs will have to co-plan for specialized instruction for the ASD population.

According to Tetler and Baltzer (2011), students' perspective of their placement in an inclusive setting has social benefits. Tetler and Baltzer (2011) investigated the

learning experience of 26 Danish elementary students instructed in inclusive settings compared to those instructed in special classes or special schools. Most students who were included in mainstream classrooms expressed positive social experiences with their learning environments though the placement of students was not reported to have any significant influence on their perceptions. Both adults (e.g. Sansosti & Sansosti, 2012) and students (Tetler & Baltzer, 2011) have reportedly viewed co-taught settings as socially beneficial to SWDs. While teachers perceive that SWDs benefit socially in the general education classroom, there is no indication that they will be committed to co-plan to improve the social skills of SWDs in the general education classroom.

SWDs in a preschool co-taught setting have been observed to model appropriate social behavior from regular education peers when instructed in a small group setting (Ledford & Wolery, 2013). The behaviors of three preschoolers with disabilities and 10 without disabilities were examined in a full day preschool in small group instruction and social behaviors of stating *thank you* and *you're welcome* were recorded. Ledford and Wolery (2013) concluded that preschoolers with and without disabilities did not require direct instruction or reinforcement to acquire the recorded social skills. Ledford and Wolery (2013) purported that observational learning is best achieved in structured small group activities because there are too many distractions in unstructured activities. Based on the researchers' explanation, small group instruction during the use of co-teaching models such as station teaching and alternative teaching is the most appropriate environment for gains in social skills; interaction during non-structured activities is not ideal for observational learning of social skills. Ledford and Wolery's (2012) study

involved extensive training of peers. Training of peers in social skills may not be the typical situation in all classrooms, but SWDs are likely to interact socially with their peers in the general education classroom.

While there is less discussion on social skills acquisition in co-taught settings, the notion of academic attainment as a benefit is widely discussed in this era of accountability. NCLB (2002) stipulated that all students should be instructed by highly qualified content teachers and benefit from high quality instruction. Further, there should be one curriculum for all students and equal accountability in terms of assessment. The emphasis on accountability justifies Johnson and Brumback's (2013) stated goal of inclusion and co-teaching which is to increase student achievement. Murawski and Spencer (2011) pointed out that the answer to NCLB is collaboration to address the diverse needs of students in today's classrooms by applying strategies that accommodate all students' needs. Friend and Cook (2007; 2012) and Jennings (2012) explained the characteristics of various co-teaching models that should be used in co-taught instruction involving SWDs. The current trend of addressing the needs of SWDs in in the general education classroom is to maximize their academic achievement.

**Barriers to Co-Teaching**

Despite documentation of the benefits of co-teaching, there is evidence that use of the model does not always achieve its goals. An examination of current research findings provides insight regarding the barriers to the goals of co-teaching. Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum's (2011) case study of elementary, middle, and high schools was conducted to compare the practices with those reported in the national (United States) literature. The

study was described as a small-scale study and revealed that the six co-teaching models were not equally used. The OT/OA model was more dominant in all settings. Lack of planning time was a major barrier reported by teachers in Fenty and McDuffie's study. Similarly Casale-Giannola (2012) conducted a study in urban inner city and suburban secondary school environments and found that OT/OA approach was used in 66% of the co-taught lessons observed. Casale-Giannola's (2012) study also provided evidence of failure to address SWDs needs in the co-taught classroom. SWDs lacked basic reading, writing, and math skills. The results of the forgoing studies reveal practices that may have resulted from limited co-planning because OT/OA and OT/OO do not require substantial planning.

Co-planning has not been studied independently in many recent studies on co-teaching, but it has been identified as a barrier. Co-planning as a barrier to effective co-teaching practices is an issue that has been addressed by expert commentary (Adesola, 2012; Johnson & Brumback, 2013; Leader-Jannsen et al., 2012; Murawski, 2012; Pugach and Win, 2011) and recent research (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). Co-planning has been a barrier discussed in past research as well. Scruggs et al.'s (2007) metasynthesis of 32 studies revealed co-planning as a barrier to co-teaching. Insufficient use of the models of co-teaching (Casale-Giannola, 2012; Fenty & McDuffie- Landrum, 2011) may be a direct result of insufficient co-planning.

Co-planning and co-instruction using the range of models require collaboration between co-teachers. According to Ploessl et al. (2010), communication, preparation, instruction, and conflict resolution are the specific areas that need to be addressed in

order to reduce the barrier to effective co-teaching. Each of the requirements stated by Ploessl et al. (2010) is contingent on effective collaboration and collegiality of co-teachers as evidenced in studies such as Bagherhuff (2013) and Bronson and Dentith (2014). Bagherhuff's (2013) single site case study of teachers' perceptions was conducted in a Science Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) is representative of an environment that is designed to reduce co-teaching barriers. The specific perceptions were based on meeting the needs of SWDs as some of the students enrolled in the school were SWDs. Bagherhuff (2013) reported that all teachers had contributed to planning the curriculum and making other important decisions. In addition, the administrators were committed to allotting planning time and time for collaboration. Bronson and Dentith's (2014) study of co-teaching partners in a pre-school also revealed the importance of communication and collaboration in establishing collegiality of co-teachers. However, their study only reported on teachers who worked together the entire day.

There are temporary and permanent co-teaching assignments such as the SET co-teaches with different general education teachers throughout the day or the SET remains in the same classroom with the same general education teacher. Both assignments fail to provide equal opportunity for SET and general education teacher for communication, co-planning, and relationship building because SETs have listed temporary co-teaching assignments as a barrier to co-teaching (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). Co-teachers who reportedly have planned together, shared classroom roles and structure (Fenty& McDuffie-Landrum, 2011) and had ample communication with a co-teaching team (Bronson & Dentith, 2014) are reported as most successful (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum,

2011). Based on the above research findings, the amount of time co-teachers spend together has a direct effect on co-planning and the overall success of the co-planning team.

## Co-Planning

### The Importance of Collaboration and Co-Planning

Collaboration and co-planning facilitate improved communication and resource sharing between the general education teacher and the SET (Charles & Dickens, 2012). Effective communication is important in professional relationships to include co-teaching (Sileo, 2011). Bronson and Dentith (2014) observed that pre-kindergarten co-teachers who collaborated effectively throughout the instructional day had more child centered and engaging classrooms; conversely, the situation was quite the opposite when co-teachers did not have ongoing communication. Good teaching involves planning and evaluation of the executed plan (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). In that regard, co-teachers need to find time to plan at least once per week either by personal or electronic forms of contact (Murawski, 2012). Murawski further stated that with planning, co-teachers can identify each person's role and the model of co-teaching that will be used for each class. Murawski's (2012) suggestion of electronic contact is an alternative to planning together in a defined space. Moreover, it can be viewed as a way solving the problem of the lack of scheduled planning time thereby maximizing collaboration and co-planning.

Collaboration and co-planning facilitate conversations between co-teachers. The conversations involve the choice of instructional strategies as well as the co-teaching models that will be used during instruction (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011). Co-teachers bring

different attributes to the classroom and the chosen models should consider such differences (Chapman & Hyatt, 2011). Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010) opined that the "use of effective communication and instructional strategies can help ensure that the co-teaching experience is pleasant and productive" (p. 44). Unfortunately, some teachers do not have a pleasant experience with co-teaching (Murawski & Spencer, 2011). The general education teacher usually assumes the leading role as evidenced in an analysis of lesson plans of middle school co-teachers (Bryant Davis et al., 2012). The OT/OA and OT/OO models of co-teaching (Friend & Cook, 2007) are designed for one lead teacher and another playing a subordinate role. Yet some experts like Bryant Davis et al. (2012) are not satisfied with the overuse of the OT/OO and OT/OA models.

Despite the discrepancy regarding the overuse of one model (OT/OA), Murawski and Spencer (2011) outlined how roles can be delineated by planning to use different co-teaching models. Co-teachers can use the *how, what, who* co-planning form (Murawski & Spencer, 2011) to plan for instruction, observation, and assessment for all students in a co-taught classroom. The format is designed for OT/OA, OT/OO, parallel teaching, alternate teaching, team teaching, and station teaching. Murawski and Spencer (2011) suggested that OT/OA and OT/OO may be more appropriate if one teacher lacks confidence in delivering instruction. However, Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum (2011) would like to see the other models being used more often. Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum stated that the other models (parallel teaching, alternate teaching, team teaching, and station teaching) allow for more involvement of the co-teachers in the actual execution of lessons. Ploessl et al. (2010) who stated that poorly planned activities rarely end well,

outlined how co-teachers varied expertise can be maximized as a result of planning to use different co-teaching models. It is unclear whether co-teachers deliberately plan to overuse the OT/OA model or whether its use is a result of convenience when both teachers do not have sufficient time to co-plan.

Based on the literature, when barriers are removed and co-teachers' collaboration is enhanced, the result is an environment that is conducive to effective co-teaching practices. Effective co-teaching practices is the foundation for achievement for SWDs (Coyne et al., 2010) and continuous school improvement; hence experts have identified practices for effective co-teaching (Fenty et al., 2012; Friend & Cook, 2007; Murawski, 2012; Sileo, 2011). The communication dimension of collaboration is applicable to Chapman and Hyatt's (2011) notion that co-teachers need to develop a relationship by having initial discussions prior to co-teaching and establish a shared vision (Chapman & Hyatt 2011) and perspectives (Johnson & Brumback, 2013). Conflicting beliefs about how to plan with each other might not be effective or professionally rewarding (Conderman, 2009) thereby reducing the teachers' sense of efficacy.

With two teachers in the co-taught classroom, there needs to be a clear understanding of each teacher's role. Leader-Janssen et al. (2012) purported that the SET's role in the co-teaching partnership is primarily to ensure that SWDs receive their accommodations. Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) recommended that the SET should be the one addressing the accommodations; however, it was unclear whether they viewed making accommodations as the SET's major role. On the other hand, Conderman (2009) recommended that both co-teachers discuss accommodations. A meta-analysis of

studies on co-teaching revealed that co-teachers support co-teaching (Scruggs et al., 2007) and would likely be willing to adopt the practice.

