2018

The Co-teaching Model: Relational Dynamics and Lived Experiences of Teachers Within the English Language Classroom

Christina Simmons
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Christina Yoder Simmons

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Jennifer Courduff, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Narjis Hyder, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Danielle Hedegard, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

The Co-teaching Model: Relational Dynamics and Lived Experiences of Teachers Within

the English Language Classroom

by

Christina Yoder Simmons

MA, Fordham University, 2009

BA, Messiah College, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Learning, Instruction, and Innovation

Walden University

May 2018

Abstract

As the population of English language learners (ELLs) in the United States grows, educators, administrators, and policymakers must support effective methods of instruction. Co-teaching, an inclusive special education instructional approach, has recently grown in popularity as a method for providing English as a second language (ESL) support. The research on ESL co-teaching lacks in-depth data about the experiences and relationships of co-teaching teams. The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within an English language instructional setting. Friend and Cook's model of collaboration and Siemen's theory of connectivism provided a framework for this study. Through purposeful sampling, 3 ESL and 3 mainstream teachers were identified. Individual interviews and subsequent focus groups yielded information about the lived experiences and perceptions of both the ESL and mainstream teachers. Using Moustakas' heuristic inquiry stages of analysis, the data were analyzed and coded. Four themes emerged: *preparation, the value of time*, *the issues of control*, and *the dynamics of a co-teaching relationship.* The teachers perceived insufficient time as a major barrier to effective preparation and coordination of teaching teams. The participants also indicated additional elements as important to the success of a teaching team: personality, teacher modeling, flexibility, and communication. This study may lead to social change by informing educators, administrators, and policy-makers about (a) implementing the ESL co-teaching model and (b) the supports needed to help ESL and mainstream teachers function effectively in a co-taught classroom.

The Co-teaching Model: Relational Dynamics and Lived Experiences of Teachers Within

the English Language Classroom

by

Christina Yoder Simmons

MA, Fordham University, 2009

BA, Messiah College, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Learning, Instruction, and Innovation

Walden University

May 2018

Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my children, Everett and Evangelina, who have given me the title that I cherish most: Mommy. You won't remember the countless hours I spent working on this degree, but I hope as you grow older that I can be an example to you of the importance of valuing yourself and your dreams.

Acknowledgments

I am so appreciative of the people who helped me get through these many years of pursuing this degree. If it were not for the many countless acts of love and support, I would not have made it to this point!

To my husband, Clinton: This has truly been a journey for both of us. You supported and encouraged me from the start. You pushed me in those moments when I felt like giving up and you made countless mint chocolate chip ice cream runs to keep me going. I love you so much.

To my parents: You were my first educators. You shaped who I am today and I am so appreciative of your guidance. In the years that I completed these classes and many hours of school work, you were my personal cheerleaders. I love you both!

To my mother-in-law, Priscilla: I am so appreciative of the hours you spent discussing and guiding me through this process from your own experience. Your willingness to take the time to proofread and give me feedback in this last leg of my journey was a true testament to your love and support. Thank you!

To Dr. Courduff: You pushed me and challenged me and I came out stronger for it. I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and empowering me to take ownership of my passion and my knowledge. You are an inspiration!

To Dr. Hyder: Thank you for serving on my committee and for your guidance during the dissertation process. Your insight was essential to my success.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Diversity in the United States is one of the unique aspects of the country, evidenced by a recent study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (2015) providing information that more than 350 languages are spoken throughout the United States. Although English is still the predominant language spoken in U.S. homes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), the rapid growth of different languages has significantly affected educators throughout the nation (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy, Martin-Beltrán, Silvermann, & Nunn, 2015; Russell, 2014). As a result of the greater presence of English language learners (ELLs) in schools, considerable effort in the field of education is focusing on ways to best meet the needs of this unique population (DelliCarpini, 2014; Im & Martin, 2015; Peercy et al., 2015).

The needs of the English as a Second Language (ESL) population include language learning, where one might require up to 10 years to reach full proficiency in the English language (Cummins, 1984). Language is not the only area of adjustment for these individuals as culture, family, and academic needs also play a role in their growth (Hersi, Horan, & Lewis, 2016). Therefore, additional research is needed to increase simultaneously the language and academic growth of ELLs. Accordingly, I can attempt to bring about social change by contributing to research supporting the second language population, a group that is not always well supported or represented. By increasing ESL instruction awareness, policymakers, district leaders, administrators, and educators may

create situations in which second language instruction takes place in its best form. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation was to substantiate this claim.

In this chapter, I provide background and rationale for the research that I conducted. The chapter contains an overview of the fundamentals of the study including the research problem, questions, and purpose. I conclude by outlining why this study is important and preview the subsequent chapters.

Background of the Study

This study is rooted in the examination of co-teaching between teachers of ESL and their general education partners. In this study, *co-teaching* is defined as the collaboration and shared teaching that occurs between teachers of ESL and their general education partners to provide instruction to a wide-variety of students (Friend as cited in Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). Such research addressing the practices and outcomes of these co-teaching teams within a second language instructional setting is scarce. The studies that have been conducted, however, cover a range of subtopics such as teacher preparation (DelliCarpini, 2014), teacher interactions (Im & Martin, 2015; Park, 2014), and the role of instruction (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014) under co-teaching conditions. In the available research, researchers conducted studies in different contexts and with a range of participants and subjects. This overt diversity in the available studies suggests that co-teaching for English language instruction is, indeed, multifaceted.

The research on collaboration and co-teaching outside of the specific focus of English language instruction, however, provides insight into ways in which these elements within a classroom and among teaching peers interact. In addition, the brief literature that is ESL-centered aligns with that of the literature related to special and general education collaboration and co-teaching. Accordingly, cataloguing of the research on co-teaching for English language instruction yields several certain central themes:

- Improvement of student achievement and increased inclusion of all students (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Forte & Flores, 2014; Owen, 2015; Prizeman, 2015; Ronfeldt, 2015; Strogilos & Stefandis, 2015b).

- Teacher growth (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Forte & Flores, 2014; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Owen, 2015; Pratt, 2014; Seo & Han, 2013; Takala & Uusialo-Malmivaara, 2012).

- Diversity of instructional methods and skills (Bryant Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Pratt, 2014; Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012).

Gaps in Prior Research

An analysis of the current literature revealed some gaps in information about the topic of co-teaching for English language instruction. Although studies conducted on co-teaching for English language instruction have been diverse, they have lacked consistency and general corroboration in terms of the findings (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Gladman, 2014; Im & Martin, 2015; Kong, 2014; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014).

Research has yet to demonstrate the efficacy of models that encourage more collaboration such as co-teaching. It has yet to substantiate whether co-teaching should be the model of choice in second language instruction. The need, therefore, is to expand on what current researchers have found and corroborate findings from previous studies by replicating research in other settings and with different demographics.

Innovation. Co-teaching, a traditionally inclusive model in the special education field (Pratt, 2014), has started to permeate into second language instructional approaches (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Only recently, however, has co-teaching become a focus of interest for teaching English to speakers of other languages (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). The implementation of and research into co-taught classrooms for second language support has the potential to apply this traditional special education practice of instruction in new and innovative ways. Instead of removing second language students from the classroom, a cotaught classroom allows students to stay with their native English counterparts for the entire day. Spending more time included in the main classroom provides native English language models to the ELLs beyond the teachers. An additional, innovative approach that manifests through the implementation of co-teaching is to help the students develop language and content side-by-side.

The fact that there is a paucity of research addressing the practice of co-teaching as a method of English language instruction suggests that this instructional approach is, indeed, innovative. The novelty of this educational approach has the potential to foster teacher creativity as a means of addressing the diversity in how students learn (Mishra,

2014). Within a classroom facilitated by both teachers of ESL and their general education partners, English learners may have opportunities to learn in new ways. In a co-taught classroom, teachers can vary how the classroom is run, provide additional support, and incorporate new approaches to teaching (Peercy et al., 2015). Of significance, incorporating new and innovative features in a classroom can, in fact, foster innovation and creativity in the students (Mishra, 2014).

Traditional Models of English Language Instruction

Instruction for English learners has evolved through the years (Peercy et al., 2015). A traditional English language instruction method has been to pull students out of their classroom appropriately called *pull out*. With this method, teachers remove students from the classroom to receive language instruction (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). This model creates isolation and separation from the students' native English-speaking peers.

In addition, there are *push-in* and *co-teaching* instruction methods with which second language learners are present in the mainstream classroom and receive support during or alongside mainstream instruction (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). Such collaboration within the context of co-teaching has numerous benefits for English learners (Kong, 2014; Park, 2014). Researchers, however, have noted a lack of mainstream teacher preparation for such collaboration. In addition, many teachers are not receptive to a co-teaching model for second language instruction (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015).

Problem Statement

The problem is that current research does not provide a great deal of evidence on how the relational dynamics between teachers of ESL and their general education partners impact collaboration and instruction for second language learners. The research also lacks in-depth data about the experiences of these co-teaching teams within a second language instructional setting. A study was needed to explore the relational dynamics and lived experiences of teachers who co-teach within the ESL instructional setting. Such a study could provide evidence for educators and administrators who seek to understand the effectiveness of co-teaching for ESL instruction.

Purpose

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. The co-teaching model for second language instruction is an innovative approach to the general co-teaching model. Moving away from traditional exclusion of students in the main classroom, co-teaching enables language learners to learn content and language simultaneously (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). Because it is a new approach to a traditionally inclusive model for special education (Pratt, 2014), a need still exists for research into the model's successes and failures for second language instruction. Gaps are present in the literature on the use of co-teaching for second language instruction, specifically on the teacher teams and the impact of their relational dynamics on the functionality of the model. More information on the relationships and

experiences of co-teachers may contribute to a better understanding of the potential value of a co-teaching model for second language instruction. In addition, it may reveal specific information on how to improve or adjust co-teaching teams. The results of this study may influence second language instruction and the ways in which teaching teams are chosen and coached to work together. At the outset of this research, I defined co-teaching as the collaboration and shared teaching that occurs between a general education teacher and ESL teacher to provide instruction to a wide variety of students (Friend as cited in Friend et al., 2010).

<div align="center">

Research Questions

</div>

Inquiry is rooted in the main question and demonstrates what the researcher truly wishes to know (Moustakas, 1990). Accordingly, there was one main question and four subquestions.

Main Research Question

What are the lived experiences and relational dynamics of educators in an ESL cotaught classroom?

Moustakas (1990) demonstrated support for the use of this one main research question and did not necessarily advocate for the use of subquestions. The author did, however, promote flexibility in approach, methods, and design within heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990). For this reason, it is appropriate to implement subquestions that fall under my main research question.

Subquestion A (SQA). What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers?

Subquestion B (SQB). What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?

Subquestion C (SQC). How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?

Subquestion D (SQD). How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?

I hold my assumptions on this research topic based on my personal experience. I chose heuristic inquiry because of the inclusion of the researcher's experience. I created these subquestions not only from my own assumptions but also from the literature that I reviewed. These subquestions provide more specific direction under the main and general research question. These questions helped to organize how I approached my interviews and collected my data.

Conceptual Framework

I viewed this study through two lenses: the model of collaboration and the theory of connectivism.

Collaboration

Collaboration involves the main elements of a positive team functioning and, as such, describes how a co-teaching team should function. Accordingly, Friend and Cook (1992) outlined important skills necessary for successful collaboration. The teaching

pairs should describe teaching situations that align with the essential components of collaboration to determine whether they are successfully collaborating and working as authentic co-teachers. As such, the essential components to successful co-teaching include a voluntary decision to be involved, equality in the classroom and planning, a shared goal, access to each other's resources, and joint investment and accountability (Friend & Cook, 1992).

Several essential elements are critical in evaluation of a co-teaching pair. One element is successful planning. A more important element, however, is an understanding that background and experience impact how teachers work together (Friend & Cook, 1992). A final description of collaborating teachers is more specifically geared toward specialist teachers and therefore in this study, the ESL teacher. Friend and Cook have suggested that specialist teachers tend to have a more open mind when it comes to working with other teachers. The assumption is that second language teachers will be more open to working with their general education counterparts than the general education teachers are when working with the specialist teachers.

Connectivism

The theory of connectivism developed by Siemens (2005) provides an additional lens through which to view the working together of colleagues, the building of knowledge within the work place, and the value of interconnectedness. Several principle ideas illuminate how collaboration occurs. One idea principal to the theory of connectivism is that collaboration can be very useful in decision making. Multiple

opinions, rather than one, bolster the decision-making process (Siemens, 2005). Other components of the connectivism theory explain the positive elements of collaboration such as how working together can encourage learning among individuals.

Furthermore, connectivism describes the idea that decisions are always in flux and therefore flexibility within relationships is necessary (Siemens, 2005). The theory of connectivism is set apart from other learning theories in that it promotes a more 21st-century approach to working together to achieve improved outcomes. It explains how individuals collaborate and connect not just on a face-to-face level but also through technology. It also emphasizes networks, defined as "connections between entities" (Siemens, 2005, para. 17).

Siemens (2005) also noted that connectivism is rooted in networks and the idea of chaos and that chaos can be understood best when contrasted with constructivism. As a learning theory, constructivism explains that individuals gain knowledge through "meaning-making tasks" (Siemens, 2005, para. 13). Indeed, constructivism can explain the dynamics of a co-teaching relationship in which teachers learn and create meaning from one another and their experiences by using a straighter, systematic approach (Siemens, 2005). The notion of chaos as a component of learning via connectivism, however, sheds light on ways in which individuals may learn by identifying patterns from meaning that already exists (Siemens, 2005). Information in a chaotic form is readily available. Learning, then, can stem from exercises in making sense of that chaos (Siemens, 2005).

Moreover, the connectivism theory further illuminates the learning process by explaining the impact of staying connected and how individuals collaborate in a digital age (Siemens, 2005). Understanding teaching relationships that occur through the individuals' face-to-face interactions represents only one component of this relationship in a 21st-century context. Email interactions and other online encounters add to the complexity and dynamics of the relationship as well. Thus, connectivism is a highly useful framework for this study in that it outlines the multiple ways in which teachers can stay connected and work in collaboration.

I viewed the data I gleaned from responses to the research questions in this study through these two lenses: collaboration and connectivism. The overall purpose of the research questions was to gather information about experiences and relationships between co-teachers. I explored the nature of these relationships through questioning participants regarding their feelings about and perceptions towards each another while working within a co-teaching model. Both the theory of connectivism and the model of collaboration provided insight into the fundamentals necessary for positive and effective working relationship. These lenses, therefore, enabled me to evaluate whether the data demonstrated positive or negative outcomes for the ESL co-teaching model and advanced knowledge about whether co-teaching is a viable model for English language instruction.

I further explored these lenses, which provided meaning and support to the data and results of the study, in Chapter 2. I corroborated their fundamental attributes with the current literature on collaboration in general and also within special education and ESL

instructional settings. Table 1 and Table 2 demonstrate how the major elements of the

study connect.

Table 1

Connections Between Theory, Subquestions A and B, and Data

Important points related to the conceptual framework	Alignment with research subquestions	Data needs	Data source	Data analysis
Specialist teachers tend to be more open to collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1995)	SQA: What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers? SQB: What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?	Initial and ongoing experiences in co-teaching. Two perspectives: one from the ESL teacher and the other from the general education teacher.	Semistructured interview, focus groups, personal experience as the ESL teacher.	Compare opinion of general education teachers with those of the ESL teachers. Identify key experiences that describe initial impressions as well as impressions that evolved over time spent working together.