Other experts believe that there is equity in co-teaching and both teachers should have equal roles. Friend and Cook (2012) explained that co-teachers are equally credentialed and should be viewed as peers that have equal classroom responsibility. However, they noted that the co-teachers do not possess the same expertise. If co-teachers do not have the same expertise, Friend and Cook's (2012) notion of equal classroom responsibility does not seem to be warranted. On the subject of differing expertise, Conderman (2009) advised that co-teachers reflect regularly on their co-teaching experiences, which could be interpreted as a way of meeting a consensus for practice using their respective expertise. Additionally, co-teachers need to share instructional and assessment responsibilities (Adesola, 2012; Conderman, 2009; Murawski, 2012). Sharing instructional and assessment responsibilities may require extensive dialogue if co-teaching partners do not share the same skills.

The collaborative process should be understood as a way of benefitting students and the co-teachers need to be willing to work through adverse issues (Murawski & Spencer, 2011) to realize those benefits. The two teachers have to share a common space, materials, confer on instructional methods and classroom management and such interaction is challenging for all co-teachers (Conderman, 2009; Murawski, 2012) provided valuable tips for effective co-teaching that include relationship building and instructional techniques. Planning and role assignment are two broad categories that could be deduced from Murawski's (2012) tips. If proper attention is paid to the two

categories there should be no issues or problems that impede collaboration, co-planning, and the use of effective practices.

**Co-Planning for Instruction in the 21st Century**

SET's contribute to co-planning for tiered support of all students in Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is a direct result of the NCLB and is designed to teach academics and behavior concurrently (Buffum et al., 2012). SET's expertise in the areas of behavioral and academic supports could be maximized with co-planning. Co-planning for the use some models of co-teaching: one teach, one assist (OT/OA) and one teach, one observe ([OT/OO] Murawski, 2012; Murawski & Spencer, 2011) may be appropriate for SWDs who require maximum specialized support in behavior and academics in the general education classroom. Alternately, co-planning is necessary as one co-teacher is sometimes required to provide remedial instruction. Regardless of the circumstance, Murawski and Spencer (2011) emphasized that co-teachers need to "proactively communicate and plan how they would like to work together." (p. 96)

An effective plan for tiered instruction should ensure that all SWDs receive their required accommodations; however, Debnam, Pas, and Bradshaw's (2012) study revealed that in most cases tertiary supports were not provided with fidelity. Their study was conducted in 45 elementary schools from six Maryland school districts. Debnam et al.'s study was a mixed methods study which utilized the School-wide Evaluation Tool created by Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, and Horner (2001, as cited in Debnam et al., 2012). In the United States, many students with LD have other disabilities such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Behavior (ADHD) or conduct disorders (Algozzine,

Putnam, & Horner, 2012), all of whom require tertiary supports. Co-planning will most likely result in the increase of the tertiary supports that are presently lacking for all categories of SWDs.

In addition to RTI, UDL is a new planning strategy that is receiving much attention. UDL is important in the discussion on co-planning and co-teaching because teachers must plan to utilize the design. According to the National Center on Universal Design for Learning (NCUDL, 2014), UDL is a curriculum to help students become expert learners by removing barriers that impede learning (para 1). NCUDL (2014) specified UDL curriculum as being composed of the following interrelated components: goals, methods, materials, and assessments. One of the possible barriers of SWDs educational attainment is that they will not be successful if they do not receive supports. Metcalf (2011) explained that UDL reduces this barrier by presenting content in a number of ways based on students' abilities to receive and perceive information. Moreover, UDL is the medium through which SWDs can progress in the area of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curricula (Basham & Marino, 2013), an increasing instructional focus in the 21st century. Basham and Marino noted that SWDs struggle with STEM learning and very few pursue STEM careers. Though UDL was not designed specifically for SWDs or co-taught instruction, the components emphasized (goals, methods, materials, and assessment) are in alignment with strategies and practices that should be used with SWDs. Co-planning for UDL therefore provides an avenue for SWDs to widen their career paths.

UDL principle helps to ensure that alternatives are included in the curriculum and lesson planning (Narkon & Wells, 2013) to accommodate learners who would not be successful without such alternatives. King-Sears (2014) explained that the UDL approach is proactive in that students' accommodations are considered before planning the lesson rather than considering the accommodations after the lesson has been planned. Although Murawski and Spencer (2011) mentioned that the design is proactive in terms of planning, they added that it simplifies the process of differentiation. Murawski and Spencer (2011) identified SETs as being important when utilizing the design because their expertise will assist the general education teacher to identify the content that should be included for the wide range of students in the class. It therefore means that SETs ought to play a meaningful role in co-planning given their expertise in the provision of accommodations.

Employments of UDL principles require extensive planning. In situations where students are co-taught, co-planning is a requirement as the SET's expertise is needed to plan for specialized instruction to SWDs. Researchers have noted that the use of UDL provides an equal opportunity for students with learning disabilities in general educations classrooms because their needs are addressed (King-Sears, 2014) using the following three UDL principles: representation, expression, and engagement (Metcalf, 2011), all of which facilitate accommodations. Murawski and Spencer (2011) simplified the three principles: representation, expression, and engagement. Representation refers to how the content is taught, expression refers to how students demonstrated what they learned, while engagement deals with the manner in which teachers motivate students.

Considering that UDL encompasses meeting the needs of diverse learners, Chapman and Hyatt (2011) listed UDL as an area of importance in the daily classroom practice of co-teachers. If UDL is as important as Chapman and Hyatt stated, then the SET will be expected to be more involved in planning for its use.

**Administrative Responsibility in Promoting Co-Planning**

Leader-Janssen et al. (2012) purported that leadership from school administration is necessary for the success of SWDs while Lipsky and Gartner (1997) identified the principal as the leader in charge of both special and general education. The beliefs of the experts suggest that school administrators should not overlook special education. Friend et al. (2010) observed that logistics, including common planning and scheduling is one of the three most studied topics in co-teaching. Pugach and Winn (2011) reviewed literature of four major studies on collaboration and co-teaching between special education and general education teachers. According to Pugach and Winn (2011), the studies were conducted between 1999 and 2007. The reviewed studies were: Murawski and Swanson (2001, as cited in Pugach & Winn, 2011); Scruggs et al. (2007, as cited in Pugach & Winn, 2011); Weiss and Brigham (2000, as cited in Pugach & Winn, 2011); and Welsh, Brownell, and Sheridan (1999, as cited in Pugach & Winn, 2011). Pugach and Winn (2011) reported that a lack of administrative support as well as a lack of common planning time were barriers to successful co-teaching. The principal is the instructional leader in the school (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) and the scheduling of common planning for instruction is one logistic matter that he/she needs to address in any special education agenda.

Adesola (2012) emphasized that motivation is important for success with co-planning being no exception. In Solis et al.'s (2012) summary of syntheses of meta-analyses of studies of inclusive education and co-teaching, they reported that teachers valued administrative support and sufficient time to communicate and plan. Administrators who facilitated collaboration and learning opportunities resulted in all teachers accepting ownership for all students in a school where co-teaching was implemented (Bargerhuff, 2013). With reference to continuous improvement and successful programs, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) stressed that there can be no progress without teacher ownership. Administrative support for co-teaching is therefore necessary as it facilitates co-planning, promotes ownership, and results in successful educational programs.

Walsh's (2012) reflected on the administrative support required for successful programs (Adesola, 2012; Bargerhuff, 2013; Hargreaves and Fullan; Solis et al., 2012) Walsh reported on a program that administrators implemented to improve co-teaching in Howard County School District, Maryland. Results revealed that the achievement gap between students without disabilities and SWDs decreased from 31% to 9% in reading proficiency and from 34% to 12% in mathematics proficiency. The comparison was made using scores of students from Grades 3-8 during the period 2003 to 2009.

While advocates have succeeded with more SWDs gaining access to regular education services, there may be another underlying reason why administrators are not placing emphasis on co-teaching. Fowler et al. (2009) explained that educational policy is influenced by systemic and governmental agenda. Though co-teaching has received

attention in research, it appears as though the governmental agenda of standards based curriculum for SWDs has not addressed the details of co-teaching practices including co-planning. As such, some teachers and teaching assistants believe that the standards agenda is not beneficial to SWDs because they can shape negative practitioner attitudes of inclusive education (Glazzard, 2011). Some system administrators may be in compliance with a governmental agenda that does not prioritize best co-teaching practices including making provision for common planning and providing resources to improve SETs' planning skills.

**Teachers' Perceptions: Implications for Co-Planning**

There are a few studies that investigated perceptions of pre-service teachers views of special education co-teachers' perceptions of Response to Intervention ([RTI] Swanson, 2012; Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014), and general and SETs role of collegial support (Jones, Youngs, & Frank, 2013). Forlin and Chambers (2011) collected pretest/posttest data from 67 early childhood and primary pre-service teachers in Australia. Pertinent findings in Forlin and Chambers study relating to perceptions were (a) a strong link between perceived level of confidence and knowledge and teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education and (b) teachers anticipated being more stressed if they were to have SWDs in their classes. The results suggest general education co-teachers' perceptions may influence their attitude towards inclusive education and the level of support provided to the SET for co-planning.

Elementary SETs from Grades 3-5 shared their perceptions on *Response to Intervention* or tiered support provided to students in Swanson's (2012) study. One

notable benefit stated by teachers was the opportunity that is provided for collaboration with classroom teachers and other professionals in meeting students' needs. Werts et al.'s (2014) study findings on SETs' perceptions of RTI also revealed that SETs perceived collaboration with other teachers as a benefit of RTI and instructional benefits for students. Burdensome work and the need for additional staff listed as barriers in both studies (Swanson, 2012; Werts et al., 2014). In contrast to Swanson's study, Werts et al.'s (2014) listed more perceived barriers which included attitudes, lack of training, and lack of resources.

Jones et al. (2013) investigated the role of colleagues in shaping the career paths of novice teachers by gathering their perceptions. A noteworthy finding was that special educators' perceptions of support from their colleagues were strongly predictive of their commitment to their assignment and their schools. Brinkmann and Twiford's (2012) qualitative study sought to find out the skill sets that elementary general and SETs perceived as necessary for successful co-teaching. Their study was conducted in an attempt to identify barriers and other reasons for discrepancy regarding various aspects of co-teaching. Classroom management, collaborative lesson planning, communication, data collection, interpersonal skills, differentiation of instruction, and self-advocacy were reported as being necessary skills for successful collaboration and co-teaching. The skill most teachers mentioned as being most important for successful collaboration and co-teaching was communication. Based on Jones (2013) and Brinkmann and Twiford (2012) findings, SET's are not likely to communicate effectively with their co-teachers if they are not satisfied with their co-taught assignment. Brinkmann and Twiford (2012)

suggested that administrators should provide professional development in the skill sets needed for collaboration and co-teaching. However, it is unclear whether an SET's satisfaction with their co-taught assignment improves with administrative provision of professional development in the areas of collaboration and co-teaching.

## Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teachers' work environment, beliefs, and attitudes are likely to dictate their approach to co-planning. Bandura (1997) noted that "teachers' beliefs in their self-efficacy affect their general orientation toward the educational process as well as their specific instructional activities" (p. 241). Moreover, there is also cognitively based motivation that leads to goal setting and positive self-evaluation (Bandura, 1977). According to Klassen, Tze, Betts, and Gordon (2011) researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to measure TSE. Klassen et al. (2011) meta-analysis of research on TSE conducted between 1998 and 2009 revealed that there were limited studies on the sources of self-efficacy. A number of studies on TSE focused evaluating or developing a suitable scale to measure the constructs of TSE (Avanzi et al., 2013) rather than the sources of TSE.

Gibson and Dembo's (1984) study was one of the earlier studies in which the researchers set out to develop a valid self-efficacy scale that examined the relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher behaviors. They conducted factor analysis of an existing self-efficacy scale as well as classroom observations. A notable result of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) study is the identification of the two categories of TSE, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Skaalvik

and Skaalvik (2007b) have conducted similar research in which the researchers have claimed to develop measures that are aligned to the multifaceted nature of a teacher's job. Scherer, Jansen, Nilsen, Areepattamannil, and Marsh's (2016) study on self-efficacy scales in which exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) was used confirmed the multidimensional nature of TSE.

Teacher self-efficacy has not only been observed in experienced teachers, but also with prospective teachers (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Teachers' self-efficacy is an important motivational construct that is positively related to a variety of outcomes for both the teachers and their students (Scherer et al., 2016). Studies on TSE have addressed professional development and classroom performance. In a study with pre-service teachers, self-efficacy increased after they took a course specifically designed for teaching science to elementary students (Bergman & Morphew, 2015). A longitudinal study conducted by Holzberger and Kunter (2013) indicated that high instructional quality led to an increase of self-efficacy the following year.

In the area of behavior, teachers' positive experiences with behavior led to increased self-efficacy (Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2012; Holzberger & Kunter, 2013). Pan et al., (2013) observed that the health and physical education teachers' self-efficacy had a positive influence on teaching preparation, teaching content, teaching strategy, and teaching evaluation. It seems as though there is a link between self-efficacy and teacher performance. The cognitive processes that are stimulated as a result of professional development and positive experiences may have been the agents for increased professionalism.

Research in self-efficacy in content areas is an example of the importance of situation in studying TSE. Both (Rimpola, 2014) and Nurlu (2015) investigated self-efficacy beliefs in the area of mathematics teaching. Both researchers used a scale to determine TSE in the area of mathematics as well as interviews in their studies. In addition, Rimpola used a general TSE scale. Rimpola's study could be considered a mixed methods study in which follow-up interviews were done to further explain the results of the TSE scales. However, Nurlu (2015) only used the survey questionnaire to obtain the participants for the study. Rimpola (2014) observed that teachers' stronger TSE in the area of math were more willing to experiment with new methods to increase student outcomes. In contrast to Nurlu's (2015) study, Rimpola (2014) compared the TSE for co-teachers in the area of mathematics teaching. The results revealed that scheduled planning time did not contribute significantly to the special education and general education teachers TSE in the area of math. Therefore, scheduled planning time may not be a contributing source to co-teachers TSE in mathematics teaching.

Teachers self-efficacy (TSE) scales have been developed for a range of tasks teachers are required to perform. Wu and Wang (2015) used the Internet Self-Efficacy Survey (ISS) to investigate teacher's internet self-efficacy and their informational commitments. Teacher informational commitment was observed to have positive effects on their internet self-efficacy. A science TSE scale is also in existence. The Science Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (STEBI) was used to find teachers' self-efficacy in teaching science (Bergman & Morphew, 2015; Bursal, 2015; Onen & Muslu Kaygisiz, 2013). While the STEBI was the sole means of data collection in the studies that measure

TSE in science, Wu and Wang (2015) used interviews to supplement the quantitative survey data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection are therefore appropriate for measuring TSE. However, Klassen et al. (2011) noted that there is need for more qualitative and longitudinal studies that investigate TSE.

## Review of Methodology

### Qualitative Methodology

Studies on co-teaching have employed a variety of research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. However, those that sought to examine perceptions, views, and practices related to co-teaching have mainly employed a qualitative approach (for example, Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Burton & Goodman, 2011; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010; Russell & Bray, 2013; Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015; ThomasTetler, 2011). The qualitative methodology uses purposeful sampling that provides thick descriptions and detailed explanations (Creswell, 2012). Scruggs et al. (2007) identified the appropriateness of qualitative research for describing and providing insights into attitudes, perceptions, interactions, classroom structure, and behaviors in co-taught environments. Given this fact Scruggs et al., (2007) used only qualitative studies to conduct a metasynthesis that addressed these factors.

### Differing Methodologies

While there are many studies in which researchers used the suggested qualitative approach to gather teachers' experiences and perceptions of co-teaching; fewer researchers conducted quantitative studies examining perceptions and experiences related

to co-teaching. The studies that sought to gather perceptions using the quantitative approach were conducted with the number of participants ranging from 67-1,754 (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Jones et al., 2013; Wert et al., 2014). In contrast, qualitative studies had significantly less participants. Attitudes, self-efficacy, motivation, placement, and achievement have all been researched using the quantitative method.

Leadership challenges relating to inclusive education is one aspect of co-teaching that was documented using the mixed-methods approach. Garner and Forbes (2013) distributed an electronic survey to collect data on the challenges that elementary, middle, and high school principals face in relation to inclusive education. They reported that the Likert-type questions were composed as a result of literature reviews of research related to leadership and co-teaching and a pilot study was conducted before the final questions were selected. Garner and Forbes (2013) also allowed participants to share their thoughts on issues not addressed in survey questions. Similarly, the views of pre-service teachers in Australia and the United States were documented using a combination of Likert-type survey questions and open-ended questions (e.g. Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011). Altieri et al. (2015) also took a mixed-methods approach in the form of questionnaires and interviews to obtain data on participants' collaboration practices.

Specific studies on co-teachers, co-planning, and self-efficacy took a mixed methods approach utilizing self-efficacy scales and open ended questions to corroborate the results of the data obtained from pre-established measures. Such studies include Rimpola (2014), Tzivinikou (2015b), and Nurlu (2015). Tzivinikou (2015a) investigated collaboration between special education and general education teachers using self-

evaluation questionnaires, a quantitative approach. A number of researchers took primarily the quantitative approach to investigate teachers or administrators' attitudes and self-efficacy as they relate to co-teaching and inclusive education. Miltenienė and Venclovaitė (2012) examined attitudes of SETs and general education teachers who worked with SWDs in Lithuania by taking a survey of their attitudes towards collaboration. Attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusive education and SWDs have also been documented using scales such as attitudes towards inclusive education scale (e.g. Gokdere, 2012) and other attitude questionnaires. Urton et al. (2014) used the German EZI, a questionnaire with two subscales to collect attitudinal data on principals and teachers. Urton et al. (2014) also used a self-efficacy and collective efficacy scale to document self-efficacy as they investigated the relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy.

Some researchers used pre-established scales to investigate self-efficacy before and after interventions (e.g. Leyser, Zeiger, & Romi, 2011; Urton et al., 2014; Pan et al., 2013). Others took measures to investigate the constructs of self-efficacy and develop scales in alignment with the constructs (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007a; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Woodcock, Hemmings, and Kay (2012) developed their own questionnaire to study inclusion and self-efficacy of pre-service teachers utilizing Likert-scale items drawn from two sources: the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale ([CIES] Sharma & Desai, 2002, as cited in Woodcock et al., 2012); and, the Self-Efficacy toward future Interactions with People with Disabilities Scale ([SEIPD] Hickson, 1996, as cited in Woodcock et al., 2012). Viel-Ruma et al.

(2010) used pre-established measures to measure both self-efficacy and job satisfaction of SETs while investigation the relationship between the two constructs.

Tremblay (2013) compared the effectiveness of co-taught instruction and resource room instruction. The Observation Survey (Clay, 2003 as cited in Tremblay, 2013) was to document reading and writing achievement of students with learning disabilities (LD) who received two different models of instruction: co-teaching and resource room instruction. Tremblay also used the TEDI-math (Van Nieuwenhoven, Gregoire, & Noel, 2001, as cited in Tremblay, 2013) to document math achievement of the participants.

The causal comparative mixed-methods approach was used to study motivation of SETs and general education teachers based on their AYP. A comparison of motivation of SETs and general education teachers who taught middle school math in AYP and non-AYP schools was reported by King-Sears and Baker (2014). Data were recorded using a Teacher Motivation Survey that the researchers developed in alignment with similar instruments used in other studies.

The purpose of this study was to investigate SETs' perceptions relative to co-planning for the instruction of SWDs and their peers. The methodology that was used to collect and analyze data in this investigation is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Results are presented in chapter 4. The final chapter, chapter 5, includes a discussion of the results, information on the researcher's conclusions about this investigation, and recommendations for future research. References and appendices are located after the numbered chapters.