Table 2

Connections Between Theory, Research Subquestions C and D, and Data

Important points related to the conceptual framework	Alignment with research subquestions	Data needs	Data source	Data analysis
Collaboration according to Friend and Cook (1992) should be: ● Voluntary ● Show equality ● Have common goals ● Share resources ● Display equal investment.	SQC: How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?	Explanation of how co-teaching works. Description of how relationships can impact a teacher's job and how work is carried out.	Semistruct ured interview, focus groups, personal experience as the ESL teacher.	Common trends among all teachers displaying what is needed for successful collaboration/cote aching.
Communication as a component of collaboration may take place in many forms (Siemens, 2005) and may impact the success or failure of the team. Learning can occur from working in collaboration (Siemens, 2005).	SQD: How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?	Description of optimum communication (online/face-to-face/both). Discussion about the successes and failures within a co-teaching experience.	Semistruct ured interview, focus groups, personal experience as the ESL teacher.	Exemplars of successes and failures. Compare my personal experience of both with those shared by the participants.

Nature of the Study

The approach to this study was phenomenological. The phenomenon, or "lived experience" that participants shared (Patton, 2015) was professional practice in a co-taught classroom providing second language support. Phenomenology focuses on gathering the essence of the experience from participants (Patton, 2015); an even more specific phenomenological approach that considers the experience and passion of the researcher, however, is heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2015). The heuristic inquiry approach allows the researcher to bracket personal experiences.

My experiences stem from 10 years of practice as an educator in the field of ESL and involvement in many different second language instructional models as an ESL teacher. The settings in which I have taught and models I have used have been diverse. I have taught second language instruction at the elementary and secondary level in public schools. The instructional models in these schools included push-in, co-teaching, and replacement English where students came to me for their English block instead of a regular English class. I have also taught in an international school and was the administrator for the ESL department in which I worked to phase out the pull-out model and implement push-in and co-teaching.

My own lived experiences in co-teaching for second language instruction was valuable in deciphering and understanding the data that I collected (Moustakas, 1990). I recognized the importance, however, of seeking to ensure validity despite interpretation of data considering my personal experience. This approach is substantiated by Moustakas

(1990) who indicated that researchers must follow a "rigorous and disciplined series of steps" outlined by the heuristic inquiry approach to accurately explain and understand the data (p. 17).

Data Collection

The focus of this study was lived experiences and relational dynamics of teachers who work in co-taught classrooms. To understand the day-to-day experiences and explore the relationships between teaching teams, I obtained data via interviews. Interviews are a common approach to collecting data in heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990). Such interviews allowed for natural conversation and the ability to uncover feelings, thoughts, and the inner workings of the individual involved in the experience (Moustakas, 1990). The goal of the interviews was to take the feelings and thoughts of the participants and use them to explain the actions and interactions within the co-teaching relationships.

In addition to individual interviews, I conducted two focus groups: one group with ESL teachers and the other group with general education teachers. The use of focus groups, another form of data collection, expanded the opportunity to get more in-depth feelings and inner thoughts from the participants, possibly in a new way. This is because focus groups are enhanced by the dynamics and interactions among those being interviewed; furthermore, researchers can review the dialogue as well as the nuances within communication such as body language or tone (Patton, 2015). Of note, because attitudes and perceptions are difficult to observe, the data collection method did not include observation.

Data Analysis

I further enhanced the data collection process by my approach to analysis. I analyzed the data throughout all stages of the study (Moustakas, 1990). A fundamental approach to data analysis within a heuristic inquiry is revisiting the data throughout the collection period and sequencing the findings in an order that tells a story (Moustakas, 1990).

I expanded on the analysis of the data once it was collected by fully immersing myself in the audio recordings of the interviews, the transcriptions, and my notes as the researcher (Moustakas, 1990). During this immersion process, I identified themes and connections among all the participants' stories. To stay organized and consistent with my findings, I coded the data for themes using Atlas-ti. Using a computer program aided me not only in organization but also in keeping the data secure and all in one place.

<div align="center">

Definitions

</div>

I use the following terms frequently:

English as a second language (or ESL; interchangeable with second language instruction/English language instruction) indicates that English is not the native language of the individual (Gunderson, 2008); the individual is learning English in this instructional setting.

English as a second language (*ESL*) *teacher* is someone who teaches individuals English in an English-speaking community. This is opposed to English as a foreign

language (EFL); which occurs when English instruction takes place in a non-English speaking community (Gunderson, 2008).

General education, content and mainstream teacher are terms that will be used interchangeably throughout this study. All terms will refer to teachers who are not certified in ESL instruction but are certified in specific content areas for instruction in elementary or secondary education (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; Reeves, 2006).

English language learner (*ELL*) *or English learner* (*EL*; interchangeable with *second language learner)* are terms frequently used for the individual who is learning ESL (Reeves, 2006).

Collaboration is defined as ". . . direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend & Cook, 1992, p. 5).

Co-teaching is defined as the collaboration and shared teaching that occurs between a general education teacher and ESL teacher to provide instruction to a wide variety of students (Friend as cited in Friend et al., 2010).

Perceived experiences will be defined as episodes in one's life that can be explained "through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgements" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15).

Success when discussing co-teaching and collaboration will be defined using Friend and Cook's (1992) core attributes of collaboration between teachers: voluntary, shared goals and resources, and equitable investment in the classroom.

Relational dynamics will be defined as the different interactions and experiences that contribute to a relationship and take place between two individuals as their relationship develops (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2009)

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study are as follows:

1. Individuals will participate on a voluntary basis.

2. Participants will have a varied experience in co-teaching and collaboration practices.

3. Participants will provide open and honest responses to interview questions.

As it pertains to the focus group interactions, I maintained the same three assumptions. In addition, I assumed that the comfort level of sharing may decrease because individuals were in the presence of their colleagues and may have felt less free to share their feelings.

Scope

The problem that I intended to address in this study is the lack of knowledge about how the relational dynamics between teachers of ESL and their general education partners impact collaboration and instruction for second language learners. I limited the scope of the study by gathering participants from one school district. Entrance criteria for participation included being either an ESL or general education teacher from the identified public school system, willingness to participate and availability, having

certification in either a content area or ESL, and experience in co-teaching for second language support. I did not make any limitations in age or gender of participants.

I obtained permission from the district to recruit teachers from either ESL or general education backgrounds to participate in the study voluntarily (Appendices A & B).

Delimitations

The data I collected included feedback from teachers of ESL and general education teachers involved in the co-taught classroom. I did not collect data from administrators or students and therefore I cannot make assumptions or draw conclusions regarding their feelings about or experiences with co-teaching instruction. Because the instructional model that I explored was co-teaching, I did not include any research on other second language instructional models such as replacement or pull-out classes.

The results of this study may help to inform educators and administrators about the best practices and needed areas of training and development for co-teaching and collaboration to support instruction for second language learners. In addition, the results may be used to help higher education institutions prepare future educators with the necessary skills and nuances involved in collaboration and co-teaching for second language instruction.

Limitations

Specific limitations within this study explain ways in which the information may not be transferrable.

Location and Participants

To collect adequate data, I planned to recruit 10 participants for the study because 10 to 15 participants are recommended for a heuristic study (Moustakas, 1990). The 10 participants included an equal number of ESL teachers to general education teachers. With this target number in mind, I also considered the importance of reaching saturation. After interviewing my initial recruitment of six individuals, I reached saturation. Because I reached saturation with six participants and had an equal number of general education teachers to ESL teachers, my committee approved me moving forward with my focus groups. This study was limited to examining educators within one urban, public school located in central Pennsylvania. With the emphasis on a public, urban location, the conclusions may not be generalized for suburban or rural area schools nor for charter, parochial, or private schools.

Teaching Relationships

Apart from being certified in ESL or a general, content area, the participants needed to have had past or current experience co-teaching or collaborating for second language instruction. Because the co-teaching relationship was limited to those occurring between teachers of ESL and their general education partners, the conclusions and data drawn from the data analysis may not transfer to other educational settings. Other relationships in an educational setting to which the findings may not be transferrable may include specific educators who also collaborate in a school setting such as special education teachers, aides, or other support staff.

Interview Process

To recruit participants, I gave a brief introduction to potential participants in a professional development session. I outlined the importance of my study and the ways in which I planned to approach data collection. As I follow up, I sent out an email to reiterate the information of my study and ask for voluntary participants (Appendix A). Once interest was established, I sent out an email with further information as to the specifics of getting involved (Appendix B). After the selection of the participants, the data collection began. Everyone who participated in the study were involved in two separate phases of data collection. In the first phase, I conducted individual interviews with each participant (Appendix D). I audio recorded all interviews so that I could accurately reflect the information the participants shared with me.

Focus Group Process

In the second phase of data collection, I conducted focus groups in which multiple participants were brought together and interviewed in a group (Patton, 2015; Appendix E). The focus groups consisted of three individuals from the same pool of participants. The number of individuals in the focus group depended on the number of individuals I interviewed first. More specifically, I grouped the participants according to their teacher category: an ESL teacher focus group and a general education focus group. Because I separated the two types of teachers, I created questions specifically geared toward ESL teachers and another set of questions geared toward general education teachers

(Appendix E). As with the individual interviews, I audio recorded these focus group sessions.

Significance

Improving instruction for ELLs and closing the academic gap between these learners and their native English-speaking peers is an endeavor. This issue comes to focus especially as the United States continues to attract immigrants, refugees, and other individuals who speak a language other than English as their first. The challenges that educators face when receiving these students into the classroom are abundant (Hersi et al., 2016). These challenges include addressing not only language proficiency but also culture, family, and academic adjustments (Hersi et al., 2016). This can be especially problematic when support and knowledge about how to best instruct English learners is lacking. An ESL teacher is a valuable resource to both administrators and teachers within a school and yet the ESL teacher's expertise or status within a building or district is not always valued or recognized. The push to collaborate and to institute co-teaching for second language instruction, therefore, is rooted in moving away from a state of unawareness about best practices to a state that is fully prepared and equipped, at all levels, to best meet the needs of English learners.

Federal law does not mandate a set instructional method for second language instruction; decisions about instructional approaches are left to the state and/or individual districts but with emphasis that the method must be effective and research-based (Department of Education United States of America, 2016; Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, &

Sweet, 2015). However, the easiest and most cost-effective for a district, even if the research supports it, may not be the best fit or even the best instructional approach for ESL instruction. The issue returns to a lack of knowledge and understanding (Hopkins et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014).

The positive effect of this study may result from an impetus to continue an important dialogue about the use of a co-teaching model in ESL instruction. Because I explored attitudes and perceptions, it could provide insight into ways in which teams are established and means for improving such teams to effectively execute this model. Finally, it contributed to existing research-based evidence about co-teaching for ESL instruction. Policymakers, administrators, and educators may use this research to decide if this model is worth exploring further or implementing into a district. The issue of global acceptance and awareness is at the forefront of much of social and education discussions today. Providing continued attention to the education of minority, English learners has clear social implications that may help advance equality and inclusion in education.

Summary

This phenomenological, heuristic inquiry study could provide administrators, educators, and policymakers information on the functionality of an ESL co-taught classroom. It may help to address questions and concerns that individuals raise when considering the co-taught model for ESL instruction. In this chapter, I addressed key components of the study to provide an overview of the purpose and approach. I discussed

the problem and background of the topic that I explored, and I explained the need for this study. I explained briefly how I reached participants, collected, and analyzed data, as well as the significance of the study. Through the lenses of a collaborative model and connectivism, I collected the data for this study through interviews and focus groups and then went on to analyze what I found. The research questions addressed how the relational dynamics of teachers of ESL and their general education partners impact collaboration and instruction for second language learners.

The remaining chapters are set up to give further depth to the study including support from recent literature, a more copious explanation of the design and method as well as the results and conclusions drawn at the end of the study. In Chapter 2, I present a comprehensive overview of the current literature on topics related to the study including co-teaching, collaboration, and the different settings in which these models take place. In addition, I explain the conceptual lens that I use to view the study. I provide an in-depth look at the design and methodology that I used to conduct the research for this study in Chapter 3. In Chapters 4 and 5, I discuss my findings, conclusions, and social implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Co-teaching, a traditionally inclusive model in the special education field (Pratt, 2014), has started to permeate the instructional approaches to teaching English as a second language (ESL; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Collaboration within the context of co-teaching has numerous benefits for second language learners (Kong, 2014; Park, 2014). Researchers, however, have noted a lack of mainstream teacher preparation in terms of both collaboration and receptivity to a co-teaching model of instruction for English learners (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Despite knowledge that collaboration is important, it is not known if collaboration through co-teaching in an English language classroom is a more effective teaching method in comparison to push in or replacement English classes. Without continued exploration of instructional models that may provide adequate support for both language and content growth, English learners may continue to underperform and fall behind.

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. At this stage in the research, co-teaching will be defined as the collaboration and shared teaching that occurs between a general education teacher and ESL teacher to provide instruction to a wide variety of students (Friend as cited in Friend et al., 2010). This chapter is broken down into multiple sections including the conceptual framework in which the study is rooted and the current literature, which is additionally broken into subsections.

The current literature chosen as relevant for this study falls under three categories including collaboration in general, collaboration within the special education field and finally, collaboration within ESL instruction. The conclusion of the chapter summarizes the important themes of the literature and brings attention to the gap that contributed to the creation of this study.

Literature Review Search Methods

I searched many of the educational databases within Walden University's library system to target relevant articles within a 5-year window for this study. The primary databases included Education Source, Education Research Complete, and ERIC. To find articles related to ESL and collaboration and/or co-teaching, I used many different keyword combinations, some of which produced little to no articles of relevancy. Those combinations included *ESL* AND *instructional models*, *ESL* AND *inclusion*, *ELLs* AND *inclusions* AND *ESL* AND *success*. The more diverse combinations were the more likely they were to produce some pertinent articles.

One example of how I needed to be creative to generate relevant results was to change ESL to ELL. Terms that produced articles useful to the study included *ESL* AND *collaboration*, *ELLs* AND *instruction*, *teaching ESL* AND *content*, *collaboration* AND *special education*, *collaboration* AND *teaching*, and *co-teaching*. In addition to the Walden Library's supply of databases, Google Scholar was a helpful starting point to find related articles. Once I identified pertinent articles, I confirmed if they came from refereed journals.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was rooted in two different approaches to understanding educational events: the theory of connectivism (Siemens, 2005) and the idea of collaboration in education (Friend & Cook, 1992).

Essential Elements of Collaboration

The elements of collaboration and working as a team within a school setting stem from two well-known researchers, Friend and Cook. These researchers wrote a book that set the foundational layers for optimum collaboration within an educational environment. Their original work on the subject focused on interactions among school professionals including special education teachers and speech and language professionals, as well as school counselors and psychologists (Friend & Cook, 1992). Although the researchers articulated elements of collaboration that should be central to interactions among these professionals, they also focused on the elements of relationships that apply to any professional interaction or collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1992).

In their book, Friend and Cook (1992) acknowledged the complexities of all interpersonal relationships. An understanding of these complexities contributes to the important components outlined for effective, collaborative teams. The fundamental components include the following:

- Individuals involved in the collaboration making voluntary decisions to be involved.

- Individuals in the team being given equal voice and power.

- Members of the team having at least one common goal.

- Each individual being actively involved in responsibilities and decision making.

- Resources of each individual shared with the team.

- All members of the team being invested and accountable for the outcomes of joint work (Friend & Cook, 1992).

From these core elements, multiple assumptions stem regarding the interaction and involvement individuals take in collaboration. Much of the current research on collaboration and co-teaching aligns with the components that Friend and Cook (1992) outlined for a successful team. The topics of focus range from a lack of these components (Al-Natour, Al-Zboon, & Alkhamra, 2015; DelliCarpini, 2014; Russell, 2014; Stefandis & Strogilos, 2015; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013; Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012) or reinforcement of the assertion that these principles support valuable collaboration (Berry & Gravelle, 2013; Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Gladman, 2014; Luo, 2014; McGriff & Protacio, 2015; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). In addition to these principles that help with a general understanding of how collaboration works, Friend and Cook also identified a specific explanation of the complexities that arise from different professionals working together.