# Chapter 3: Research Method

## Introduction

Merriam (2002) stated that qualitative research is highly descriptive because data are analyzed using words and pictures. This study is a qualitative case study, as this was the most appropriate method for acquiring rich, thick descriptions regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences. The research questions were formulated to acquire the perceptions of SETs in regard to their self-efficacy for teaching in an inclusive setting. The manner in which their perceptions may be facilitated by co-planning is emphasized. A thorough understanding of a phenomenon such as co-planning is possible when using participants' words (Creswell, 2012). The voices of the participants facilitated the rich, thick descriptions required for understanding teachers' efficacy for teaching in an inclusive setting and co-planning in the local context.

## Design

This case study revealed the depth of knowledge that was being sought in this study (Merriam, 2002). The reasons why there is limited co-planning between SETs and their general education counterparts cannot be thoroughly understood using the quantitative approach. Quantitative research identifies a few variables to answer narrow questions (Creswell, 2012). The questions were designed to acquire details regarding the participants' perceptions with regard to their efficacy in planning for co-taught instruction. The theory of self-efficacy is applicable to gathering perceptions. Pajares (2003) explained that thoughts and emotions are governed by self-efficacy. Further, self-efficacy beliefs influence motivation and behavior (Pajares, 1996; Skaalvik & Skaalvik,

2007a) to co-plan for instructing SWDs in the general education classroom in the local school district.

Merriam (2002) defined a case study as "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community" (p. 8). In this study, I examined various aspects of co-planning. I investigated SETs' perceptions of their ability to co-plan and factors that impact co-planning. The questions were designed to examine SET's personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy in terms of their beliefs in their ability to co-plan, the educational goals they set, and factors that influenced the goals. An intense description of co-planning is provided using the conceptual framework of self-efficacy. Moreover, this study was designed to facilitate that intense description of the participants as a group in a school district.

## Research Questions

The following three research questions were designed to conduct this investigation:

RQ1: How do elementary SETs perceive their co-planning experience as impacting their self-efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings?

RQ2: What do SETs perceive as facilitators to co-planning?

RQ3: What do SETs perceive as barriers to co-planning?

## Context

I interviewed eight elementary SETs who participated in co-teaching. My original plan was to interview at least 10 participants. However, the participant recruitment

process was extremely challenging. The procedure implemented to recruit participants included receipt of school district permission to conduct research followed by permission from principals. I contacted 12 principals to seek permission to recruit participants from their schools; however, only five responded despite repeated e-mail communication. The principals who responded granted permission for their staff to be recruited. The participants represent those five schools.

All of the participants were employed by one suburban school district in Northern Georgia. The number of participants is a reasonable number based on Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) suggestion to choose a number based on the time and resources available for the study. Elementary SETs were chosen because I am particularly interested in elementary special education. I am an SET and aspire to become an elementary special education administrator.

The school district's approval letter stipulated that the interviews had to be conducted after work hours. Meetings and other commitments made scheduling very difficult. Teachers have after school engagements such as tutorial sessions and professional development sessions. Therefore, time for teachers to participate in the study was a factor inhibiting additional participants. Two teachers indicated their desire to participate; however, they stated time restraints prevented them from doing so.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized that naturalistic sampling, the type of sampling used in qualitative research, is used to maximize information rather than to make generalizations. In that regard, I used purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012) to identify SETs who provided the best information to answer the research questions in

detail. All of the special education co-teachers I interviewed taught English/language arts and/or mathematics because the majority of co-teaching assignments are in the two subject areas. Additionally, instruction in English/language arts and mathematics are more critical in a multitiered system of supports. An investigation of co-planning in English/language arts and mathematics would be more representative of the co-teaching model. Some participants also co-taught science and social studies. The SETs were identified by the school administrators.

## Ethical Protection and Participant Recruitment

To ensure the protection of the participants of this study, I submitted an application and required documents to Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The documents included:

- Human research protections training completion certificate,
- data collection tool interview questions, and
- letter of invitation to participate in research.

I received conditional approval from the IRB. My IRB approval number is 12-02-16-0381682. I then submitted a research application to the Research and Evaluation Department (the superintendent's designee) of a suburban school district in Northern Georgia. After receiving approval to conduct the study in the school district, I submitted the letter of cooperation provided by the school district to Walden's IRB in order to obtain final approval to conduct the study. I originally planned to have the Research and Evaluation Department of the school district recommend schools for the study. However, the department representative asked me to select a list of schools for the study. The

individual explained that the department does not recommend schools for studies. I identified 12 schools in my application to the school district. The schools were randomly chosen from the list of schools in the district. After receiving district approval, I contacted the principals of the 12 schools by e-mail with an explanation of the proposed research. I made repeated attempts to contact principals; only five principals responded. Those who responded all granted permission. They received an information flyer for distribution to all potential participants. The information included the research questions, purpose, a description of the study, and my e-mail address. Potential participants were provided with a letter of informed consent after corresponding with me by e-mail. The letter contained the following information:

- statement that the study involves research;
- statement of why the subject was selected;
- disclosure of the identity and all relevant roles of researcher (doctoral student, teacher);
- explanation of research purpose;
- procedures for obtaining informed signed consent forms;
- description of procedures;
- expected duration of subject's participation;
- statement that participation is voluntary;
- statement that there will be no penalty for nonparticipation;
- statement that there will be no correct or incorrect answers to questions;
- co-teachers will benefit from the results of the study;

- statement that there will be no compensation for participation;
- assurance that confidential information will be kept in a locked cabinet and/or password protected computer (only accessible by the researcher);
- the researcher's contact information (e-mail address);
- the chairperson's contact information (e-mail address);
- that the subject may keep a copy of the informed consent form; and
- explanation that the researcher's role of SET and involvement in co-teaching may incur bias.

## Role of the Researcher

I was the sole researcher conducting the study. I am a certified SET employed by a suburban school district. I did not interview any former or present coworkers because the relationship may have incurred bias in data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that distortions in data can occur due to the inquirer's involvement with the respondent and "slavish adherence to hypotheses formed earlier" (p. 282). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the researcher should be aware of distortions and correct them when they occur. In that regard, I paid careful attention to the structure of follow-up interview questions and ensured that I did not provide insinuating nonverbal signals during interviews. My observation of scheduling that does not always allow for common planning between co-teachers may have also incurred bias. I have a personal opinion of scheduled planning at the schools where I have had a co-teaching assignment. Moreover, I may have shared my opinion with coworkers. I believe that would have led to skewed interpretation of data provided by former and present coworkers.

I transcribed each interview verbatim from audiotape. I asked a peer reviewer to review a portion of the transcribed interviews to confirm that I had logically developed common themes. The peer reviewer was a certified educator who had conducted qualitative research at the post-graduate level. This individual was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Member checks were done by asking respective participants to clarify any responses that were unclear. This step was taken to check for accuracy of participants' own data that were included in the findings as well as credibility of findings for the context. Participants clarified draft interpretations electronically using e-mail.

## Setting and Participants

Geographical information for the school district and demographic information for participating schools are presented below. Such detailed information allows readers to make a judgment about whether they can transfer the results to their own setting (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The student enrollment, including enrollment of SWDs, for participating schools are included in Table 1. Participants' age range, gender, special education teaching experience, and qualifications are provided in Table 2. In addition, data collection and analysis were guided by the theoretical framework, self-efficacy. In so doing, a researcher is stating the theoretical parameters, allowing readers to determine the transferability of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Table 1

*Information on Participating Schools*

| | Number of participants | Total enrollment | Students with disabilities (%) | Economically disadvantaged students (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School A | 3 | 629 | 9.22 | 93.2 |
| School B | 2 | 447 | 8.35 | 78.3 |
| School C | 1 | 381 | 12.9 | 55.9 |
| School D | 1 | 732 | 5.1 | 7.5 |
| School E | 1 | 1044 | 5.3 | 95.1 |

The number of students served in special education as a percentage of the total school enrollment is at or below the national average, 12.9 % (USDOENCES, 2016). The percentage of students served in special education in School D and School E was significantly lower than the national average. It is possible that those schools do not have self-contained classes. The presence of self-contained classes could increase the percentage of students served in special education. With the exception of School D, all participating schools had higher than 50% of their enrollment classified as economically disadvantaged.

Table 2

*Participants' Demographics, Experience, and Credentials*

| | School | Gender | Age range | Special education teaching experience | Degree earned |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | A | Female | 30-39 | 3 years | Masters |
| Participant 2 | A | Female | 30-39 | First year | Bachelors |
| Participant 3 | B | Male | 30-39 | 7 years | Bachelors |
| Participant 4 | B | Female | 40-49 | First year | Bachelors |
| Participant 5 | C | Male | 30-39 | 8 years | Bachelors |
| Participant 6 | D | Female | 30-39 | First year | Masters |
| Participant 7 | A | Female | 40-49 | 13 years | Masters |
| Participant 8 | E | Female | 30-39 | First Year | Bachelors |

The majority of participants were in the 30-39 age groups. Four of the teachers were first year teachers while the others could be classified as veteran teachers. The data obtained from the first-year teachers are particularly important in the interpretation of the study findings.

## Data Collection and Confidentiality

Primary data collection was achieved by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews using guided questions (Appendix A). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that

interviews can be *structured* where the interviewer only asks questions to find out unknown details of a phenomenon, or *unstructured* where the interviewee formulates the questions and also answers them. The *semi-structured* nature of the interviews falls within the *structured/unstructured* continuum. The interviewees answered a wide range of questions about co-planning in accordance with the research questions (Appendix A). The interviews are described as in-depth because of their open-ended nature and probes to arrive at detailed answers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Interviews were conducted from February 28 to March 30. All interviews were conducted individually and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. I began recording each interview by stating (a) the participant's assigned identification number, (b) the location of interview, (c) the date and time of the interview, and (d) the purpose of the study. The demographic information, experience, and credentials of the participants are presented in Table 2. Participants were told that there were no correct or incorrect responses. I demonstrated to participants how to pause/stop the recording device during the interview. This step was taken in the event that participants wished to provide me with information that they didn't want recorded and analyzed. I recorded the last statement of each interview, thanking the participant for consenting to participate in the study. I transferred the recording to my personal computer that is password protected. I then transcribed each interview using the Microsoft Word program, paying careful attention to identify the person speaking at the beginning of each new statement or question.

I took confidentiality precautions by using numbers to identify participants. Additionally, the participant's number was used to display demographic information and teaching experience. A transcript only contained an identifying number for the participant. I was the only individual with knowledge of the number assigned to each participant. The participant's identities (names and matching numbers) are being kept in a locked file in my home.

Interview length ranged from nine minutes to 19 minutes. All interviews were conducted after work hours. Most participants seemed rushed to complete the interview; some participants gathered up their belongings in anticipation of leaving immediately after the interview. All participants chose an appropriate location for the interview. The locations included classrooms, science laboratory, media center, and staff lounge. The only interruptions were occasional schoolwide announcements that lasted for a few seconds. In addition to interviews, I analyzed documents that served as sources of triangulation (lesson plans, teachers' individual schedules, and school improvement plans).

## Data Analysis

I used *thematic analysis,* to identify categories, patterns, and themes. Thematic analysis has been used to analyze semi-structured interviews that investigated experiences and/or perceptions of educators (e.g. Burton & Goodman, 2011; Feiler & Watson, 2011; Stephenson & Carter, 2011; Van De Putte & De Schauwer, 2013). Thematic analysis has also been used to analyze focus group interviews (e.g. Glazzard, 2011; Hecker, Young, & Caldarella, 2014; Swanson et al., 2012). The commonality of

these examples justifies that *thematic analysis* is an appropriate method for analyzing interview data.

Participants' perceptions were coded under two broad categories: personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy as outlined by Gibson and Dembo (1984). Personal teaching efficacy describes the participant's beliefs of the impact of their co-planning experience on their ability to plan for effective co-taught instruction. This data was further categorized three of the six dimensions of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007b) self-efficacy scale. The dimensions are instruction, adapting instruction to individual needs, student motivation, maintaining discipline, co-operating with colleagues and parents, and coping with change.

Other dimensions also emerged during data analysis. Teaching efficacy describes external factors that influence the participants' ability to meet their goals or expected outcomes. The external factors or sources were categorized using Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences and physiological reactions and other categories that emerged from the data. The analysis was done manually taking the following steps:

1. I analyzed each interview after transcribing it.
2. I assigned word codes to record categories beside individual sentences or groups of sentences of the interview. The categories were determined based on the core idea of each sentence or segment of the interview.
3. In this preliminary analysis, I used color codes to identify the categories that were related.

4. Thereafter, I recoded the data to reduce the number of codes.
5. My next step in analyzing the data was to analyze the responses for each research question to arrive at themes, patterns, and categories for the research questions.
6. I then reviewed the transcripts a final time to determine if the main themes and patterns were consistent with the data.
7. The findings were compared with the literature and theoretical framework to ascertain validity and address discrepancies thereof.

## Validity

The term validity is used to determine the accuracy or credibility of research findings (Creswell, 2012). The term *credibility* is the naturalistic equivalent for validity and is widely used in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that credibility is important in naturalistic research because the researcher must make interpretations of reality. Further, the researcher must take steps to ensure that the interpretations or constructions are adequate. In this study, member checks, and peer reviews (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2002) by a qualified peer reviewer were used as credibility measures. According to Merriam (2002), a peer review is a strategy that can be used to verify the researcher's interpretations during data analysis. The peer review increases the internal validity of a qualitative study because the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. School documents were also reviewed as a means of triangulation or credibility measure.

**Document Review**

Different sources can be used to verify the accuracy of data; information can be discounted if it does not concur with available documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interview data were triangulated by examining participants' schedule, their lesson plans, and the schools' improvement plans. The schedules served as a means of validating scheduled co-planning time. I examined the school improvement plan for each participant's school. Samples of lesson plans were examined to check for consistencies regarding making provisions for accommodations and role sharing of co-teachers. The information from the school improvement plans was used to check for corroboration between the plan and the responses regarding perceived facilitators and barriers to co-planning. A document review protocol (Appendix B) was used to organize the information contained in each document. The protocol facilitated the process of data analysis by identifying specific statements that were relevant to this study.

**Peer Review of Analyzed Data**

After coding the interviews, I selected 38% of all coded data (without coded information) and provided the transcripts to one peer reviewer as a method of validating my analysis. This action was necessary because interpretative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) may be influenced by researcher's relationship of what and who are being studied (Merriam, 2002). Peer reviewing was done by asking a peer to review transcripts and provide initial codes. This step was necessary to check for logical development of themes, conclusions and recommendations.

The results of the investigation are outlined in Chapter 4. The results are analyzed using logical themes. Further, there is a discussion on the manner in which the themes conform to the theoretical framework, self-efficacy. Discrepant cases are also addressed in the upcoming chapter.

# Chapter 4: Results

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate SETs' perceptions regarding co-planning for the instruction of SWDs and their peers in the general education classroom. Data were obtained by face to face interviews and review of documents (school improvement plans, teachers' schedules, and lesson plans). Participants provided answers to interview questions (Appendix A). The interviews were taped, transferred to a computer in an MP3 file, and then transcribed from the MP3 audio recording. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and the participant was identified using an assigned number. The MP3 file contained the date of the respective interview. This facilitated tracking because only one participant was interviewed on a specific date. Moreover, I made a note of the date of each participant's interview.

A pocket folder was dedicated to each participant's records. The folder was labeled with the participant's number to protect privacy. Interview transcripts and triangulation documents associated with each participant were placed in the participant's folder and replaced after each use. Each participant's school was assigned a letter identifier and this identifier was also placed on the respective pocket folder.

The results of this study are first presented by analyzing data from the interviews. Participants were asked a total of seventeen questions during the interview. The data presented portray all participants' perceived experiences with co-planning. In addition, information that is relevant to assessing TSE of participants was explored. The interview transcripts were collectively analyzed to identify common themes. Most of the interview

questions were designed to provide specific answers to the three research questions. As such, the data from the interviews were coded to identify themes that would provide logical answers to each research question.

## Findings

Thematic analysis of the findings was conducted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do elementary SETs perceive their co-planning experience as impacting their self-efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings?

RQ2: What do SETs perceive as facilitators of co-planning?

RQ3: What do SETs perceive as barriers to co-planning?

Two overarching themes, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), were used to analyze the research findings to answer RQ1. The analysis theme of RQ2 is "perceived factors that contribute to effective co-planning," while the theme analyzed to answer RQ3 is "perceived barriers to effective co-planning."

According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007a), there are six dimensions of personal teaching efficacy: (a) instruction, (b) adapting instruction to individual needs, (c) student motivation, (d) maintaining discipline, (e) co-operating with colleagues and parents, and (f) coping with change. Co-planning time and expected student outcome are emergent subthemes given the context of this study. Three additional subthemes for personal teaching efficacy emerged from the data based on Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2007b) dimensions. The five subthemes are listed below:

- Expected student outcome.
- Co-planning time.
- The role of confidence and student motivation in determining personal teaching efficacy for co-planning.
- Collaboration between SETs and general education teachers.
- Coping skills for co-planning.

**Personal Teaching Efficacy: Research Question 1**

The theme "personal teaching efficacy" is used to analyze data and answer RQ1. Personal teaching efficacy refers to the belief that a teacher possesses the skills and abilities to bring about student learning (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In the context of this study on co-planning, personal teaching efficacy is adapted to the situation. As such, personal teaching efficacy refers to the participant's beliefs of the impact of their co-planning experience on their ability to plan for effective co-taught instruction. As self-efficacy involves goal setting, the theme "expected student outcome" analyzes the goals participants set for their SWDs who are instructed in the general education classroom. Teachers' co-planning experiences are also carefully outlined in this portion of data analysis.

**Expected student outcome.** Participants listed a range of outcomes for their SWDs. The outcomes mentioned included being on grade level, developing skills, reduced support, graduating and going to college, closing the achievement gap between SWDs and their peers without disabilities, and exiting special education. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and

execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Their outcomes for students can be viewed as being synonymous with the attainments referenced by Bandura (1997).

Some teachers' responses during the interview indirectly reiterated positive outcomes for their students. For example, Participant 6 stated:

> Well, sometimes it's hard with the stress. It's discouraging. I've had some days where I was really discouraged. I usually just remind myself that, you know, I just do the best that I can. I'm here for the kids. And I also talk with other teachers who have more experience than I do.

The above statement echoes a sense of commitment to task and perseverance to accomplish that task. In reference to meeting SWDs needs, Participant 4 stated:

> I have one young man who likes magnets, so I try to bring that in as much as possible. One young boy likes to draw. One of my girls likes to write stories. So, I try to incorporate whatever they like into the lesson.

This statement implies that she is providing accommodations to ensure that her students access the curriculum by addressing their multiple intelligences, an important teaching practice (Adcock, 2014). Knowledge of participants' beliefs in their SWDs' educational outcomes is one portion of the data that has direct implications for participants' personal teaching efficacy. Participants' positive student expectations imply that they believe they possess the skills to contribute to student success. That signifies a high level of personal teaching efficacy regardless of the experiences with co-planning. Participants' personal beliefs in their abilities (Bandura, 1997) reflect their degree of personal teaching efficacy.

**Co-planning time and data-driven planning.** Teachers overwhelmingly stated that they do have time dedicated to common planning. A review of participants' lesson plans and schedules substantiated this finding. This finding is contradictory to research findings in the literature reviewed (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011; Scruggs et al., 2007; Solis et al., 2012) that report lack of scheduled common planning time for co-teaching partners. Some participants viewed data driven planning as an integral part of co-planning. Participant 2 noted, "We meet once a week during our planning hour." Similarly, Participant 5 explained, "Well, we do a lot of co-planning together. . . . They give us a lot of time to co-plan so I think they are very supportive of what we do." The use of differentiated instruction and classroom supports have also been mentioned as being addressed during co-planning time; however, the lesson plans reviewed do not reflect a wide range of instructional supports for SWDs. When teachers co-plan they reportedly analyze data to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. Participant 5 stated, "Well, we are a data driven school here so we use the data really to help plan and form our instruction." Participant 3 stated, "We look at assessment data. We look at IEP goals. In second grade, the assessment data we look, we use the MAP [Measure of Academic Progress] test. . . .We also use DIBELS [Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills]." This implies planning is done to meet the needs of SWDs who are instructed in the general education classroom.