The following explanation is helpful when viewing the dynamics between teachers of ESL and their general education partners. When individuals are working together, each person brings a different experience and background to the team and this

background experience contributes to how the individuals work together (Friend & Cook, 1992). In addition to background perceptions and experience, each school professional is wired, and therefore functions, according to the norms of their position. A general education or content area teacher fits within the traditional role of working in isolation and, therefore, is less conditioned to work in collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1992). Specialists, such as ESL educators along with special educators, however, have a natural tendency to be more open to collaboration because of the nature of their jobs which revolves around supporting students who are often in many different classrooms (Friend & Cook, 1992). This attitude of openness and willingness is seen predominantly in the specialists and not from the general education teachers and is an idea that has shown up in the current research on collaboration and co-teaching (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Berry & Gravelle, 2013; Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Kong, 2014; McGriff & Protacio, 2015; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Yi Lo, 2014). Ultimately, the core components of an ideal collaborative team and this explanation of the tendencies of general education teachers versus specialist teachers provided a lens for this study. Specifically, this lens created a view of a teacher's characteristics and how he or she contributes to the team.

Connectivism

For the theory of connectivism, Siemens (2005) provided a unique lens for viewing collaboration among teachers. Connectivism has specific ties to the advancement of technology in society (Siemens, 2005) and while this study did not deal directly with the influence of technology, some underlying assumptions within the theory aid in

understanding how collaboration functions and what it means to function effectively in the 21st century. Siemens (2005) set his theory apart from other learning theories by acknowledging the growing presence of technology and its effects on how people live, as well as the fact that knowledge is more accessible, continually changing, and growing more quickly than it has in the past. Through the theory of connectivism, we view learning and education through a relevant and updated lens for the 21st century.

Within the theory of connectivism, Siemens (2005) defined learning as a process that is dynamic, ever changing, and not always controlled by the individuals involved. This theory provided some core principles that align with the concepts and literature on collaboration. Siemens stated that "learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions" (para. 24) which emphasizes the importance of networks and connections. Collaboration, defined as working together (Friend & Cook, 1992), also puts weight on valuing multiple opinions and diverse input to enhance the educational experience. In another body of literature, Im and Martin (2015) specially identified the benefits of teachers reflecting and dialoguing about the experiences of teaching together to improve their instruction. For example, teachers may provide perspectives and feedback unique to their background knowledge and thus help one another to identify areas of needed improvement (Im & Martin, 2015).

Apart from focusing on diverse input, another principle that Siemens (2005) outlined was that "nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning" (para. 24). It is evident that Siemens highlighted technology as the portal for

individuals to make connections, but it still comes down to the human-to-human connection; connectivism is rooted in the individual and this is where the cycle of knowledge starts before transferring to the network and then the organization (para. 28). A plethora of researchers agreed that ongoing learning takes place when educators work in collaboration (De Lay, 2013; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Forte & Flores, 2014; Kelly & Cherkwoski, 2015; Owen, 2015; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2014). This, therefore, upholds the idea that connections are fundamental to learning (Siemens, 2005).

A final useful element of connectivism, one that highlights the importance of collaboration, is that "decision-making is itself a process…while there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision" (Siemens, 2005, para. 24). This principle demonstrates the necessity for flexibility as Siemens (2005) indicated that decision-making may include discerning how to change and adjust. Siemens also noted the importance of deciding whether information is vital or not when decisions are altered. A working relationship between two or more people requires a level of flexibility (Park, 2014) that is not necessarily utilized when an educator teaches in isolation. Moving away from isolation and toward working with other colleagues can provide a level of flexibility and openness to change.

Thus, connectivism allows educators to understand elements of learning and knowledge in the 21st century, particularly considering the growing influence of technology and new approaches to education. In addition, fundamental facets of the concept offer a lens to understand collaboration. Current research on collaboration and

co-teaching demonstrates how the concept of connectivism can create a lens for analysis and alignment.

Review of Literature

Collaboration in Education

Recently, reformers of education have become more focused on the implementation of collaboration to improve and adjust the educational experience (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). The motivation behind the push for greater collaboration is multifaceted, including creating enhanced inclusion for all students (Pratt, 2014), improving student achievement (Jao & McDougall, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2015), and connecting teachers for the purpose of advancing their professional growth (Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015). Indeed, collaboration among teachers can take many forms including working with individuals in the same department or expertise (Holmstrom, Wong, & Krumm, 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014), working across the district (Jao & McDougall, 2016), or even interacting with educators across the country via online collaboration forums (Seo & Han, 2013). Collaboration, however, looks very different from school to school; an approach to collaboration in one school may not be the best approach for another school (Jao & McDougall, 2016) and thus it is important to recognize the complexities and nuances of collaboration. The following section of the literature review addresses the general aspects of collaboration among educators without narrowing the search to specific conditions or types of educator.

The Elements of Collaboration

The research on collaboration in education covers a plethora of topics including variations in how collaboration appears around the world (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Forte & Flores, 2014; Honingh & Hooge, 2014), how it functions in fostered, professional development sessions (Hallam et al., 2015; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Owen, 2015), and the impact of teacher collaboration on student achievement (Jao & McDougall, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). This plethora of topics provides breadth to the discussion of collaboration. Despite these numerous avenues in the research, however, the researchers have reached many similar conclusions about how collaboration functions and in what ways it is successful.

The necessities for success. Collaboration is complex in that it is rooted in people working together and functioning within relationships. For this reason, researchers have identified that the fundamentals of a working relationship such as trust (Hallam et al., 2015), communication (Jao & McDougall, 2016), support (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015), and time (Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Steyn, 2016) are necessary for a collaborative team.

Trust. Researchers have indicated that one of the main qualities of a positive, collaborative relationship is trust (De Lay, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). Trust ensures that the individuals in the team feel safe to share and to provide feedback to one another (De Lay, 2013; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). In one study, teachers said that making personal connections and sharing about their personal

lives enabled them to build trust over time (Hallam et al., 2015). Trust, therefore, helps

teachers to be open and willing to work with those whom they have been paired (De Lay,

2013). Another way to build trust is to take equal responsibility for the tasks at hand

which demonstrates to the group an equal contribution and investment (Hallam et al.,

2015).

Communication. Encouraging collaboration among educators goes against the

traditional teaching model in which a teacher works in isolation and the classroom is

strictly his or her domain (Steyn, 2016). Because the past norm has been teaching in

isolation, learning to communicate well with colleagues is another fundamental aspect of

effective collaboration (De Lay, 2013; Hallam, et al., 2015; Jao & McDougall, 2016).

Collaboration functions best when teachers are open and willing to communicate and in

turn, open to listening to the ideas of their colleagues (De Lay, 2013). By making

personal connections, teachers enhance their ability to communicate effectively (Jao &

McDougall, 2016). Ultimately, a positive result of open communication is that teachers

more readily dialogue about students and their needs (Hallam et al., 2015).

Support. Trust is established over time and can build as teachers receive

opportunities to collaborate. The time and environment needed to collaborate

successfully are strongly connected to the involvement and support of school leadership

(Goddard et al., 2015; Hallam et al., 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Steyn, 2016).

Administrators who actively encouraged collaboration along with providing

environments where teachers could interact and meet during the school day, fostered

positive collaboration and a greater willingness for teachers to be involved (Goddard et al., 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014). In one study, researchers noted that the involvement of administration gave both structure and autonomy to collaborative groups (Hallam et al., 2015). In addition, when administrators set the tone for collaboration, they can bring together the teachers by providing a shared vision and modeling respect and interaction with colleagues (Steyn, 2016). Notably, a key element to effective leadership by administration goes beyond setting the tone for the community; it includes following up on collaborative activities such as by monitoring lesson plans, observing instruction, and providing feedback to help guide teachers (Goddard et al., 2015).

Time. Regularly referenced in research, a practical aspect of the collaboration model is the issue of time (Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Ronfeldt et al. 2015; Seo & Han, 2013; Steyn, 2016; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2015). Without time, trust cannot be established, support cannot be executed, and communication cannot be implemented. Studies have shown that schools that factored in time for collaboration had positive results within the established teams (Jao & McDougall, 2016; Steyn, 2016; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2015). In one study, researchers shared that the success of one group of teachers was rooted in the time they spent working together and building relationships; only after that time was put in were they able to be productive and work towards a common goal (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2015).

Other studies have echoed the importance of time by indicating that time allowed teachers to establish common goals, grow together (Jao & McDougall, 2016), observe

one another, and share skills and expertise (Steyn, 2016). When time is limited and the administration does not seek to provide time dedicated to collaboration, teachers must work around time constraints if they are determined to collaborate. One approach to working around the issue of time is online communication either with other teachers in the school or district (Jao & McDougall, 2016) or by seeking out online forums that focus on teacher collaboration (Seo & Han, 2013). In one study, researchers shared that teachers maximized their limited time together by focusing on topics from which they could all benefit (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

When successful collaboration occurs. Building a foundation for collaboration with the purpose to function in a meaningful and fruitful way is essential. The successful accounts shared by researchers not only highlight what is needed to succeed but also the results of those successful collaborative teams. Studies have shown that positive student achievement is a result of collaboration (Goddard et al., 2015; Owen, 2015; Ronfeldt et al., 2015), as well as teacher growth (De Lay, 2013; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Owen, 2015), and teacher motivation (Forte & Flores, 2014; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2015).

Student achievement. A positive outcome of teacher collaboration is illustrated by demonstration of the ways in which students benefit. Working in collaboration enables teachers to be more innovative and diverse in their approaches to teaching (Forte & Flores, 2014; Owen, 2015) since they receive feedback and ideas from their colleagues. Other benefits noted were increased inclusion of and involvement by students (Al-

Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Forte & Flores, 2014) and improved scores and results of assessments (Owen, 2015; Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

  Teacher growth and motivation. Although the focus for collaboration is often primarily on student growth and how classrooms can enhance instruction, it is pertinent to note that teachers receive significant benefits as well when implementing collaboration. A significant benefit noted by multiple researchers is that teachers may experience professional growth through collaboration (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Forte & Flores, 2014; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Owen, 2015; Seo & Han, 2013). With intentional collaboration where the focus is on making it meaningful for all involved, teachers can learn a lot from discussion and from the expertise of each individual involved (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). The practice of teachers observing one another teaching (Owen, 2015) and sharing materials and resources is also useful (Seo & Han, 2013). Contrary to the studies that demonstrated how teachers learn and develop through collaboration, however, Holmstrom et al. (2015) revealed in their study that teachers who collaborated by focusing only on pacing and planning did not grow or develop as a team; the hyper-focus they put on simply planning lessons and the lack of conversation about outcomes and student needs created an underdeveloped team.

  Adding to the body of research-based evidence, another benefit that many researchers found was that of increased motivation when teachers worked in teams (De Lay, 2013; Forte & Flores, 2014; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Szczesiul & Huizenga,

2015). Motivation increased as teachers worked alongside each other and showed that they valued accountability and opinions about their shared experiences (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2015).

The struggles with collaboration. Like any new endeavor, implementing or developing an environment of collaboration can come with struggles. Researchers have provided a mixed address on how the preconceptions of teachers impacted collaboration. Though Kelly and Cherkowski (2015) along with Forte and Flores (2014) indicated that teachers expressed limited or negative views of collaboration, Ronfeldt et al. (2015) revealed that teachers who had struggling students generally had a positive outlook on collaboration. Many researchers discussed the issue of pairing teachers together in pairs or groups (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Steyn, 2016). Bringing together people to work can be problematic for multiple reasons including being paired with an individual from a different content area (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015), differing personalities (Jao & McDougall, 2016; Steyn, 2016), or having opposing goals (Jao & McDougall, 2016).

Special Education and Co-teaching

The movement to include all students into general education classrooms brought about an emphasis on collaboration and co-teaching in education (Friend & Cook, 2013). The idea of intentional collaboration and the use of co-teaching originated from the concept that special education and general education teachers should work alongside one another to address the needs of students with varying abilities (Friend & Cook, 2013).

The traditional motivation for collaboration and thus co-teaching, therefore, is rooted in the special education movement (Friend & Cook, 2013; Pratt, 2014). It is only recently that the model for co-teaching has begun to expand to support students with other learning needs (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Friend & Cook, 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). This portion of the literature review will focus on research that discusses the role of co-teaching in the traditional setting of special education and general education.

Issues with co-teaching and collaboration in an inclusion setting. There is resounding agreement among researchers on the benefits and necessity of co-teaching and collaboration for inclusion of students with learning disabilities (Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013; Pratt, 2014; Prizeman, 2015). Many researchers, however, have addressed some of the common issues that arise because the varying responsibilities of general education and special education teachers are not necessarily conducive to a positive co-teaching environment (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Berry & Gravelle, 2013; Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Stedanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Strogilos & Trafouia, 2013). One such issue is "one-sided responsibility", the common yet presumably ineffective model chosen for an inclusion classroom.

One-sided responsibility. A co-taught classroom requires the teachers to jointly address the needs of the students and to take equal responsibility when it comes to all tasks needed to create a functioning classroom (Friend & Cook, 2013; Tzivinikou, 2015). Numerous studies have revealed misconceptions of general education teachers when it

came to who should address the needs of the students with learning disabilities in the

classroom (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Berry & Gravelle, 2013; Stefanidis & Strogilos,

2015a). One study by Al-Natour et al., (2015) analyzed the relationships between special

education and general education teachers. Researchers observed that special education

teachers were clearly assigned certain responsibilities for identifying and supporting

students with learning disabilities. This happened even though these responsibilities

could have easily been addressed by the shared knowledge of academic content from the

general education teacher (Al-Natour et al., 2015). Similarly, Berry and Gravelle (2013)

uncovered a view that special education teachers were solely responsible for the kids with

needs, suggesting that the general education teachers did not understand how to address

and interact with the special education children in their classrooms. Thus, a sense of

isolation developed for the special education teachers despite their involvement in a co-

taught classroom because teachers thought they alone should be responsible to teach one

particular group of students (Berry & Gravelle, 2013). In another study that specifically

addressed the question of responsibilities held by special education and general education

teachers in the classroom, findings showed that general education teachers focused

strictly on general education students and left the job of any type of inclusion for special

education students to the special education teacher (Strogilos & Stefandis, 2015b).

  Contrary to many of the studies that showed a negative reception of the secondary

role of the special educator, King-Sears, Brawand, Jenkins, and Preston-Smith (2014)

observed in their study how a content and special education teacher pair more gracefully

balanced their roles as primary and secondary teacher respectively. The responsibility for

instruction of content, science, fell naturally to the content area teacher and thus he

conducted most of the whole-group sessions (King-Sears et al., 2014). The special

education teacher still had a distinctive role and provided some whole-group instruction

such as review of the previous day's lesson or reading through the text with the class

(King-Sears et al., 2014). Despite the slight difference in roles, many students felt that

they benefitted from a co-taught classroom and they felt comfortable with the fact that

either teacher could help to clarify or explain misunderstood concepts (King-Sears et al.,

2014). These two teachers found harmony in their arrangement (King-Sears et al., 2014)

and demonstrated a specific model of co-teaching. Ultimately, this suggests that lopsided

perceptions about responsibilities and tasks may stem from one of the common co-

teaching models: one teach, one assist or support (Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-

Jones & Vail, 2013; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013).

  The common co-teaching model for special education. Within many recent

research articles on the topic of co-teaching for inclusion, researchers have indicated "one

teach, one assist" as the most common co-teaching model used for inclusive classrooms

with students with individual education plans (IEPs; Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-

Jones & Vail, 2013; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). Friend and Cook (2013) described the

one teach, one assist model as an approach wherein one teacher is usually in charge while

the other teacher circulates to provide needed support for students. This approach does

not necessarily require common planning time or much collaboration (Friend & Cook,

2013). This model highlights one teacher as the primary educator (Friend & Cook, 2013) and automatically suggests inequality between the two teachers by providing an unequal balance of power (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013).