The data reveal that, in previous years, participants had not always had common planning time. The situation seems to be more desirable now than in previous years. Participant 3 explained in the following statement:

> Time. That's the biggest one. You got to have time to plan together. Ah, I've had years before where I was bouncing back and forth from grade level to grade level, room to room, and I didn't have the same planning time as the people I was teaching with.

Participant 1 expressed similar sentiments in stating, "This year I am more motivated because I have the time to collaborate." Participants in this study did not complain about the lack of assigned planning time. An examination of their schedules corroborated their responses regarding present scheduling.

While teachers seem to be pleased with the time allocated for co-planning, some view time as a barrier because the time is not always used to co-plan for daily instruction. Data analysis and other assigned tasks consume a major portion of scheduled planning time. Participant 2 expressed her displeasure with the practice by stating that, "Usually I put into our system benchmark testing, or we have to do something for the counselor or put folders together. We plan certain things, but it's not an actual lesson." Despite the allocation of scheduled planning time, Participant 3 explained that there needs to be some flexibility if teachers are pulled for meetings, professional development, and IEP meetings. He remarked, "If we don't have time to plan together then we just have to have the flexibility to do it 'on the fly' and to adjust as needed." Participant 8 stated, "Sometimes we may have, you know, IEP meeting or a general ed. teacher may have something else on her plate during that time for planning." The foregoing statements suggest that common planning time for the purpose of daily instruction is not guaranteed.

**Collaboration between SETs and general education teachers.** The allocation of common planning time does suggest that co-teachers are collaborating for the benefit of the students they instruct. The level of collaboration is contingent upon what occurs during scheduled common planning. Participant 1 stated, "This year I am more motivated because I have the time to collaborate . . . but before I felt like as a special education teacher I wasn't important." Some participants described their collaborative experience as favorable. For example. Participant 8 expressed satisfaction in stating:

> We interact well. We're very open, we bounce ideas off of each other. If there is something that I feel like I may be not even necessarily stronger at but if it's something that we want to try, my co-teacher, she's very open. She doesn't ever shut any ideas down. We work together to tweak the ideas to again make sure that we are challenging those who are a little bit behind but also pushing those who are higher to continue to achieve on a higher level. So, we definitely interact well for the common good of our students.

Participant 7, who co-teaches with two general education teachers, described her satisfaction with the level of collaboration with one co-teacher: "We have a meeting of the minds. We mastermind how we're going to do it. We decide who is going to do what part and we have a nice ebb and flow about it." Participant 7 affirmed that there is positive collaboration that is required for successful co-planning. Most participants affirmed some degree of positive collaboration. Participant 3, who co-teaches with one teacher the entire day, is in favor of being on the same schedule as the entire grade level.

He stated that, “In the past, when I am in, you know, three different grade levels throughout the school day, it’s harder to get plugged into any one grade level.”

Some participants who work with two co-teachers have both favorable and unfavorable collaborative experiences. Participant 2 noted that she is more inclined to plan with one teacher. She has a challenge collaborating with her other co-teaching partner. When asked about the possible reason for lack of collaboration, Participant 2 replied, “I don’t know if it’s me . . . I haven’t been able to figure it out.” Similarly, Participant 7 explained that, “The time management of that person [one of her co-teachers] is very different . . . so it is very difficult for us to be on the same page at the same time.” Participant 6 stated:

> With the kindergarten teacher that I work with, the interaction is great. I mean we have good conversations. She is always open to my input and ideas. With the first-grade teacher I’m with, it’s not that way. You know unfortunately I think she would like to pretty much control most of what goes on and it’s harder for her to sometimes hear my ideas.”

Based on data, all participants valued the sharing of ideas as an integral part of co-planning. Despite three of the participants voicing negative collaborative experiences, those same participants also reported positive collaborative planning experiences with one of their co-teaching partners.

**The role of confidence and motivation in determining personal teaching efficacy for co-planning.** All participants, despite years of teaching experience, indicated that they were confident in their ability to plan effective co-taught instruction,

plan for student accommodations, and plan lessons that motivate SWDs to learn. Participant 4, a first-year teacher, was “extremely confident”. Likewise, veteran teachers such as Participant 7, expressed “I am very confident because I’ve done it several years.” While Participant’s 7 responses suggests that confidence and experience are positively correlated, Participant 4’s response is converse to such reasoning.

Participants indicated moderate to high levels of motivation to plan with their co-teachers. Participant 6 reported the lowest level of motivation, “I am motivated. Probably not the highest level of motivation because I’m a little discouraged about the co-teaching situation with one teacher.” The data is likely indicative that participants are satisfied with their general pedagogical and specialized instructional skills as seven of the eight participants (88%) expressed that they are motivated to plan with at least one co-teacher. Participant 4 did not indicate her level of motivation in stating that “We don’t sit down together and plan.”

Relative to personal teaching efficacy, participants’ negative experience does not seem to inhibit their personal teaching efficacy. According to the self-efficacy framework, participants’ confidence and motivation is an indication of their commitment to working towards the goals they set for themselves. While 100% of participants have identified promising goals for their students, they also expressed their perceptions of their coping skills. The coping skills mentioned are likely to influence goal setting.

**Coping skills.** Another area that is considered in personal teaching efficacy is participant’s coping skills. All participants expressed that they use coping skills that seek to improve their challenging situations. Participant 1 stated that, “If you feel that

something is going to come out of you negative the best would be maybe to walk away and come back." Other participants seek out other professionals for advice in dealing with challenges of co-planning. For example, Participant 4 explained, "I talk to- the other interrelated teachers are fabulous here so we kind of talk to each other about strategizing. We talk things out." Participant 8 indicated that, "I usually seek the advice of my mentor just if something were to come up. Just see how we could try to take care of the situation without there being any type of strife of conflict in the classroom." None of the participants reported taking measures that would escalate a conflict. The coping strategies of the participants are indicative of their perseverance to continue along the path that would allow them to meet the goals they set for themselves.

The foregoing analysis of sub-themes for personal teaching efficacy indicates that participants in this study perceived their co-planning experiences as having no impact on their personal teaching efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings.

**Teaching Efficacy: Research Question 1**

Teaching efficacy examines the individual's goals and the external factors that influence the individual's accomplishment of set goals (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teaching efficacy is therefore analyzed using the theme: external factors that influence teaching efficacy for co-planning. The analysis of external factors takes into consideration Bandura's (1971) sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences and physiological reactions.

**Mastery experiences.** Bandura (1977) provided the following explanation of mastery experiences: "Successes raise mastery expectations; repeated failures lower

them, particularly if the mishaps occur early in the course of events" (p. 195). Though teachers have noted that they collaborate with co-teaching partners, the deduction from the data is that the co-planning process is not very successful. This is due to perceived facilitators of co-teaching are lacking in the experiences presented. Table 3 presents the voices of the participants regarding perceived facilitators. The perceived facilitators are elements that they (participants) wish to see incorporated to enhance the success of the co-planning process. The barriers presented in Table 3 (Participants' Perceived Facilitators and Barriers of Effective Co-Planning) also impede the success that is necessary for mastery experiences.

Table 3

*Participants' Perceived Facilitators and Barriers of Effective Co-Planning*

| | Factors that contribute to effective co-planning | Barriers to effective co-planning |
|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | Allocated time to plan<br>Wanting the same outcomes for students with disabilities | Time |
| Participant 2 | Communication | New teachers (special education and general education) |
| Participant 3 | Time | Time<br>Pulling for meetings |
| Participant 4 | Communication | General education teacher not addressing SWD's needs in plans |
| Participant 5 | Communication<br>Try new things<br>Being Open<br>Accept criticism | Professionalism |
| Participant 6 | Flexibility<br>Willingness to learn from someone else<br>Patience | General education teacher's dominance |
| Participant 7 | Time<br>Dedication | General education teacher's dominance<br>Time<br>Territorial attitude of general education teachers |
| Participant 8 | Time<br>Having supplies and resources | Resources<br>Two co-teachers not having common goals |

Some of the factors mentioned in Table 3 are external to the participants. According to the Theory of Self-Efficacy, such experiences impact an individual's level of self-efficacy. Bandura's (1977) reference mastery experiences noted that "repeated failures lower them, particularly if the mishaps occur early in the course of events" (p. 195). Four of the participants in this study are first year or beginning teachers, therefore, their co-planning experience is in the beginning stage. The data reveal that the beginning teachers are challenged with experiencing 'best practices' in co-planning. They all require support to be successful. Participants 2, 6, and 8 would like to have more professional training in co-teaching. Participants 8 stated, "I think it would be helpful especially for new teachers coming into special education to have workshops." Participant 2 would like to see general education teachers included in those trainings. Not all veteran teachers expressed that professional development should be offered in co-planning and co-teaching. Participant 7, who is a veteran teacher, would also like special education co-teachers, general education co-teachers, and school administrators to participate in professional development. The need for training for general education teachers is reiterated in Participant 6's statement: "Like they [general education teachers] don't know what to do when they're supposed to work with a special education teacher."

**Physiological reactions.** The effects of the barriers experienced by teachers are likely to result in physiological arousal. Professional development can improve the current practice thereby alleviating such arousal. High physiological arousal in the form of stress and anxiety has a negative effect on performance. The data reveal that the new teachers are particularly stressed to the extent that they are requesting measures to alleviate their

stress. Participant 6 stated that, at times, she is not enthused. She noted, “I’ve had some struggles working with one of the teachers so I’m not always confident that it [planning effective co-taught instruction] will happen. Participant 7 described the attitude of a co-teacher as stressful in stating that, “It’s an emotional drain when you have to fight just to have peace.” The external factors described as barriers have been observed to be highly influential in the degree of stress experienced by participants. The stress experienced in dealing with some of the barriers outlined in Table 3 are factors (pulling for meetings, general education teacher’s dominance, common goals) that impede participants’ teaching efficacy.

**Perceived Factors that Contribute to Effective Co-Planning: Research Question 2**

All participants provided factors that they perceive as facilitators to effective co-planning. Communication, time, common vision, openness, flexibility, dedication, and willingness to learn summarize the list presented in the data. Among the facilitators of co-planning listed, time and communication have been echoed by multiple participants. The factor of time was voiced by four participants (50%). Three participants (38%) identified communication as necessary for effective co-planning. The data suggests that co-teachers regard time to co-plan and communication with their co-teaching partners as being the most important facilitators of co-planning.

Time and communication can be viewed in tandem because co-teachers need to have time to communicate. Some of the other facilitators mentioned are attitudinal in nature. For example, openness, flexibility, dedication, common vision, and willingness to learn are qualities that both co-teachers need to develop (See Table 3). However, the

participants viewed these qualities as lacking in the general education co-teachers. Four participants (50%) indicated that they do not initiate co-planning in response to a specific interview question. Perhaps participants need to perform a self-reflection of their commitment to communication, their dedication, and their flexibility for co-planning given the time constraint.

**Perceived Barriers to Effective Co-Planning: Research Question 3**

While time to plan daily lessons was a prominent factor identified as an inhibitor of co-planning, other factors were also identified as barriers to effective co-planning. Participants' perceived barriers included time, pulling for meetings, general education teachers' dominance, attitude of general education teachers, and the absence of common goals between co-teachers. All participants acknowledge that they do have common planning. However; time is not always used for planning for co-taught instruction as noted by six participants (75%). Participant 2 expressed frustration in stating that, "Usually when we plan it's not based on what we're doing next week…we have to do something for the counselor or put folders together." In describing the effect of the time constraint on co-planning Participant 3 noted, "It doesn't happen very often but sometimes we only have one or two days a week where we actually have common planning." The attitude or disposition of the regular education teachers was noted by five of the eight participants (63%) as a barrier to effective co-planning.

The similarity between participants' perceived facilitators and perceived barriers to effective co-planning is that co-teachers can play a role by being flexible and finding alternative ways and times to plan. However, the data also reveal that school

administrators do not seem to be prioritizing co-planning time for daily instruction. Administrators also seem to be lacking in their effort to create an environment that fosters co-planning. These sentiments were echoed in the improvements that participants suggested. A complete list of the desired improvements is presented in Table 4 (Participants' Statements on Co-Planning 'Needs').

Table 4

*Participants' Statements on Co-Planning 'Needs*

| | School represented | Improvement areas |
|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | School A | I would say no (improvement) because a lot has changed since the previous two years. |
| Participant 2 | School A | We should plan twice a week versus one.<br>We should share different responsibilities and roles as far as co-planning in different subjects. |
| Participant 3 | School B | I guess more time to meet if possible. |
| Participant 4 | School B | Sometimes I need more of a 'heads-up'. |
| Participant 5 | School C | Some of my teachers in the past, we didn't see eye to eye."<br>It really just depends on the chemistry between the two teachers |
| Participant 6 | School D | Maybe just more emphasis on the fact that we're both equals in the room.<br>Looking again at the co-teaching models<br>Team building |
| Participant 7 | School A | Introduction at the beginning of the school year<br>The teachers have to be dedicated.<br>Part of it is administration because they have to allow the time. |
| Participant 8 | School E | As long as we can have time dedicated to plan, things will flow better.<br>An improvement of just continuing to establish the expectations and roles in the classroom. |

Table 4 (Participants' Statements on Co-Planning 'Needs') presents the exact statements of participants with regards to the improvements they would like to see in co-planning. Their statements cover a wide range of issues. If their suggestions are considered, participants teaching efficacy levels should increase since some of the views are contingent upon factors external to the participants.

**Discrepant Cases**

The analysis of findings also includes analyzes of discrepant cases. These cases challenged my expectations or emerging findings (Merriam, 2002). Three discrepancies were identified in the findings: a) veteran teacher motivation in relation to their experiences b) participants' perceptions despite the provision of common planning time for co-teachers and c) participants overall view of co-planning in their respective schools (See Table 5: Participants' Views on Co-Planning).

Three out of four veteran teachers noted that they are highly motivated to plan despite the barriers they encounter in co-planning. Time has been repeated as a major barrier in the co-planning process. However, the teachers do not believe that constraint affects their motivation to co-plan. Co-planning time is allocated to co-teachers, yet co-planning time remains an issue. It is possible that teachers now have more time than previous years to co-plan so that can be viewed as an incentive to motivate teachers as two of the three teachers mentioned that time was a greater challenge in prior years.

Table 5

*Participants' Views on Co-Planning*

| | School Represented | Overall View of Co-Planning |
|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | School A | We're all on the same page.<br>They encourage us to do so. |
| Participant 2 | School A | When we're planning we're planning about stats and stuff.<br>It's not based on what we're doing to do next week. |
| Participant 3 | School B | I feel like I'm more part of the second-grade team.<br>I am on the exact same schedule as all of the second-grade teachers. |
| Participant 4 | School B | It's effective.<br>It works for School B (name substituted). |
| Participant 5 | School C | We do a lot of planning together.<br>Our administration kind of provides us with opportunities to first of all align curriculum across the board.<br>They give us a lot of time to co-plan.<br>I think they (administration) are very supportive of what we do. |
| Participant 6 | School D | It does work well in some classrooms.<br>There could definitely be more training.<br>We do our best.<br>We make it work. |
| Participant 7 | School A | Admin or regular ed. teachers are not aware of how it's supposed to go effectively. |
| Participant 8 | School E | It's pretty effective. |

The data in Table 5 (Participants' Views on Co-Planning) reveal that most participants have a positive outlook on co-planning in their respective schools. The frustration and desires expressed by participants, particularly first year teachers, do not reflect the participants' overall views of co-planning in their schools. Participants' strong sense of personal teaching efficacy is a possible explanation for their positive views regarding co-planning in the respective schools.

## Evidence of Quality

### Document Analysis of School Documents

Interview data for this study were validated by examining documents. The documents include school improvement plans, participants' schedules, and a sample of participants' daily lesson plans. The original plan included an examination of schools' master schedules. However, it was not necessary to use master schedules to determine participants' planning times. Seven of the eight participants co-teach in one grade the entire day. Their planning therefore coincides with the planning time for the respective grade level. The planning time for the other teacher was also verified using the schedules for the two grades she co-teaches.

The strategies for academic improvement of participating schools did include detailed plans for data analysis of all students' academic data. Professional development targeted all teachers. There was no specific mention of co-teaching or co-planning. The schedules confirm that the participants have common planning time as revealed in the interview data. I examined the lesson plans for evidence of accommodations and allocation of roles. The plans contain greater evidence of instructional accommodation in

the form of small groups rather than detail of designated roles during the lesson. Participants were usually assigned to teach a small group during the lesson. There were no co-teaching models identified in lesson plans. Seven participants' plans included both the general education teacher's name and the SET's name. The eighth participant's plans only contained the SET's name.

**Member Checks and Peer Review**

Quality checks included member checks and peer review of data interpretation. During the member checking process two participants' statements required clarification, Participant 1 and Participant 7. I emailed the participants to have them provide more details for the statements that created doubt during interpretation. Participant 1 originally provided the following statement to explain her persistence with initiating co-planning, "I do not have the time because I'm unfortunately pulled to consult with other special education students." Participant 1 clarified her response by stating that she is not persistent with initiating co-planning. Participant 7 was asked to define 'parallel teaching' which she stated is the only model utilized due to limited co-planning. Her definition was consistent with my interpretation of parallel teaching, the practice of dividing the class into two equal groups with both teachers conducting the identical lesson.

A qualified peer reviewer was asked to interpret the data for three of the eight participants. The peer reviewer has completed qualitative data analysis for a doctoral study. This individual is an experienced special educator who has experience with co-planning and co-teaching. In my opinion, the experience and qualifications of the individual are qualifying criteria for a peer reviewer. I presented hard copies (16 pages)

of interviews transcripts to the reviewer in person and directed her to create her own codes to analyze the data. The peer reviewer's interpretation and mine were quite similar. The main difference was the choice of words used to describe some ideas or qualities represented by the data.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion on my interpretation of the findings of this study, relating the foregoing findings to a larger body of research. The upcoming chapter also outlines how the results of this study impact the social wellbeing of individuals. Recommendations for action and further study that answers newly formulated questions and a final summary complete the documentation process of this study.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

## Introduction

This qualitative study was conducted to investigate the problem of co-planning for instructing SWDs in the general education classroom. The review of relevant literature highlighted specific problems in the process of co-planning. The self-efficacy framework was used to determine the extent to which participants' self-efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings influenced their co-planning practices. Two forms of TSE were investigated, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. The distinction between personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy accentuate the subtle nature of TSE. The conclusion for this investigation is that SETs' experiences with co-planning have a greater influence on teaching efficacy rather than personal teaching efficacy. This could not be determined by taking a holistic approach of TSE in this investigation.

## Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretations of the findings in this study are based on the following three research questions:

RQ1: How do elementary SETs perceive their co-planning experience as impacting their self-efficacy for teaching in co-taught settings?

RQ2: What do SETs perceive as facilitators of co-planning?

RQ3: What do SETs perceive as barriers to co-planning?

The data reveal that teachers with co-taught assignments have confidence in their ability to plan for effective co-taught instruction. Both new teachers and veteran teachers

expressed the same beliefs regarding their confidence to co-plan for co-taught instruction. Research findings indicated that new and experienced teachers gain confidence from acquisition of knowledge and skills (Bang & Reio, 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017) after completing a mentoring program. The confidence of teachers in this study may have stemmed from pedagogical training knowledge, which Lauermann and Konig (2016) observed as being a factor in boosting teachers' confidence. Reported confidence in their co-planning abilities cannot be attributed to ongoing professional training as participants reported the need for training in co-planning. Participants' confidence seems to be a motivating factor to co-plan despite reported adverse situations.