Because it is often the students with learning needs who need the extra support, the assist role naturally falls to the special education teacher (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). This approach to co-teaching can be particularly useful at the beginning of a co-teaching relationship when teachers are getting to know each other and their styles of teaching. When teachers first start out in a co-teaching relationship, they commonly move through stages of collaboration and team work (Pratt, 2014). Staying in this approach of one teach-one assist, however, shows a lack of team development and collaboration, and can lead to more problems (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). In addition, this model can contribute to the separation of teachers and students, thereby creating an imbalance in a classroom that should be the epitome of balance and embracing of diversity by demonstrating full inclusion (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Stedanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013).

Flexibility. The issue of flexibility, or lack thereof, came up in numerous studies addressing the roles of each teacher in a co-taught classroom. Because the special education teacher has typically been viewed as the one responsible for students with learning needs, his or her role in the classroom can tend to vary and change more so than the role of the general education teacher (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). In research addressing flexibility in the co-teaching situation, the special educators, however,

demonstrated a better attitude and approach to coteaching (Stefandidis & Strogilos, 2015a). They also possessed a more extensive background knowledge on the methods and systems of a co-taught classroom (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Furthermore, the special educator was often seen as the key to successful co-teaching (Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012) since many times it was observed that the general education teacher was resistant to change the traditional role of teaching with one primary teacher (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). When the need for flexibility is recognized in both teachers, then growth in the team can happen and teachers diversify and differentiate lessons more regularly (Pratt, 2014).

Successful co-teaching work in inclusive classrooms. Aside from the issues, researchers have also gathered evidence about the needs of special education and general education teachers in a successful co-teaching model. By noting both strengths and weaknesses within different co-teaching models across the world (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013; Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012) educators have a better idea of what is necessary for success (Bell & Gravelle, 2013; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013; Pratt, 2014).

Needs. The literature has identified the following needs in order to achieve a successfully run co-taught classroom: enhanced knowledge about co-teaching (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Kamens, Susko, & Elliot, 2013; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013; Pratt, 2014; Prizeman, 2015; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015; Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012; Tzivinikou, 2015), time for planning and collaboration (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Bryant

Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Hussin & Hamdan, 2016; Pratt, 2014;

Prizeman, 2015; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013; Takala & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2012), as

well as support from both teachers and administration (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Hussin &

Hamdan, 2016; Prizeman, 2015).

     Researchers have also found that teachers starting in a co-teaching model or even

those who had been working in a co-teaching model for some time lacked training and

knowledge on the fundamentals of collaboration and co-teaching (Al-Natour et al., 2015;

Pratt, 2014; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Takala & Uusialo-Malmivaara, 2012). In

particular, Tzivinkiou (2015) noted a complete ineffectiveness in collaboration when

teachers did not have training.

     To counter the ineffectiveness when teachers had little to no background

knowledge on co-teaching, Pancosofar and Petroff (2013) found that training empowered

teachers, provided a more positive outlook for success, and improved teachers' self-

perception and motivation when it came to co-teaching. Tzivinkiou (2015) also found

that when involved in training, the attitudes of teachers changed as well as their

willingness to collaborate and work toward success.

     Teachers are not the only ones who benefit from training. A couple studies

illuminated the fact that in order to implement and foster collaboration among teachers,

administrators need just as much training in areas of collaboration and co-teaching

(Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Kamens et al., 2013). By thoroughly understanding the

skills and requirements of collaboration and co-teaching, administrators can better

support the teachers (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Kamens et al., 2013) which is a vital

element to collaboration and co-teaching success (Bell & Baecher, 2012; Gunning,

White, & Busque, 2016; Russell, 2014).

   Success for students and teachers. In classrooms where co-teaching is working,

students with learning needs respond to the support and inclusion thereby providing a

strong rationale for the co-teaching model (Berry & Gravelle, 2012; Bryant Davis et al.,

2013; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Pratt, 2014; Prizeman, 2015).

   Success for students with learning needs is multi-faceted. In a successful

classroom, students perceived their teachers as equals and therefore isolation did not

occur for either teacher or student (Berry & Gravelle, 2012). Furthermore, the attention to

collaboration in a successfully co-taught classroom led to lesson plans that addressed the

diverse needs of students with learning issues and enabled teachers to differentiate

instruction more thoroughly (Bryant Davis et al., 2013; Pratt, 2014; Takala & Uusitalo-

Malmivaara, 2012). In addition, success came when all teachers involved embraced their

roles within a team (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015).

   For students who had issues with social interaction or communication, both

Prizeman (2015) as well as Strogilos and Stefandis (2015b) discovered an increase in

participation and positive behavior in co-taught classrooms. Teachers with positive co-

teaching experiences expressed how they learned from their co-teachers as they worked

together and drew from each other's strengths, which contributed to growing

professionally (Pratt, 2014; Takala & Uusialo-Malmivaara, 2012). With increased

participation in co-teaching settings, teachers learned the value of shared responsibility and equal footing in the classroom and how this model can enhance the educational experience for their students (Prizeman, 2015; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Strogilos & Stefanidis, 2015b).

Co-teaching as an ESL Instructional Model

Co-teaching, a traditionally inclusive model in the special education field (Pratt, 2014), has started to permeate ESL instructional approaches (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). The research on ESL and general education teachers co-teaching in classrooms with ELLs is not plentiful. Available studies cover a range of subtopics such as teacher preparation (DelliCarpini, 2014), teacher interactions (Im & Martin, 2015; Park, 2014), and the role of instruction (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014) under co-teaching. The studies address many different contexts and participants. The overt diversity in the studies demonstrates how the topic of coteaching for English language instruction is multi-faceted. This section of literature will focus on what the literature says about the effects of co-teaching for both the teachers and the students in ESL instruction.

Benefits and challenges of co-teaching for English language instruction. Numerous benefits result from implementing co-teaching as an instructional model for ESL. The benefits range from helping teachers grow as educators (Chandler-Olcott, Nieroda, & Crandall, 2014; Martin-Beltran, & Peercy, 2014) to enhancing instruction and attention to students (Chandler et al., 2014; Chandler-Olcott, & Nieroda, 2016; Gladman, 2014; Kong, 2014).

Benefits for teachers. Teachers working with ELLs need specific training in teaching methods and strategies that address developing both linguistic and content needs of the students (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012). Not surprisingly, research shows that teachers experience growth and increased knowledge when they participate in co-teaching (Chandler et al., 2014; Martin- Beltrán & Peercy, 2014). Chandler et al. found that teachers evolved over time as they co-taught; furthermore, they implemented new strategies learned from peer teachers and demonstrated confidence in previously insecure areas of teaching. Similarly, Martin-Beltrán and Peercy discovered that working together to focus on the needs of ESL students helped teachers to grow in their understanding of best practices for that population. In further support of this notion, Luo (2014) noted that teachers expressed how co-teaching not only provided learning experiences, but also encouraged them to self-reflect on their teaching practices. Elsewhere, the literature has shown that the teaming together of general education and ESL teachers enables each teacher to learn new skills specific to the expertise of the partner teacher (Luo, 2014; Martin- Beltrán & Peercy, 2014). The literature reviewed in this section suggests value in honing and improving a teacher's professional skills over time.

To stay current with the changes in the field of education, teachers are encouraged to participate in professional development or continuing education. Co-teaching is only one way that enables teachers to connect and learn from one another. Research suggests that teachers may improve their ESL instructional strategies through experiences with co-

teaching; this model also helps both teachers in the co-teaching pair to reflect on their individual and collective teaching approach (Luo, 2014; Martin- Beltrán & Peercy, 2014).

Seeking out expertise. A noted theme within this body of research was that ESL teachers brought their language expertise into the content-area classroom to instruct, support, and aid when needed (Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, & Sweet, 2015; Park, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Collaboration occurs only when individuals are willing to listen and interact with those involved (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Thus, content area teachers who engaged in conversation about the struggles of their ESL students also sought out advice from ESL teachers to improve instruction for ELLs (Peercy et al., 2015). Ultimately, intentional interactions among colleagues about students who struggled led to a better addressing of students' needs (Peercy et al., 2015).

To explore this phenomenon, Park (2015) observed co-teachers naturally falling into their area of expertise while teaching. In a content-driven lesson, Park described how both content and ESL teacher worked with one another to convey the lesson information. One teacher either pulled back when his or her colleague could better address something or stepped in to build on the other teacher's point and provide additional insight to the student (Park, 2015). In these cases, the interjections from a teacher or deference to another was seen as support and not disruption or disrespect (Park, 2015). A slight twist on aligning with expertise came from the study conducted by Hopkins et al. (2015) who noted that expertise from ESL teachers was sought out only for language arts support. The implications from ESL knowledge should be conjoined with language arts only is

that ELLs are left lacking support for content areas such as math or science (Hopkins et al., 2015).

     Benefits for students. Classroom and district initiatives are put into place to demonstrate growth and development of student achievement (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). The previous section addressed the potential benefits to teachers when co-teaching. It is important to report also the impact on students in the classroom. This section will include the students' experience within a co-taught classroom both overall and specifically in academics.

     Overall experience. Students can experience the uniqueness of the co-teaching model by having the option to call upon two different teachers during their classroom experience (DelliCarpini, 2014). From the students' perspective, DelliCarpini (2014) as well as Gladman (2014) found that a co-teaching model was generally accepted and viewed as a positive instructional approach. With two teachers in the room, students felt more comfortable when asking questions or seeking help (Gladman, 2014). Another overall benefit for students in a co-taught classroom was the opportunity to have more than one perspective presented on a topic (Park, 2015). The knowledge and background that each teacher carried served to fill in gaps left by his or her partner teacher (Chandler et al., 2014; Gladman, 2014) thereby providing a more enriched presentation of information to students. Many academic benefits for ELLs exist in the overall experience with co-teaching as the method of instructional delivery (Chandler et al., 2016; Gladman, 2014; Kong, 2014).

Academic benefits. By catering to specific needs and providing more on-on-one attention, more specialized and specific instruction results from two teachers with unique expertise thereby improving the academic experience for ELLs (Chandler et al., 2016). With enhanced attention because two teachers are in the room, the relationship between the teachers and students becomes more personalized and close (Gladman, 2014) thus providing the potential for teachers to be more in tune with issues of their students. Accordingly, Kong (2014) noted that joining together ESL and content area teachers allowed the classroom experience to be language rich but with a focus on content. Beyond the value of a better joining of language and content (Kong, 2014), a co-teaching classroom can provide more active involvement from students and help with general comprehension (Gladman, 2014). Students feel more comfortable and supported and, therefore, more secure when participating (DelliCarpini, 2014; Russell, 2014).

Challenges within a co-taught classroom. A co-taught classroom is not an instructional model that can be flippantly implemented. Rather, such implementation demands time, support, and attention to the teacher relationships (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013).

Attention and support. A co-teaching and collaborative classroom needs support and attention to thrive. Administrative support of not only the co-teaching model but also for collaboration among teachers is a core demand for success (Bell & Baecher, 2012; Gunning, White, & Busque, 2016; Russell, 2014). With encouragement resulting from

collaboration, teachers could focus on their relationship as working partners, another fundamental element within the co-teaching model.

Relationships. Co-teaching can also be called team teaching and this label represents the essence of this instructional approach: working together as a team (Friend & Cook, 2013). For co-teaching to work and have a positive impression, each teacher involved must be committed to making the team work (Gladman, 2014). Efficient team work allows the teachers to demonstrate an authentic relationship to the students. This includes showing them what it means to maneuver through conversations, disagreements, and working together (Chandler-Olcott et al., 2014; Gladman, 2014). This team mentality also leaves the individuals open to hear what the other has to say and the fresh perspective that he or she can offer to address the students' needs and progress (Im & Martin, 2015). Working well together is essential to a co-teaching team (Friend & Cook, 2013). Furthermore, demonstration of mutual respect encourages teachers to draw upon each other's strengths in order to maximize the opportunities that come when two teachers are in the room (Park, 2014).

Without a proper relationship, teachers may feel hesitant about their interactions with one another. As such, Kong (2014) noted that teachers feared infringing on their partner's area of teaching and therefore approached collaboration in the classroom teaching with hesitancy. Additional studies have revealed a lack of equality among general education and ESL teacher teams (Hersi et al., 2016; Yi Lo, 2014). In one study, researchers indicated a clear difference in the role of power when it came to ESL teachers

and other general education teachers; the ESL teachers filled a role of support and listening but did not necessarily have equal footing in the classroom (Hersi et al., 2016). Similarly, Yi Lo (2014) found that ESL teachers expressed more ease in collaboration than other teachers because they filled a typical role. It is evident that balancing strategies for co-teaching and collaboration can help to build a positive relationship. Recognition of shared responsibilities and space (Martin- Beltrán & Peercy, 2014), planning (Peercy et al., 2015), and mutual respect (Bell & Baecher, 2012) can help to improve and strengthen relationships for the co-teaching model.

Time. In a study on how content and ESL teachers collaborated in the classroom, Kong (2014) established that teachers viewed collaboration as a time-consuming practice and therefore a challenge when there was already little time in the day without students. Chandler-Olcott et al. (2014) concluded that part of the success of co-teaching during a summer writing institute for ELLs was that teachers had time to co-plan before lessons were implemented, which was not easy during the school year when there was a lack of time for multiple teachers to come together for planning. Additional studies further supported the need for time for collaboration, noting that with intentional time, collaboration develops and grows stronger (Gunning et al., 2016) and that fruitful discussions on student needs and lesson improvements occurred when teachers had the time to sit down and talk (Peercy et al., 2015).

A successful co-taught classroom. Researchers have found numerous indicators of strong and successful co-taught classrooms involving ESL and general education

teachers. Success in a pair comes from shared communication, trust, and a mutual

understanding of students (Park, 2014). A team that demonstrates a shared knowledge of

needs and tries to address those needs together shows the importance of each teacher

(Peercy et al., 2015) Bridging the concepts of communication and teamwork together, co-

teaching is also successful when teachers become more comfortable with one another,

with their roles in the classroom, and are open to perspectives and input from their

teaching partners (Luo, 2014). Research also indicates how beneficial it is to both

teachers and students when individual teachers understand their areas of strength and

expertise and are empowered to use those strengths in a co-taught classroom (McGriff &

Protacio, 2015). For ESL teachers who often struggle to have their voices heard, asserting

themselves and their knowledge in the co-teaching relationship provides balance to the

team and voice for the ELLs in the classroom (McGriff & Protacio, 2015).

Preparation for Co-teaching and Collaboration

The issues of preparing preservice teachers, or individuals preparing to become

teachers, for collaboration and co-teaching is another subset of the research on co-

teaching and collaboration. The conclusions drawn from observing preservice teachers

and teacher education courses unanimously emphasized the need for proper training and

experience in collaboration and co-teaching before these individuals enter the field of

teaching (Frey & Kaff, 2014; Jimenez-Silva, Merritt, Rillero, & Kelley, 2016; Pellegrino,

Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Rodriguez, 2013; Turner, 2016).

Higher education and faculty role. Because collaboration and co-teaching are central to inclusion and student success, teacher educators have considered this an important topic when preparing preservice teachers. This heightened awareness of new needs has encouraged education faculty members to collaborate and decide on the best ways to prepare their students for meeting the needs of diverse populations (Jimenez-Silva et al., 2016; Frey & Kaff, 2014; Pellegrino et al., 2015).

In several studies, faculty members worked together to find ways to improve students' knowledge and experience with co-teaching and collaboration. They designed classroom experiences addressing the subject and demonstrated what collaboration looks like. Jimenez-Silva et al. (2016), Frey and Kaff (2014), as well as Pellegrino et al. (2015) all conducted studies in which faculty members across curriculum and content areas co-taught classes. The classes for preservice teachers were co-taught with the intention to expand the students' knowledge of working together and creating meaningful learning experiences for all students (Frey & Kaff, 2014; Jimenez-Silva et al., 2016; Pellegrino et al., 2015). By actually co-teaching these sessions, the faculty members could discuss the elements of collaboration from a personal experience and allow students to observe what co-teaching looked like in real time (Frey & Kaff, 2014). In addition, this provided students with opportunities to see which strategies were beneficial in a co-taught setting (Pellegrino et al., 2015). Thus, the modeling of co-teaching had an effective impression on the preservice teachers beyond just direct instruction about co-teaching and collaboration.

Tools needed by preservice teachers. By demonstrating what co-teaching might look like and then discussing the skills involved in collaboration, faculty members could provide their students with a preliminary look into a common practice used in schools today among educators. In the field of ESL, preservice teachers need training when it comes to preparing lessons that target both language and content needs. In one particular study, Jimenez-Silva et al. (2016) noted that part of the faculty collaboration included creating a lesson template for the preservice teachers, one that emphasized the incorporation of language and content objectives. Elsewhere, Pellegrino et al. (2015) indicated that preservice teachers needed to know how to address language standards and carry out effective collaboration. To add to the ideal education of preservice teachers, education courses provided preparation by encouraging students to observe collaboration in public schools (Turner, 2016), having students work with peers in class assignments that modeled real life planning such as creating units for ESL students (Rodriguez, 2013; Turner, 2016), and talking through different student scenarios such as IEP meetings with parents or accommodations (Frey & Kaff, 2014). The experiences of preservice teachers working alongside their peers provides that much needed experience with collaboration.

The influence of preservice teacher preparation in collaboration. Across the studies examined for this portion of the review, researchers found that preparation in terms of the concepts of collaboration and/or co-teaching in education courses provided a greater depth of knowledge in the complexities of collaboration (Frey & Kaff, 2014; Pellegrino et al., 2015; Rodriguez, 2013). In addition, it helped to hone preservice

teachers' awareness of areas of growth for working with peers (Turner, 2016), the importance of communication (Frey & Kaff, 2014), and the value and expertise that members bring to a team (Pellegrino et al., 2015).

Phenomenology as a Research Design and Current Literature

To clarify the approach and methods of this dissertation research, I have also reviewed literature pertaining to research design. Specifically, I will utilize a heuristic inquiry approach and thus include my experience and intense interest in the co-teaching experience (Moustakas, 1990). For the sake of understanding this design more thoroughly, however, I broadened my literature review to include specifics about phenomenology, which is the overarching design under which heuristic inquiry falls (Patton, 2015). Although heuristic inquiry does possess some unique elements that set it apart from phenomenology, the idea of the lived experience and identifying the essence of the phenomenon are at the forefront of the qualitative design (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985).

Because phenomenology studies, whether using a heuristic approach or not, focus on lived experiences and sharing in the phenomenon (Patton, 2015), one of the main commonalities of phenomenological research is exploring perceptions (Alibakhshi & Dahvari, 2015; Günay & Aslan, 2016) or experiences (Jhagroo, 2015; Pereira & Gentry, 2013). In turn, these perceptions serve to explain either a problem or potential solution to a problem. Multiple researchers utilize phenomenology because this design acknowledges the issue from the start, as opposed to discovering it within the study.

Furthermore, a phenomenology is aimed at discovering how the shared experiences of the

participants can lead to an in-depth understanding of an issue that had not been evident

from past research (Alibakhshi & Dahvari, 2015; Ereş, 2016; Jhagroo, 2015). Thus, my

review of this body of literature substantiates the appropriateness of this approach to my

research.

Summary

Several common themes emerge from the body of current research on

collaboration and coteaching in general, as well as in a special education or ESL

instructional setting. Researchers agree that the benefits of collaboration demonstrate the

effectiveness of this instructional approach thus giving reason to implement it in more

educational settings (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Bell & Baecher, 2012; Bryant Davis et al.,

2012; Chandler et al., 2014; De Lay, 2013; Forte & Flores, 2014; Gladman, 2014;

Goddard et al., 2015; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Owen, 2015; Park, 2014; Peercy, et al.,

2015; Pratt, 2014; Russell, 2014;).

Besides the benefits, however, there are many challenges such as:

- Timing, (Chandler, et al., 2014; Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall,
  2016; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Kong, 2014;).

- Compatibility (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Gladman, 2014; Martin-
  Beltran & Peercy, 2014).

- Support and training (Al-Natour & Al-Zboon, 2015; Hallam, et al., 2015;
  Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Steyn, 2016).

Therefore, it is essential to address these elements in order for collaboration to be successful (Goddard et al., 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013; Park, 2014; Prizeman, 2015;).

Gaps in Literature

Recent research suggests that collaboration and co-teaching have become established practices in the special education field (Kamens, Susko, & Elliot, 2013; Pratt, 2014; Prizeman, 2015; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015a). In the field of English language instruction, however, research has yet to demonstrate the efficacy of models that encourage more collaboration such as co-teaching. Indeed, research has yet to substantiate whether co-teaching should be the model of choice in second language instruction. In addition, and specific to the field of ESL, though researchers have explored the reactions and interactions between teachers of ESL and their general education partners to some extent (Chandler-Olcott, 2014; Gunning et al., 2016; Hersi et al. 2016; Park, 2014; Russell, 2014), ongoing research must address what ESL teachers do in collaborative situations, how they overcome barriers to collaboration, and how they best serve their students.

Addressing the Gap

The intent of this study was to provide information on two of the areas where more research is needed: 1) analysis of the lived experiences of teachers in a co-teaching model in an ESL/general education setting and 2) information on the relational dynamics between teachers of ESL and their general education partners. By gathering information

on the structure and success of the co-teaching model for English language instruction,

this research contributed to information addressing whether more schools should support

the implementation of collaborative-focused models for ESL instruction, such as co-

teaching. In addition, by exploring the lived experiences and relational dynamics between

teachers of ESL and their general education partners who are co-teaching and

collaborating, the research provided additional evidence. This evidence may include the

nuances of this relationship and suggest ways in which educators can enhance

collaborative experiences when working the English languages learners. This research

will contribute information that is needed within the ESL field and provide not only ESL

educators with more data about co-teaching and collaboration but it will also inform

districts and administrators looking at various ESL instructional models.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. At this stage in the research, *co-teaching* is defined as the collaboration and shared teaching that occurs between a general education teacher and ESL teacher to provide instruction to a wide-variety of students (Friend as cited in Friend et al., 2010).

In this chapter, I will address important details on how the research took place. I will explain my role as the researcher, the research design and methodology. I will also share the methods that I used to conduct the research and the validity factors involved in the process.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question (RQ) created for this study was as follows:

What are the lived experiences and relational dynamics of educators in an English as a second language (ESL) cotaught classroom?

To help with organization when collecting data from the interviews and to provide a focus, I also created subquestions:

Subquestion A (SQA). What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers?

Subquestion B (SQB). What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?

Subquestion C (SQC). How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?

Subquestion D (SQD). How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?

With these questions, I explored the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. I gathered the data through individual interviews and focus groups using a heuristic phenomenological research approach.

Choice of Design

I selected a qualitative approach for this study because it enabled me to delve deep into the subject matter and explore how situations related to the topic are constructed and carried out in the real world (Yin, 2016). Another reason for the use of a qualitative approach is that it requires a small sample size; a quantitative approach would require a larger number of participants to get valid results (Yin, 2016). A larger number of participants may increase generalizability yet a smaller sample enables the researcher an in-depth understanding of the topic researched (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, qualitative researchers may report qualitative data in a more story-like or narrative manner; the appeal of this style of reporting is another reason for choosing the qualitative approach. With the intention to explore lived experiences of the participants involved, storytelling can provide a unique understanding to the data as opposed to numerical data used in quantitative studies (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

A researcher can use one of many approaches to gather and analyze qualitative data. I have found, however, that phenomenology—particularly heuristic inquiry—is the best suited methodology for this study. Phenomenology allowed me to focus on a shared lived experience of the participants (Patton, 2015) and heuristic inquiry enabled me to consider my experiences in that same lived experience (Moustakas, 1992). I outlined the alternative qualitative methodologies that I considered and rejected for this study (Appendix F).

Heuristic Inquiry

My goal was to reveal the inner workings of teacher relationships and their experiences when co-teaching for English language instruction. Phenomenology is an appropriate choice for looking at how individuals process their experiences on their own or collectively with others (Patton, 2015). Moreover, I chose to approach this study through a specific type of phenomenological design called heuristic inquiry. The word *heuristic*, translated from the Greek form of *heuretikos*, means "I find" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40). This term emphasizes a key element of heuristic inquiry, the researcher herself. Heuristic inquiry is a unique form of phenomenological inquiry, mainly because it includes the researcher's own experience with the phenomenon and not just the experience of participants in the study (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2015). A few characteristics set heuristic inquiry apart from a phenomenological approach even though many elements overlap. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) indicated that these include the following:

- Emphasizing a connected understanding with the phenomenon as opposed to a detachment from it.

- Keeping the people involved at the forefront of the study rather than letting them disappear through the analysis process.

- Keeping "the essence of the person in experience" (p. 43).

Connection Between the Design and the Conceptual Framework

The design must not only connect to the research questions but also to the lenses through which I am framing the study. Siemen's (2005) theory of connectivism and Friend and Cook's (1992) model of collaboration meld together to provide a perspective with which I reviewed the data. Both lenses provided a perspective on the meaning of professional collaboration (Siemens, 2005; Friend & Cook, 1992). Furthermore, the theory of connectivism evaluates how in the process of learning, individuals connect with each other in a modern, digital age (Siemens, 2005). Accordingly, I gathered information on attitudes and perceptions. I evaluated analyzed how these feelings relate when working in a collaborative team, whether face-to-face or through online communication.

The theory of connectivism also provided a deeper understanding into collaboration in the 21st century. Friend and Cook's (1992) model of collaboration, however, provided a universal explanation of how collaboration should look in an educational setting and the elements needed for successful collaboration. These perspectives helped to frame the lived experiences that I revealed in this study, namely

that of co-teaching in a classroom with ESL students, either as an ESL teacher or a

content area teacher. Tables 3 and 4 tie together all the elements of the study process.

Table 3

Connections Between Theory, Subquestions A and B, and Data

Important points related to the conceptual framework	Alignment with research subquestions	Data needs	Data sources	Data analysis
Specialist teachers tend to be more open to collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1995).	SQA: What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers? SQB: What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?	Initial and ongoing experiences in co-teaching. Two perspectives: one from the ESL teacher and the other from the general education teacher.	Semistructured interview and focus groups.	Compare the opinions and experiences of general education and ESL teachers. Identify key experiences that describe initial impressions as well as impressions that evolved over time spent working together.

Table 4

Connections Between Theory, Research Subquestions C and D, and Data

Important points related to the conceptual framework	Alignment with research subquestions	Data needs	Data source	Data analysis
Collaboration according to Friend and Cook (1995) should be: ● Voluntary ● Equal ● Share common goals ● Share resources ● Have equal investment.	SQC: How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?	Explanation of how co-teaching works. Description of the ways in which relationships can impact a teacher's professional responsibility and how work is carried out.	Semi-structured Interview and focus groups.	Search for common themes within the data obtained from all teachers regarding what is needed for successful collaboration/co-teaching.
Communication in collaboration may take place in many forms (Siemens, 2005) and may impact the success or failure of the team. Learning can occur from working in collaboration (Siemens, 2005).	SQD: How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?	Description of how communication works (online/face-to-face/both). Discussion on the successes and failures within a co-teaching experience.	Semi-structured interview and focus groups.	Exemplars of successes and failures. Compare my personal experience of both with those shared by the participants.

Role of the Researcher

The active role taken by the researcher is an element of qualitative research that sets it apart from that of quantitative research. The researcher becomes entrenched in the data collection and analysis process and is in some way a participant (Patton, 2015). Whether by choosing observation or interviewing as the primary form of data collection, the researcher plays a prevalent role. Furthermore, from within these data collection methods, the researcher can take on more specific roles such as a primary observer or a participant observer. I took the role as participant observer in this study.

From the perspective of the participant observer role, I combined separate interactions and observations with the data gathered in an interview (Patton, 2015). As the researcher, I was involved and then provided feedback on observations. Moreover, through the use of heuristic inquiry, my personal experience directly influenced the data analysis process because heuristic inquiry provides a unique role for the researcher in that some of the data comes from the researcher's personal experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). Merging the researcher's experience with the intensity of the exploration produces the "essence of the phenomenon" (Patton, 2015, p.119).

Personal experience. Involvement by the researcher and experience with the phenomenon studied is fundamental in the heuristic inquiry approach (Moustakas, 1990). My personal role as an educator in the field of ESL and the multiple ESL instructional models with which I have experience, including co-teaching and push-in, were fundamental to understanding my role within this study. In addition, I could help to create

meaning from my experiences and from those of my participants by corroborating my knowledge with theirs.

Conflict and bias. The use of my own workplace or community could cause conflict, especially in the participant recruitment process. Because of this, the district in which I gathered data and interacted with participants was not one in which I have worked or am currently working. I have no personal or professional ties to the district or the teachers in the district.

In addition to conflict of interest, bias is an important consideration. In any form of research, the researcher has experiences and perceptions that may get in the way of recording and reporting accurate and unbiased data. My personal experience in the field of ESL education and in the role of a co-teacher provided me with some strong feelings on the subject. I am an advocate of co-teaching and have, both past and present, pushed towards better collaboration between teachers of ESL and their general education partners when it comes to servicing second language learners.

Thus, since the heuristic inquiry approach to research allows me to include my personal experience into the thought process and development of the research (Moustakas, 1990), it is essential to implement checks and balances within that process that ensure validity and clarity of mind in the process. Moustakas (1990) indicated the importance of constantly comparing one's own experience with the experiences of the participants through questioning and reflection. I followed the outlined phases of the design that helped to ensure validity and clarity in my interpretation of the data. The

phases included initial self-reflection, confirmation or opposition to the reflections, and personal perceptions with those individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990).

Methodology

The participants in my study were a mix of general education teachers and ESL teachers who had experience working in co-taught classrooms that included both English learners and native English-speaking students. The goal was to pull from a diverse pool of teachers that ranged in age and years of experience. A range of experience may provide a well-rounded understanding of teachers' experiences rather than narrowing background to a specific age or specific amount of years taught.

Sampling

Maxwell (2013) encouraged the use of purposeful sampling because it is more conducive to small sample sizes, qualitative approaches, and is generally more realistic with time and logistics. It is a common sampling method used in phenomenological studies (Alibakhshi & Dahvari, 2015; Ereş, 2016; Günay & Aslan, 2016; Pereira & Gentry, 2013). In addition, it allows researchers to select samples or cases that will most appropriately fit their study and presents the best information in terms of depth and understanding (Patton, 2015).

Participants. The specific sampling strategy common in heuristic inquiry is intensity sampling; this sampling approach enabled me to identify exemplars of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Although age and gender did not play a role in the selection

of participants, individuals who participated must have experienced the phenomenon that I studied. Hence, entrance criteria specified that the participant must have had at least one year of experience working in a co-teaching or push-in setting for ESL instruction. Furthermore, the participants' role within either model, past or present, must have been either that of a general educator certified in a particular content area, or that of an ESL teacher. Special education teachers or aides were not included as these roles were not applicable to this study. Participants could have had push-in model experience as a mode of co-teaching experience since this mode requires collaboration and can often shift to a co-teaching model over the course of the year (Friend & Cook, 2017).

Recruitment of participants. After IRB approval, I followed the guidelines of communication that the district instituted in our partnership. The school district board approved the partnership I maintained as I conducted my research. This partnership allowed me to contact teachers and paired me with the administrator in charge of the ESL staff. The administrator was not involved in any part of the study other than to provide me with the contact emails of teachers within the district. I maintained the privacy of participants and did not share the names of those who participated to the administrator.

According to the district policies, I received a short amount of time to present my study to a group of ESL teachers during a professional development session. In addition, I sent a preliminary email to teachers in order to elicit interest and recruit participants for the study (Appendix A). For those who were interested in learning more, I sent a follow-up email (Appendix B). After this, I made direct contact via email and phone to the

individuals who expressed interest in participating. In these conversations, I reiterated the

entrance criteria. I also shared information about the data collection method; which

included time estimates for the interviews and meeting as a focus group. With

confirmation that the individual wished to continue, he or she received a consent form.

This consent form had the same information that I reviewed with the individuals in our

final conversations (Appendix C).

 Sample size. As a starting point in the sample size selection, I intended to recruit

at least 10 teachers. In addition, my goal was to have the same amount of ESL teachers to

general education teachers. The ultimate goal within the data collection process, however,

is to reach saturation, when information from new participants becomes redundant

(Patton, 2015). There was a possibility then that more than 10 – and possibly even less

than 10—participants would be necessary to fully understand and draw conclusions

during this inquiry thereby reaching saturation (Patton, 2015). This possibility became

evident after I had completed six interviews and noted repetition across participant

responses. Because I reached saturation after six interviews and had an equal number of

ESL teachers to general education teachers, I moved forward with conducting my focus

groups.

Instrumentation

 Phenomenological studies focus on the lived experience and defining the essence

of that experience (Patton, 2015). Interviews are often the primary source via which

phenomenological data are collected. Interviews are appropriate because of the personal

nature of this design and the goal to elicit experiences through individuals' perceptions and emotions. As a phenomenological approach, heuristic inquiry follows suit and institutes interviews as a primary form of data collection (Moustakas, 1990).

Another approach to gathering data from individuals is through focus groups whereby multiple individuals come together to discuss the given topic (Patton, 2015). I asked the participants with whom I met in the individual interviews to join in the focus groups as well. The purpose of the data collection process was to focus on the phenomenon and to reveal how it occurs for those who experience it (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). The joining of data from one-on-one interviews and focus groups allowed some broadening of the data I collected. Furthermore, it enabled me to triangulate the data between the two types of data collection methods.

Interviews and Focus Groups

My goal was to have participants join in both data collection sessions: the individual interview and the focus group. The focus groups allowed me to pool together the ESL teachers for one session and the general education teachers for another session. This design was because focus group should be conducted with people who have shared knowledge or experience (Patton, 2015). The advantage to a focus group is that it enables the participants to hear and share based on what others in the group say (Patton, 2015).

Ultimately, the sessions allowed me to gain knowledge about the participants through the descriptions of the shared, lived experience of co-teaching. Moustakas (1994) noted that when interviewing, the researcher should encourage the participants to pay

close attention to the moments that stood out within their relevant experience, and to retell that experience in its entirety. Through an explanation of the individual's experience, the data that I gathered went beyond the observations of the experience because it provided insight into what the individual was thinking about the experience.

Individuals may recall past experiences that the researcher can record in the interview; the precise nature of all events or situations cannot always be accurately documented, however, since it occurred at an earlier time (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, the recording of feelings and emotions through observations is necessary although accuracy can be challenging (Patton, 2015). During my interviews, I aimed to gather excellent information about the "…feelings, thoughts, and intentions" linked to the experience of the individual (Patton, 2015, p. 426). This is important because the emphasis is not on just the experience, but rather how the individual has interpreted that experience and attitudes that have developed from and because of that experience. Ultimately, by interviewing multiple participants, I aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of the inner-workings of everyone's thought-processes. I gathered data about not only the experiences of co-teaching relationships but also the feelings and assumptions that came along with that experience.

Interview protocols for one-on-one interviews. Interviews were my primary mode of data collection and I set up protocols for how I would administer them. I audio recorded all the interviews to recall the conversations that I had with the participants (Moustakas, 1990). I conducted the individual interviews through a semi-structured or

guided approach. This approach to interviewing means that as the researcher, I had a list

of questions that helped to steer the conversation toward the topics and ensured

consistency throughout all interviews (Patton, 2015; Appendix D). The semi-structured

element also allowed for some divergence, if an opportunity arose, for a participant to

expand on or divulge more in-depth information than anticipated (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016). Ultimately, a guided conversation allowed for a more comfortable approach to

dialogue but also ensured that I provided consistency throughout multiple interviews

(Patton, 2015). Within the heuristic inquiry approach, it was better that I maintained a

comfortable dialogue between myself and the participants— rather than a rigidly

structured approach to interview (Moustakas, 1990).

Interview protocols for focus group. The focus groups followed the same

protocol of the one-on-one interview in that I prepared questions ahead of time to guide

the conversation (Appendix E). These questions were broken into two groups: one set of

questions was specific for the ESL teacher group and the other set of questions was

specific for the general education teacher group. In addition, the focus groups were audio

recorded to ensure that I maintained accuracy through the analysis process. An element of

a focus groups that is both challenging yet beneficial was the interjection of multiple

opinions that may vary and not necessarily agree (Patton, 2015). Hence, an interview

guide prepared for this type of interview helped to focus the conversations while still

allowing for some flexibility (Patton, 2015).

Interview and focus group questions. Both the individual interviews and focus groups included questions that I generated. Patton (2015) outlined six types of questions that one can include in an interview guide. The questions I included in the guides encompassed experiences, behaviors, opinions and values, as well as knowledge about co-teaching (Patton, 2015; Appendix D & G).

The experience and behavior questions helped me gather information about what I might observe. The opinion and values questions looked specifically for judgements or perceptions about the experience (Patton, 2015). Knowledge questions focused on facts and not feeling (Patton, 2015) which helped to identify elements of each participant's background experience. Apart from the main questions, Patton (2015) recommended the use of probes to guide the participants and to ensure more in-depth responses. Such probes enabled me to follow-up to obtain a further explanation of a participant's answer (Patton, 2015). I grouped the focus group questions into sections: one section of questions was specific for ESL teachers and one section of questions was specific for general education teachers (Appendix E).

A panel of experts reviewed the questions in this study to ensure clarity, focus, and appropriate content. The panel of experts consisted of both general education and ESL teachers, as well as school administrators. None of these individuals participated in my study.

Pilot study. Before conducting the interviews for this study, I conducted a pilot study, using the interview questions with two individuals. I obtained permission to trial

these questions on teachers from a different school district (Appendix I). The data I

collected from the pilot study was not included in my conclusions. The pilot study

enabled me to tweak and revise the questions and confirm that they were relevant and

appropriate. After the pilot study, I found that I would benefit from adding three

additional questions. These questions would provide additional information to help me

understand the teacher experiences and provide a greater context to those experiences. I

submitted a change in procedure to the IRB and received permission to add the following

questions: 1) If there is anything you would like to happen or change related to the co-

teaching model, what would it be? 2) What are the expectations, if any, of the

administrators when it comes to the co-teaching relationship? 3) In what ways does your

relationship with your co-teacher impact your instruction? In Tables 5 and 6, I show the

connection between my research subquestions and different interview questions. I used

the questions for the one-on-one interviews and focus groups.

Table 5

Connecting Research Subquestions A and B With Interview Questions

Research subquestions	Interview questions
SQA: What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers? SQB: What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?	1. What is your definition of co-teaching? 2. How were you first introduced to co-teaching? 3. What were your first impressions of co-teaching? 4. What were your first impressions of your co-teacher? 5. How receptive was your co-teacher to your teaching and knowledge expertise when you first started working together? Has this changed? 6. How would you describe your relationship with the co-teacher? 7. Describe the general attitudes of the ESL department in your school regarding collaboration and co-teaching with your general education peers? 8. What is your perception of the views of content teachers when they find out that they have a high number of ESL students? 9. What is your perception of the views of content teachers when they find out that they are paired with an ESL teacher for class instruction?

Table 6

Connecting Research Subquestions C and D With Interview Questions

Research subquestions	Interview questions
SQC: How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?	1. What does a typical day look like for you when it comes to working with an ESL (or general education) teacher? 2. How do or did your roles develop as you worked together in collaboration? 3. How do you feel about your assigned roles? 4. Can you identify any strengths or weaknesses? 5. As a member of a grade level or content area team, what have you learned about collaboration from working with that team or teams?
SQD: How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?	1. What was your preparation and that of your co-teacher in advance of your co-teaching assignment? 2. How do you feel your interactions with this teacher? 3. What is the process for resolution when two teachers who are working together have issues or complaints about one another?

Interview procedures. The participants involved in the individual interviews were the same individuals who participated in the focus group. I collected the data from one, inner-city school district in central Pennsylvania.

I conducted the interviews and collected that data. As the sole researcher, I ensured that procedures and protocols were put into place before conducting the interviews. Initial interviews spanned from 25 to 45 minutes depending on the individual. The material I collected from the interviews was clear and therefore I did not need to conduct follow up interviews. I did, however, conduct member checks after the individual interviews and focus groups.

After the one-on-one interviews, I arranged for two separate focus group interviews. One focus group was for the ESL teachers and the other focus group was for the general education teachers. The theory of connectivism (Siemens, 2005) asserts that modern connections occur via technology. Based on this notion and to facilitate the interview process, interviews were conducted both in person and via video technology.

Researcher tools. All interviews were recorded using the *Voice Pro* app through an iPhone. Once each interview was recorded, the audio file was transferred to a computer and secured for confidentiality. The audio recording of each interview ensured accurate recollection of the interview dialogue (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In addition to the audio recordings of each interview, I incorporated the use of reflection and memos into my data collection procedures. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) indicated that memos and comments on the data can help a researcher to make connections between the data, theory, and methods of the study. It was important to incorporate not only my experiences and background from the start of the study but also to do so as I collected and reflected on the data. This assertion acknowledges the central

role of the researcher in a heuristic inquiry study. I as the researcher must maintain a connection to my own perceptions without judgements or limitations in order to move through the process with a degree of flexibility (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Self-reflection along with these memos and notes helped in making personal connections to the themes of the study as they emerged. Figure 1 shows a more in-depth timeline for the data collection and analysis process.

```
┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Submitted proposal  │  │ Worked with district│  │ Set up phase 1:     │
│ for IRB approval    │  │ to make contact with│  │ individual          │
│                     │  │ potential           │  │ interviews          │
│                     │  │ participants        │  │                     │
└─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
```

```
┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Transcribed and     │  │                     │  │ When phase 2 was    │
│ reviewed data.      │  │ Phase 2: focus      │  │ complete,           │
│ Checked transcripts │  │ groups              │  │ transcribed and     │
│ with individuals    │  │                     │  │ reviewed the data.  │
│ (member checks)     │  │                     │  │                     │
└─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
```

```
┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │  │ Continued analysis  │  │                     │
│ Cross- coded with   │  │ and compared        │  │ Drew up initial     │
│ the interviews.     │  │ trends/themes with  │  │ findings and        │
│                     │  │ both recent research│  │ conclusions         │
│                     │  │ and conceptual      │  │                     │
│                     │  │ framework           │  │                     │
└─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
```

Figure 1. Process for data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data to identify themes and sought to answer my research

questions. The data collection within a heuristic study relies heavily upon the researcher

and co-researchers' accounts of the shared experience (Moustakas, 1990). I reviewed

both the notes and audio recordings after each interview for information that I might have

missed during the actual interview (Moustakas, 1990). I analyzed the data continually

throughout the course of the study (Moustakas, 1990). Moustakas (1990) encouraged a total experiential immersion into the data in order to analyze and synthesize data. In addition, there was an intentionality to reveal what I found in the data through a creative way (Moustakas, 1990). The immersion into revisiting the data allowed me to piece together a story that evolved from my sessions and my own personal reflection. I mapped together pieces of story that revealed my analyses and conclusions in a creative way (Moustakas, 1990).

A common practice in the heurisitic research process is to leave and come back to the research; Moustakas (1990) indicated that after taking a break from the research, the researcher is ready to analyze for themes and commonalities among the data. What is not outlined, however, is a system for coding and therefore I relied on Patton for guidance on coding. Patton (2015) asserted that coding is a process and oftentimes the researcher must read through the data multiple times to establish a set of codes and an understanding of the data. A first read through helped me to generate initial codes and then subsequent re-readings helped to solidify the codes (Patton, 2015). After I established a set of codes and thoroughly reviewed the data, I pinpointed themes and naturally occurring recurrences I found in the data (Patton, 2015). This process allowed me to identify the core and shared ideas that surfaced from the interviews and focus groups.

The use of the software program *Atlas-ti* aided me in the coding process. This program allowed for better organization of data and quicker coding (Scientific Software

Development GmbH, 2016). In addition, the program helped me generate reports such as comparisons and cross coding among transcripts.

Part of the analysis process within heuristic inquiry is to maintain the integrity of each individual's story or experience even though themes are picked out from among all experiences (Moustakas, 1990). Thus, I reflected on the encounter with each participant and drew up notes and reflections before moving on to another participant (Moustakas, 1990). Ultimately, highlighting exemplars displayed by individuals within a group allows for ideal presentation of the data because the researcher is encouraged to bring attention to two or three individuals who represent the phenomenon at its best (Moustakas, 1990).

In addition to these exemplars, however, I sought to identify themes that emerged from a pooling of all data. This allowed for a better explanation of all aspects of the phenomenon of the lived experience of co-teaching to improve outcomes for English learners. Once I established a narrative with my identified themes and explanations, I asked my participants to review my work. Member checks help to catch any misinterpretations or miscommunications from my interactions with the participants (Patton, 2015). To conclude, heuristic inquiry puts an emphasis on synthesizing and presenting data to tell the story in a creative way such as a poem, narrative, or piece of art (Moustakas, 1990).

Trustworthiness. To produce a credible study, I needed to ensure validity throughout the whole research process. Because of my involvement with participants in a heuristic inquiry, I served as an instrument. Thus, the trustworthiness of the findings of a

study was rooted in my ability to carry out the proceedings in a sound and ethical manner, using expertise and rigor (Patton, 2015).

Validity. Validity of research findings is of ultimate importance and carefully following a pre-determined method that has been designed according to established standards for attaining rigor in research. In this study, triangulation and member checks can help with the internal and external validity of the study (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, internal and external validity and transferability can be improved when I think about how the information gathered may be used in other settings. Self-reflection is an important strategy for ensuring validity within the heuristic research approach and something I incorporated into my data analysis process (Moustakas, 1990).

Credibility. Triangulation is a commonly used technique that can safeguard credibility (Patton, 2015). A realistic form of triangulation and one that I used in this study was a comparison of the information gathered from the individual interviews with what was shared in the focus groups. Accordingly, Patton (2015) specified that one form of triangulation can be "comparing what people say in public with what they say in private" (p. 662). Another way that I increased credibility was through member checks whereby participants reviewed interview notes and interpretations of the data they offered (Patton, 2015). Because I analyzed the data as I conducted my interviews and focus groups, I shared my analysis with the participants shortly after our sessions. I emailed them my analysis of the information I gathered and asked for any clarification or changes to my interpretations. The act of checking and possibly updating or adjusting the data per

the participants' feedback can also strengthen validity since it helps to eliminate possible interference or bias that may result from only the researcher reviewing the materials (Patton, 2015; Moustakas, 1990).

Saturation of the data is another element that helped ensure internal validity. Saturation is the point at which information becomes repetitive and new interviews offer no new information. Saturation of the data is a means of confirming that a given sample size is sufficient for valid findings (Patton, 2015).

Transferability. The goal of my study was to provide insight to the co-teaching model for ELLs. Through careful execution of my methodology, I increased the transferability of the results so that others may envision how similar aspects of the co-teaching model may or may not be applicable in their educational setting (Patton, 2015). This study took place in a school district that has a population of students from a majority of lower socio-economic status. The largest ethnicity represented in the district is African American, while the majority of second language speakers speak Spanish as their first language. The study elicited teachers from Kindergarten through 12th grade. With these parameters set for the study, considerations for transferability must be taken in account. These considerations may include socio-economic status of the district, ethnic diversity, and majority second language spoken.

Dependability. The use of triangulation not only improves the validity and credibility of a study but can also strengthen dependability. Triangulation took place through comparing data collected from one-on-one interviews with the data collected

from focus groups. Dependability can also be enhanced using an audit trail. I took notes on my reactions, conclusions, interpretations and any other pertinent information that I gleaned to process the information throughout the study. I took notes as I conducted the interviews and focus groups. By taking notes and then reflecting at the end of each session, I recorded important information that was not revealed through the audio recording. An audit trail can strengthen the dependability by making the researcher's process transparent and clear (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Confirmability. A final element that can help to establish trustworthiness in a study is to enhance confirmability through reflexivity. Reflexivity enabled me to be introspective, paying careful attention to my own views while equally attentive to the participants involved (Patton, 2015). Heuristic inquiry includes self-reflection before and after data reflection as the role of the researcher and his/her perspective is key (Moustakas, 1990). Additional reflexivity for trustworthiness in a study is important. Patton (2015) noted that reflexivity is especially crucial in the analysis and reporting stages of the research process. During this time, I reflected on my own knowledge as well as considered how those involved may react to the findings and conclusions drawn (Patton, 2015).

Ethical Concerns

After I received Walden IRB approval and an IRB approval number, I followed all protocols and procedures that were outlined in addition to any guidelines presented by the district location where I recruited participants.

Research site. I submitted a request to conduct research to a school district in the eastern United States. The school board approved the initial process, which required me to fill out a grant/partnership agreement. The administrator of the ESL department and the Chief Academic Officer signed off on the agreement.

Participant treatment. Consideration of the participants' involvement and treatment is important. The involvement of participants for this study was voluntary with no compensation. I conducted the interviews and focus groups in a location that ensured no one would interrupt or overhear the sessions so that participants felt free to talk while maintaining anonymity with their involvement in the study. If a participant was unwilling to continue in participation or decided not to participate after consenting, he or she would have been removed from the participant list and the data, if any, collected from his or her initial involvement would have been discarded by being permanently deleted from my computer. In addition, if I took any handwritten notes on the participants, I would have shredded and disposed of those notes.

To promote credibility and enhance validity, an interview consent form was presented to all participants to review and sign before the interviews were conducted (Appendix C). The consent form included an overview of the study's objectives, the level of involvement expected from each participant, and the ways in which the information would be recorded, reviewed, and confirmed. It also included potential, yet minimal, risks that were involved should the individual decide to participate in this study.

Beyond the consent form, it was important to establish a method to keep transcripts and other information related to the data confidential to ensure protection of the participants' identity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The audio recordings were uploaded to a password protected, personal computer that is accessible only to the researcher. Audio files and notes were backed up on a flash drive and secured in a location that only the researcher could access. The data will be destroyed after five years, the required amount of time set by Walden University.

Conclusion

This study uses a phenomenological heuristic inquiry approach to uncover the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. I collected the data through individual interviews and focus groups with the aid of *Voice Pro* audio recording software and notes taken by the researcher. With the help of *Atlas-ti* software, I analyzed the data throughout the whole study and evaluated it for themes and codes that reoccurred.

Once data were accessed and interpreted, I took measures to ensure validity and trustworthiness including triangulation and confirmation with participants on the interpreted data. Upon completion of data collection, I analyzed the data as described in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. I built my study to answer one main question: What are the lived experiences and relational dynamics of educators in an English as a second language (ESL) co-taught classroom? I also sought to answer the following four subquestions:

Subquestion A (SQA). What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers?

Subquestion B (SQB). What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?

Subquestion C (SQC). How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration?

Subquestion D (SQD). How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?

This chapter is organized to reflect the process of data collection, analysis, as well as the results of the study. I provide a description of how I conducted the pilot study and the necessary alterations I made following that trial study. I detail the process for data collection including the challenges to recruit and set up meeting times. I also describe the process for recording, coding, and analyzing the data. To fully understand the analysis process, I outline the heuristic inquiry process for data recording and analysis. I further

elaborate on the analysis process, sharing the prevalent themes and subthemes that emerged. Following the data analysis description, I review the steps I took to maintain trustworthiness and validity. The chapter concludes with a detailed description of the results of the study. The purpose of this section is to address the research questions and give an in-depth representation of the experiences and voices of the participants. I constructed the final section to address a synthesis of research questions, themes, and participant experiences.

Pilot Study

I conducted the pilot study once I secured IRB approval. The purpose of the pilot study was to ensure greater validity in the data collection process and results. I administered the pilot study in a district other than the one where I gathered my data (Appendix I). I met with one mainstream teacher and one ESL teacher in individual interview sessions. With each individual, I went through the series of questions that I had designed for both the individual interviews and the focus group (Appendices F & G). I altered the individual interview by adding three questions after reflecting on the pilot study data. The questions I added provided more insight on the participants' perceived feelings toward the co-teaching model as a whole. The questions were (a) If there is anything you would like to happen or change related to the co-teaching model, what would it be?; (b) What are the expectations, if any, of the administrators when it comes to the co-teaching relationship?; and (c) In what ways does your relationship with your co-teacher impact your instruction?

I submitted a change in procedure to the IRB and received permission to incorporate the additional questions. I made no other changes to the study upon the conclusion of the pilot.

Setting

I identified two local school districts that used co-teaching as their main model of ESL support. After contacting both districts, one district agreed to grant me permission to recruit teachers (Appendices A & B). With consent from the district to recruit, the ESL supervisor became my district contact. She provided the email addresses of teachers in all twelve schools within the district. Potential participants received a letter of introduction (Appendix A). In the span of 1 month, I increased the number of attempts at an introduction because of the lack of volunteers after my first introduction. In all, I issued four rounds of introduction emails before reaching a reasonable number of participants to start the interviews. There are some factors that may have influenced the challenge in recruiting participants such as time of year (and the effects of the holidays) and teacher commitments to additional tasks like after school programs and professional learning communities.

Six teachers in total expressed interest in participating: three ESL teachers and three general education teachers. All six individuals participated in the individual interviews but only five of the six participated in the two focus groups. After multiple attempts to find a common date to meet for the general education focus group, one teacher indicated that her schedule was too busy to arrange a time to meet with myself

and the other two teachers. She stated it was nearly impossible to find a time she could join. Because this was due to logistics of meeting and time and not because she no longer wished to participate, I still included the data I collected from her individual interview into the study.

The process to schedule interviews and the focus group came with its challenges. I rescheduled one individual interview, as well as conducted two via Skype because of the winter weather. Because the focus groups included the maneuvering of three to four individuals, I used Doodle Calendar as a starting point to find dates in common. There were multiple reschedules of the focus groups as well due to winter weather and teacher obligations.

Demographics

Individuals could participate in the study if they (a) had an elementary or secondary certification in a content area or were ESL certified, and (b) had at least 1 year, past or present, of experience co-teaching for the purpose of supporting ELLs. The participants came from the same urban school district located in Pennsylvania and the grades taught spanned from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Two of the six teachers came from the same school. In total, the teachers represented five out 12 schools in the district.

Participant Descriptions

All the participants involved met the two requirements described previously. There were six, female participants.

Teacher A. Teacher A was in her 31st year of teaching when we met. She taught ESL for kindergarten through fourth grade. Out of those 31 years of teaching, she had spent her last three as an ESL teacher. Prior to receiving her certification in ESL, she taught math and science. She had the unique perspective of having been on both sides of the co-teaching experience.

Teacher B. Teacher B taught for 19 years. She was an ESL teacher for eighth-grade English language arts. She was in her second year of co-teaching.

Teacher C. Teacher C had been teaching for 15 years total. She had multiple certifications in addition to her ESL certification including elementary education, special education, and reading specialist certification. She was an ESL teaching for fifth through eighth grade. Her experience over the years was primarily as an ESL teacher however she did teach elementary for a while and speech and language for a year.

Teacher D. Teacher D had been teaching for a total of 23 years as a general education teacher and had experience teaching in two different states. She was currently a teacher of the gifted when we met but she had previously taught math and science from fifth to eighth grade. Her experience with co-teaching had been when she taught seventh- and eighth-grade science.

Teacher E. Teacher E was the participant with the least years of experience. She was in her fourth year of teaching. She taught eighth-grade English language arts. She was in her second year of co-teaching. She had shared that both co-teaching and ESL instruction were subjects covered undergraduate teacher preparation courses.

Teacher F. Teacher F was the third general education teacher involved in the study. At the time we met, she was teaching eleventh and twelfth grade English language arts. She had experience co-teaching with an ESL counterpart in Grades 9 to 12. She had been teaching for 16 years and was involved in co-teaching and collaboration for all 16 years.

Data Collected

I collected the data in two phases. The first phase was through the individual interviews and the second phase was through the focus groups. I completed all the individual interviews before conducting the focus groups. The data collection process spanned from December 2017 through February 2018.

Interviews

I conducted four out of the six interviews in person and two via skype. I completed only one of the interviews on school property, in a classroom. The other individuals preferred not to meet at their respective schools. Although I communicated to participants and allotted up to 60 minutes for the interview, the average meeting time was 30 minutes. Although I emailed the consent form before each meeting, I reviewed the form and received a signature to ensure agreement to participate at the start of each meeting. The two individuals who I met with via skype emailed me their signed copies. With permission, I audio recorded all interviews using the *Voice Pro* app on my password protected iPhone. I also took notes on my password protected computer. Within a few days of completing each interview, I transcribed the interviews and emailed the

transcription to each participant. I requested a response back as to whether she felt

changes were necessary. All participants responded with "no issues" (Teacher A,

personal communication, December 19, 2017; Teacher B, personal communication,

January 4, 2018; Teacher C, personal communication, January 3, 2018; Teacher D,

personal communication, January 17, 2018; Teacher E, personal communication, January

27, 2018; Teacher F, personal communication, January 23, 2018).

Focus Groups

The first focus group consisted of three ESL teachers and the second included two

general education teachers. I had prepared for about 60 minutes plus or minus ten

minutes to conduct the session; the average time for the focus groups was 45 minutes. I

met with the first group in a local library and the second group in a room on school

property. I used the same method from the individual interviews to audio record the

sessions to ensure integrity of what participants said; additionally, I took notes on my

computer. Even though I had already completed one round of member checks, I started

the focus groups by sharing the patterns from that data. The heuristic inquiry approach

values the ongoing involvement of the participants during the analysis phase (Douglass &

Moustakas,1985). Sharing the individual interview commonalities upfront allowed the

participants to elaborate further on those experiences as they shared in the group. It also

provided some moments of self-reflection. At the conclusion of the focus groups, I

transcribed the discussion and summarized the findings and themes. I communicated the

summary and themes via email to all the participants from the focus groups as a final

member check. Once again, I requested that participants communicate if they felt anything needed alteration or elaboration. All participants responded with "no issues" to indicate that I did not need to make adjustments (Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E, & Teacher F, personal communication, February 28, 2018).

Variations and Unusual Circumstances

In my original plan outlined in Chapter 3, I indicated that I would send out one introduction email to recruit initial interest from individuals to participate in this study. I also planned to follow up with an email to those individuals who expressed interest. I received interest from only two participants after my first introduction email. I knew that I needed to increase the number of volunteers to participate, so I proceeded to increase the introduction attempts. I sent out three additional introduction emails allowing for some time between each round for potential interest. After the third attempt, I accrued interest from six individuals and thus began the interview stage.

I planned for all the individuals to participate in both the individual interview and focus group. All the teachers who expressed interested were aware and committed to their involvement in both session. One teacher participated in the individual interview but not in the focus group. Her availability changed because of family and after school commitments. She attempted to find common dates to join the focus group but after multiple attempts, communicated that she was unable to meet. Upon consultation with my committee, I conducted the focus group with two general education teachers instead of three. I encountered similar challenges with arranging meetings as I did with the

individual interviews. The weather presented a major issue with travel and the ability to

meet each person. In addition, many of the teachers taught after-school and so that

provided a slight challenge with finding common times to meet.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was ongoing as I completed each interview and focus

group. By spending time with the data through transcriptions as well as coding, I immersed

myself in the information I received. After the first stage in analysis, immersion, I moved

into the incubation stage, where I took a break from the research and gained some distance

(Moustakas,1990). I coded the data using the software program *Atlas-ti*. In my coding

session with the first transcript, I generated numerous codes based on repeated themes and

elements that tied back to the research questions. This moved me into the illumination

phase where I started to encounter new ideas and concepts (Moustakas, 1990). Through the

coding process of additional transcripts, I honed the number of codes by maintaining only

relevant codes. I discarded codes that became inconsequential with further and additional

reviews of the data. I reached explication, or identifying key themes, as I started to note

the themes that emerged with multiple reviews of the data (Moustakas, 1990). When I did

my second, third and fourth review of the data, I generated more quotes and elements that

contributed to those themes. I enhanced depth to the themes by recording evident

subthemes.

The use of the *Atlas-ti* program enabled me organize the codes and produced a

useful list of quotes within each coded theme. In addition, I chose to read each transcript

on paper. By reading through printed transcripts, I could annotate directly on the text and tie further pieces of data back to the emergent themes. This final element enabled me to further immerse myself and experience the data (Moustakas, 1990).

Prevalent Codes

I developed 15 codes total in my initial coding stages. There were certain codes that weighed more heavily: *communication, experience, time, relationship, perceptions from ESL,* and *perceptions from general education teachers*. It is from these six codes that I identified and created the overarching themes of the data.

Themes

The major themes that I created from my analysis were: *preparation, the value of time*, *the issues of control*, and *the dynamics of a co-teaching relationship*. The goal in a phenomenological study is to extract the "essence" of the lived experience (Patton, 2015, p.119). In this study, the common lived experience was co-teaching for ESL support. Data from the interviews and focus groups revealed that all participants addressed experiences and thoughts that related back to the four themes multiple times. Therefore, these themes are phrases that describe the patterns that I noted in my analysis. Furthermore, I broke each theme into subthemes. The breakdown into subthemes illustrates the complexity of the co-teaching model. I illustrated the subthemes in figure

2.

Preparation
- Experience
- Training

Time
- Affects the improvement of the team
- Lack of time affects team
- ESL assignment affects time

Control
- ESL teachers = Aides
- Giving it over or up

Relationships
- Model teaching
- Flexibility
- Communication
- Personality
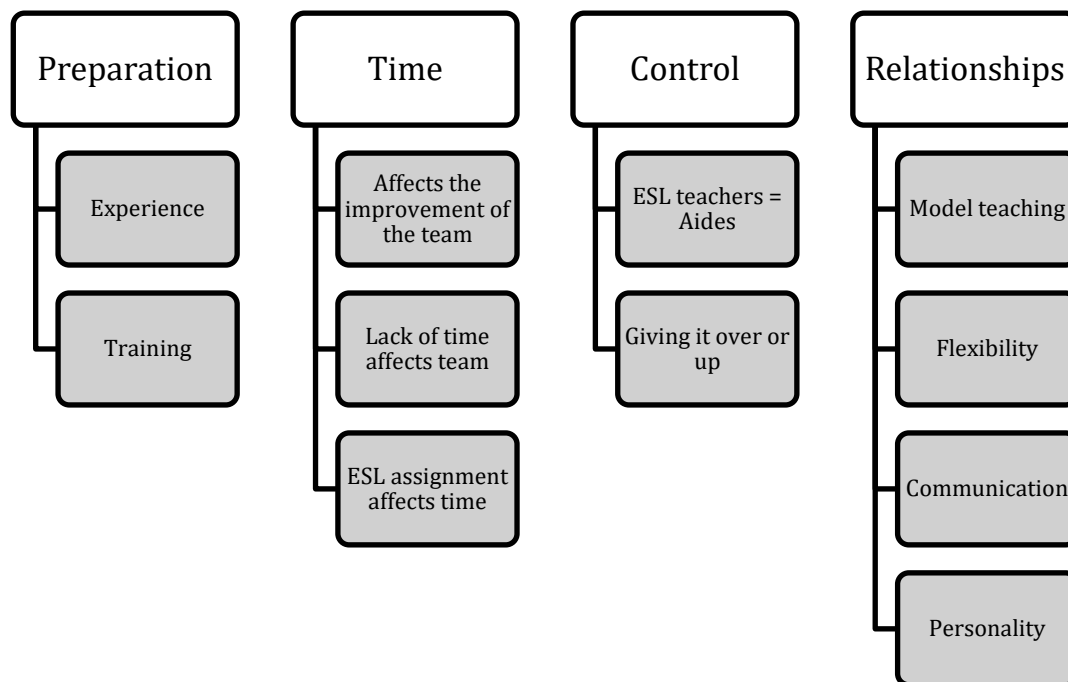
Figure 2. Themes and subthemes extracted from the data.

Time. Both the ESL teachers and the general education teachers indicated that the issue of time contributed to whether a co-teaching team had success.

Time means enhanced experience. A subtheme that was most prevalent was that time was a friend when it came to improving the team. One teacher indicated that "it takes three years to flow" when working with a co-teacher (Teacher C, personal communication, January 3, 2018). Another teacher supported this claim by saying "I think it was a lot more productive for the kids the 2nd year. If I had stayed longer [with the co-teacher], it would of course only have gotten better" (Teacher D, personal communication, 2018). Teachers valued the time they spent honing their skills with one another. The more time they could dedicate working with one another, the better the team

functioned.

Lack of time. The second subtheme that was extremely strong within the data from both groups of teachers was that teachers lack time. One of the mainstream teachers expressed her frustration, saying, "I wish we had more time to execute things with more fidelity" (Teacher E, personal communication, January 27, 2018). An ESL teacher echoed this sentiment by sharing how mainstream teachers "had the intention to collaborate with me but we couldn't find that common time" (Teacher B, February 6, 2018). Both the ESL and mainstream teachers referenced how more time to plan or just to talk would provide needed support to a successful team.

ESL teacher assignment affects availability. The third subtheme that emerged was how the ESL teachers' assignments contributed to the problem with time. The complexities of their assignments often made their availability limited. With limited availability, their mainstream co-teachers had to adapt to limited support or support without proper planning. All three ESL teachers shared how complex their teaching assignments could get. One teacher said that one year she "was in five different buildings" (Teacher A, personal communication, December 19, 2017). The mainstream teachers collectively made it clear that they were aware of the complexities of an ESL teacher's assignment. A teacher who worked with an ESL teacher in the past indicated their lack of time by explaining their inability to meet often because she thought the ESL teacher "was pulled in too many different directions" (Teacher D, personal communication, January 17, 2018).

Control. Participants revealed the theme of control more subtly than other topics and this idea emerged from both the perspectives of the ESL teachers and the mainstream teachers.

Subordinate role of the ESL teacher. A subtheme only illustrated by the data from ESL teachers came from their descriptions of oftentimes feeling more like an aide than a teacher. All three ESL teachers used variations of "classroom aide" to describe their roles with less than cooperative teachers (Teacher A, personal communication, December 19, 2017; Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2018; Teacher C, personal communication, January 3, 2018). "I really don't have any respect from them [general education teachers] because I'm an aide" (Teacher A, personal communication, December 19, 2017). This was one description that an ESL teacher shared about her role in classrooms where teachers were unwilling to allow her a greater presence within the classroom. The qualifications of an aide are less than a teacher and therefore when treated like an aide, teachers felt more like a subordinate than an equal. In fact, the ESL teachers have specialized certification in the area of English language instruction in addition to a content area or primary education certification.

Surrendering control and seeking equilibrium. The ESL teachers also more heavily described a secondary theme of surrendering control and power of the classroom. The mainstream teachers did acknowledge this theme but not as in-depth as the ESL teachers. There were multiple references to the importance of equality within the classroom when it came to teaching roles. Two ESL teachers even mentioned that the

way students viewed them demonstrated the ESL teacher's lack of power in the classroom. "The kids go 'are you a real teacher?'—how many times have you gotten that? And you know, you're not an equal" (Teacher A, personal communication, December 19, 2017). Similarly, Teacher B shared, "My ideas are validated [by the co-teacher]. I still, however, feel that in the eyes of the student, I'm not seen as a teacher. Sometimes they ask, 'are you a teacher?'" (personal communication, January 4, 2018). There is a degree of insecurity that the ESL teachers; it is intensified when it is no only the co-teacher who views them with less control but also the students. Teacher E, a mainstream teacher, corroborated this view by indicating that she naturally takes on the more authoritative role as the primary lead teacher. This inevitably makes her ESL co-teacher the one with less control. She added that because of this, she observes how students will try to take advantage of the ESL teacher (Teacher E, personal communication, January 27, 2018).

Although the ESL teachers had more to say about the issue of releasing control, two of three mainstream teachers did reference the issue of control among co-teachers. Teacher E explained her desire to improve on sharing that control by stating her intentions for next year: "I know from the start, I want to start off letting go a little more" (personal communication, January 27, 2018).

Co-teaching relationship. Relationships are complex and the co-teaching relationship is no different.

Modeling teaching strategies. A subtheme under relationships was the role of

modeling one's teaching skills and strategies. The ESL teachers viewed it as their role to model the ESL strategies. Teacher C shared, "I try to model in front of them [general education teacher]. I used to hesitate but I don't anymore" (personal communication, February 6, 2018). The role or support, therefore, takes on many functions. Not only do the ESL teaches have the chance to support their ESL students, but they also provide support to their mainstream co-teachers. By demonstrating ways to better teacher language learners, the ESL teachers provide tools for the mainstream teachers to use. The mainstream teachers relayed stories that illustrated how they watched the ESL teacher to notice strategies they could implement. The two teachers in the focus group shared that they had learned about strategies and culture from their ESL teachers:

> We are fortunate that we have strong ESL teachers who research cultural things and if there are significant events, holidays, things like that for the culture where we have students affected, the person in charge of ESL will email the staff to say this holiday is coming up. (Teacher F, personal communication, February 15, 2018)

The value of flexibility. The second subtheme that emerged within relationships was the value of flexibility; in addition, flexibility contributes to the health of the relationship. ESL Teacher C described a positive relationship by sharing that one "key to effective relationships is flexibility…" (personal communication, January 3, 2018). Mainstream Teacher F further reiterated that flexibility plays a part by recognizing that "when you have a good co-teacher, you can take turns as far as leading and supporting"

(personal communication, January 23, 2018). The teachers recognized that there are norms established in the team but also, depending on the day, the lesson, and the relationship, those norms can change. The key to maintain positivity and a successful relationship is to move with those changes (Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2017; Teacher D, personal communication, January 17, 2018; Teacher E, personal communication, January 27, 2018). Both teacher groups recognized that co-teaching only works when they can move from one task to another with openness and flexibility.

  Communication. A third subtheme central to a working relationship was communication. All teachers indicated at some point within their individual interviews and the focus groups that communication is oftentimes brief but always necessary. Teacher D described her co-teaching communication as "touch and go" (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Teacher A similarly noted that her communication with a co-teacher may only be "a five-minute conversation" (personal communication, December 19, 2017). Both reiterated that without that communication, be it brief, they would have had major issues in the teaching model.

  The impact of teacher personalities. A final subtheme that surfaced among conversations on the dynamics of a relationship was the impact of personality. Teacher D described a co-teaching team as "a very productive relationship depending on personalities" (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Another teacher noted that "if you teach with someone like you and who can put up with each other's teaching style and personality—it's the best thing ever. If you do not, it's the worst thing ever" (Teacher

A, personal communication**,** December 19, 2017). The reality of working with another individual is that the individuals need to get along. Though the attitude of an individual entering the relationship can be positive, ultimately there are elements that influence the relationship that are out of their control. The teachers recognize that personality type is out of their control and yet can have a lasting effect on the team.

Teacher preparation. Preparation for co-teaching among teachers may vary as well as their years of experiences. All the teachers shared about the differences they had with their assigned co-teacher. Many of the teachers compared years of experience or co-teaching preparation and how that had an impression on the co-teaching relationship. The subthemes that emerged under teacher preparation, however, had the greatest emphasis on what teachers lacked.

Teaching experience. The mainstream teachers were more vocal on the subtheme of co-teachers lacking experience. Teacher's F definition of successful co-teaching went beyond a teacher who has shared a vision and similar personality. She included teacher experience, both in the content area and time spent teaching, by saying

> …for the co-teacher to have knowledge of the content area, that has made a big difference. When I have co-teachers who have solid classroom management, they have a relationship with the students and they know some of the stuff regarding English content, it works really well. (Teacher F, personal communication, January 23, 2018).

Teacher D contributed to the idea that experience matters by describing her teacher as "experienced—not a brand-new teacher fresh out of college" (personal experience, January 17, 2018). As an experienced teacher herself, Teacher D indicated that the fact that they both had experience contributed to the success in their co-taught classroom. Both Teachers E and D indicated that teachers with less experience, and therefore less knowledge of the content, classroom management, and teacher collaboration skills, means a greater challenge for working with a co-teacher.

Teacher training. Training on the different co-teaching models and how to adapt the model to a classroom provides understanding and guidance to teachers. The ESL teachers unanimously agreed that the lack of teacher preparation for mainstream teachers was a major issue. The mainstream teachers had mixed reports on how they felt about their preparation for co-teaching. Teacher D readily admitted to having no training for co-teaching. She explained that she did not know she was co-teaching until she had a classroom full of ELLs. "I had no control in the situation and no preparation" (Teacher D, personal communication, January 17, 2018). Teacher F said she had training when she first started teaching and the district offers training for ESL related topics on a yearly basis. Her first year of teaching was 16 years ago and she described the training for ESL topics as something you could "sign up for" which suggests it was voluntary (Teacher F, personal communication, January 23, 2018). Teacher E explained that during her student teaching she had co-taught and that she had received classes on co-teaching and

collaboration in her undergraduate training. She did indicate, however, that she had not received training with her current co-teacher.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

A primary goal of my study was to conduct and produce an analysis of findings that are valid and credible. In Chapter 3, I outlined what measures I would take to ensure trustworthiness throughout the stages of the study. In this section, I elaborate on how I followed the plan from Chapter 3 and what additional measures I took to enhance the trustworthiness of this study.

Validity

I addressed validity by using both interviews and focus groups. A combination of these data collection methods allowed me to triangulate the data, which is important for both external and internal validity, as well as credibility (Patton, 2015). Heuristic inquiry values the voice and experience of the researcher while taking means to avoid bias. I made sure to incorporate self-reflection breaks on and through the data collection and analysis process to strengthen validity even further (Moustakas, 1990). I was also compared my reflections with the themes and information that emerged from the data (Moustakas, 1990). A final element of internal validity was to reach saturation, where information becomes repetitive (Patton, 2015).

Repetition started to emerge early on in the interview stages, especially when I compared data of individuals within the same teaching group. From the three ESL teacher interviews, similarities surfaced as I concluded the final ESL interview. The similarities

continued as I completed the interviews with the mainstream teachers. Upon completion of the focus groups, however, I confirmed that I reached saturation. I observed teachers expanding on their experiences when they were in the focus group. The focus group elicited a sense of commiseration and support. In both focus groups, the teachers were eager to share their experiences in more depth and to expand on the experiences of their colleagues. For this reason, the themes and ideas that started to develop in the individual interviews materialized again within the focus groups. With increased development, the ideas reached further enhancement but no new ideas surfaced as the discussion continued.

Credibility and Transferability

I furthered enhanced credibility with numerous member checks to ensure that I fairly and accurately depicted the experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2015). I emailed each participant after the individual interview with a transcription of our meeting. I requested an email back to confirm that they read it. After the focus groups, I emailed a list of themes that emerged and again, asked for an email confirmation. If they did not wish to make changes, I requested that they respond with "no issues." Through this process, participants could voice any needed changes or alterations. I made sure to document and follow the method and design process I outlined in Chapter 3 to help with transferability,

Dependability and Confirmability

In addition to collecting data through audio recordings, I helped to create an audit trail to record any additional insight. The use of the audit trail helped dependability by

further detailing my process of gathering and analyzing data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Reflection, as noted for validity, is also crucial for confirmability in the form of

reflexivity (Patton, 2015). Reflection is also important in heuristic inquiry where I

considered my experience in comparison with that of the participants without letting it

cloud my findings and interpretation (Moustakas, 1990). Through the analysis process, I

reviewed the data in stages. After each stage, I reflected on my experiences in

comparison with the results and made note of questions and findings. Moustakas (1990)

insisted on diligence in member checking and self-reflection for the sake of validity. By

following the process of analyze, reflect, make notes, I kept my reflections separate from

my findings so that bias and experience did not impair my understanding of the

information I gathered.

Results

The use of co-teaching as a model of English language instruction has slowly

grown more popular among school districts as a form of inclusion for ELLs in

mainstream classes (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). The purpose of this

heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational

dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. Through a

series of interviews and focus groups, I gathered information on how teachers described

and felt about their co-teaching experiences. The themes that emerged within the data

were: *preparation, the value of time*, *the issues of control*, and *the dynamics of a co-teaching relationship*.

The uniqueness of the heuristic inquiry approach and the emphasis on the researcher's experience makes the way in which the researcher shares results distinctive. The researcher shares the in a creative synthesis—in this case, a narrative (Moustakas, 1990). In addition, my voice is present throughout my analysis because part of the heuristic inquiry approach is that the researcher has shared a similar experience as the participants (Moustakas, 1990). I inserted my self-reflections in three phases within the reporting of results to demonstrate how I stopped to reflect more than once in the analysis process. In heuristic inquiry, it is important to revisit one's own experiences and reflect multiple times throughout analysis (Moustakas, 1990). There is value in reflecting. Moustakas (1990) stated that "emphasis on the investigator's internal frame of reference, self-searching, intuition, and indwelling lies at the heart of heuristic inquiry" ("Introduction: Resources and Inspiration," para.14).

My Initial Reflections, Part 1

I included reflections in the results to provide my voice, which is pertinent to the heuristic inquiry approach (Moustakas, 1990). This is the first of three reflections. I sat with each ESL teacher and could naturally nod my head and agree on much of what they said. My personal experience as an ESL teacher meant that I had common experiences. Very early in my career I realized that ESL teachers assume multiple roles, teach in multiple models, and experience different teacher treatment. I changed through three different ESL instructional models in my first year of teaching alone. I worked with at least six different teachers at one point. Some of these teachers I worked with were

engaging and welcoming whereas others barely recognized me when I entered the room. I have always sympathized with my ESL colleagues' struggles and reflected on why our situation was so common across grade levels, districts, and even states.

There are two sides to every story, however, and my motivation was to equally understand and represent those two sides. I may have had certain experiences during my 10 years as an ESL teacher, but I never really understood or heard the side of the mainstream teacher. My intent in this study, therefore, was to explore and reflect once I had gathered information from not just the ESL teachers, but also the general education teachers who worked with the ESL department. Figure 3 presents a visual representation on how I sought to organize the results in relation to the research questions and the themes and subthemes.

Figure structure (organization chart):

Main research question
What are the lived experiences and relational dynamics of educators in an English as a second language co-taught classroom?

ESL Teachers
What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers?

Mainstream Teachers
What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers?

Time (lack of it and teacher assignment)

Communication (how time influences it)

Teacher modeling (what they learn)

Communication

Teacher modeling

Control

Control

Flexibility and time (related to teacher assignment)

ESL and Mainstream Teachers How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their coteachers to impact their relational dynamics?

ESL and Mainstream Teachers How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of coteaching and collaboration?