The SETs' positive expectations for SWDs could also play a role in level of motivation expressed by most SETs. Such intrinsic qualities of the SETs account for a high level of personal teaching efficacy. The answer to RQ1 is twofold, as personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy are considered separately. This study's data reveal that SETs' experience with co-planning has a negligible influence on their personal teaching efficacy. All participants have received training in special education instruction which may explain their high confidence level. Some researchers have observed a relationship with pedagogical skills and increased self-efficacy (Bergman & Morphew, 2015; Pan et al., 2013, Scherer et al., 2016). Participants' perceptions of their ability to achieve set goals is a contributing factor to their level of personal teaching efficacy. This study finding suggests that personal teaching efficacy is influenced by positive self-beliefs of participants' pedagogical abilities.

The data generated a contrasting finding for RQ1 with regard to SETs experience with co-planning and teaching efficacy. The perceived facilitators, perceived barriers, views on co-planning in SETs' schools, and suggestions for improvement were used to draw a conclusion relating to teaching efficacy. By definition, Gibson and Dembo (1984) stated that factors external to the individual have an effect of their teaching efficacy. The factors mentioned as impeding their success with co-planning include factors 'external to the SETs'. Moreover, the level of frustration expressed contributed to the conclusion that SETs' experience with co-planning has diminished their level of teaching efficacy. Studies on co-teaching and self-efficacy corroborate the results of this study (Pratt, Imbody, Wolf, & Patterson, 2017; Mavropalias & Anastasiou, 2016; Strogilos & Stefanidis, 2015). Additionally, common planning time may not be a major cause of diminished teaching efficacy. Rimpola (2014) observed that common plan time did not affect mathematics' teaching efficacy. SETs expertise is valuable in any co-taught setting, hence educational stakeholders' awareness of this finding is extremely important.

School administrators provided common planning time for teachers. Another noteworthy dimension of this study was participant SETs worked either with one or two general education teachers or one grade level. In that regard, common planning is possible. However, time remains an issue as observed by Strogilos, Stephanidis, and Tragoulia (2016). The findings of this study demonstrate that common planning time is viewed both a facilitator and a barrier to effective co-planning. Prizeman's (2015) study demonstrated that co-teachers view time as a facilitator. Prizeman reported the co-teachers valued discrete time for planning. When viewed as a facilitator, discrete

common planning was identified to produce positive results. Teachers can use the time to communicate and employ strategies for instructing in a co-taught setting.

In a perfect scenario, teachers would meet with their co-teachers daily during common planning. However, three participants (38%) expressed concern that administrators have mandated that their scheduled planning time be used for meetings rather than actual lesson planning. Solving the problem of limited planning time requires some ingenuity and flexibility on the part of co-teachers and administrators at the building level. In answering RQ2 and RQ3, which address the facilitators and barriers respectively, teachers do value co-planning time. It should be noted that there is no universal approach to alleviating the situation of the perceived misuse of scheduled common planning time.

Other facilitators mentioned in answering RQ2 involve the attention of administrators. The data suggest common vision and administrative support are needed for best co-planning practices to occur. Administrators may create a positive co-planning culture by establishing a schoolwide vision and listening to co-teacher's concerns, successes, and challenges. Perhaps the school's special education department could spearhead this endeavor.

Participants voiced frustration regarding the lack of professional development (RQ3). SETs, particularly new teachers identified the need for more professional development (PD) in the areas of co-planning and co-teaching. The request for PD is not only made on behalf of SETs; participants expressed an interest for their general education counterparts and administrators to participate in PD sessions. Participants'

perceptions regarding PD are documented. Mavropalias and Anastasiou (2016) observed the need for both administrative overall support and training for co-teachers. Pratt et al.'s (2017) study revealed that teachers need building and district level support for the success of co-teaching.

The attitude of general education co-teachers has also emerged as a barrier to effective co-planning. The finding regarding teachers' attitudes were also observed by Pancsofar & Petroff (2016) and Peacock (2016). Participants' descriptions of their experience with co-teaching reveal that a teacher's attitude interferes with the level of collaboration that currently occurs for co-planning. Four participants (50%) perceived general education co-teaching partners' attitudes as inhibiting the success of co-planning. Negative attitudes of general education teachers also have implications for establishing a common vision and commitment to co-planning, two facilitators mentioned by participants of this study.

## Implications for Social Change

A pronounced social change resulting from the findings of this study is to promote improvement that would ensure the academic success of SWDs. The recommendations provided in this study should lead to increased personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy of SETs who have co-taught assignments. This increased efficacy is expected to translate to increased professionalism of SETs. With overall improvement in co-planning, regular education teachers and administrators will be able to contribute to the overall academic attainment of SWDs. Positive change in the practice of co-planning could effectuate a major social change in their adult lives. The academic

success of all SWDs should enable them to attend higher educational institutions and compete for the most lucrative jobs.

The expected social development for participants is more functional collaborative teams. The recommendations of this study were made to assist teachers and administrators in identifying what barriers may impede best practices in co-planning and co-teaching. Best practices require that the SET be viewed as an equal partner. Further, the results of this study will be disseminated to regular education co-teachers and administrators. Hopefully, all stakeholders will address the problem of the regular education teachers' dominance in co-planning. As a result, special education co-teachers will experience a sense of belonging to the co-planning team. It is my hope that the results of this study will positively influence the social relationship between co-teaching partners.

## Recommendations for Action

The study results indicated a need for knowledge and skills in co-planning and co-teaching. The following three recommendations should be considered by the school and district administrators:

1. Co-teachers should be required to complete a self-reflective questionnaire on co-planning. The questionnaire should be used to determine areas in need of professional development.
2. Administrators should provide co-planning and co-teaching professional development at the beginning of the school year for all co-teachers. Follow-ups throughout the year may work best.

3. District level administrators should assume the responsibility of providing training on co-planning and co-teaching to building administrators.

## Further Study

This study adds to the limited body of knowledge on co-planning and TSE. The investigation addressed one aspect of co-teaching, co-planning. The voices of SETs were the only premise for drawing conclusions on their self-efficacy. Co-planning is a collaborative effort and involves the input of other professionals. My first suggestion for further study involves investigating general education co-teachers personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy relative to co-planning. The attitude of general education co-teachers was viewed as a major barrier and this view should be examined with teachers in this school district. The data revealed that administrators also play a major role in co-planning and co-teaching. It therefore means that administrators' perceptions are also important in any effort to improve co-planning practices. Data provided by administrations is warranted to further investigate co-planning.

Co-teachers plan for SWDs' accommodations and delineation of roles in the classroom. Data provided in this study did not reveal the extent of the accommodations nor the models used. It is extremely important that co-teachers pay more attention to the accommodations identified in SWDs' IEPs. More research is needed in student accommodations, as they provided a means for students to meet curricular expectations. The various models are designed to promote progress of SWDs. Co-planning should therefore always account for the use of co-teaching models. Investigation into planning for the use of models would create an awareness of the current practice and use of the

models. Co-planning is only one facet of co-teaching and perhaps the most important. It is the precursor to what occurs in the classroom and the suggestions for further study in co-planning will provide useful information for educational stakeholders.

## Summary

My personal experience with co-teaching allowed me to identify a problem that I was passionate to explore. The professional literature on co-teaching and self-efficacy provided the foundation for my knowledge and experience in this research process. As an SET, I do have personal biases and values about co-planning. I have experienced working with co-teachers and not having any scheduled planning time as an SET. Based on my experience, I was expecting participants' reports to be similar to my experience. However, the case was quite different. All participants reported having scheduled planning time. I was also pleasantly surprised to learn that SETs have a high level of confidence in their ability to plan for co-taught instruction.

I think my role as an SET influenced my participants' openness in providing their responses. Perhaps they assumed that I was extremely knowledgeable of the topic and used terminologies and professional language they thought I would readily understand. I think some participants were also optimistic that the situation would be improved due to my decision to conduct the study. It was very difficult for me to formulate follow-up questions. I had to constantly evaluate my follow-up questions for bias before asking them. At times, I resorted to omitting the follow-up question if I had doubts that it would influence the participant's response.

This study provided important data on co-planning in one school district. The decision to conduct the study stems from reports in the literature that justify the need to decipher inconsistencies in co-planning. The focus on self-efficacy is beneficial to the school district because it distinguishes two forms of efficacy. On one hand, experiences with co-planning do not have a major influence on SETs personal teaching efficacy. However, SETs' experience in co-planning does diminish their teaching efficacy. The teaching efficacy of teachers can be promoted if all stakeholders work collaboratively to employ measures to address the SETs' perceived facilitators and barriers to co-planning.

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# Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How many co-taught segments/classes do you teach daily?
2. How many co-teaching partners do you have?
3. How confident are you that you can plan effective co-taught instruction?
4. How confident are you that you can plan effectively to provide accommodations to students with disabilities?
5. How persistent are you with regards to initiating time to co-plan with co-teacher/s?
6. What is your level of confidence as it pertains to planning co-taught lessons that motivate students to learn?
7. What are your perceptions of the overall expected outcome of co-taught instruction for students with disabilities?
8. What steps are you taking with your co-planning team to ensure that your expected outcomes are realized?
9. What do you think are factors that contribute to effective co-planning?
10. What is your view of the interaction between you and your co-teacher/s during co-planning?
11. How motivated are you to plan with your co-teacher/s?
12. What do you think are barriers to effective co-planning?
13. How do you cope with any challenges encountered in relation to co-planning?
14. Do the barriers mentioned impact your level of motivation to plan for effective co-taught instruction? If yes, How?
15. What is your overall view of the practice of co-planning in your school?

16. What improvements, if any, would you like to see in the area of co-planning with your co-teacher/s?
17. What additional information would you like to share on co-planning?

# Appendix B: Document Review Protocol

Name of Document:

Author:

Date of document:

Purpose of document:

Relevance to co-planning:

Important sentences phrases:

Relevance to self-efficacy beliefs/sources:

Relevance to instructing students with disabilities:

Relevance to interview data analysis themes:

Researcher's notes: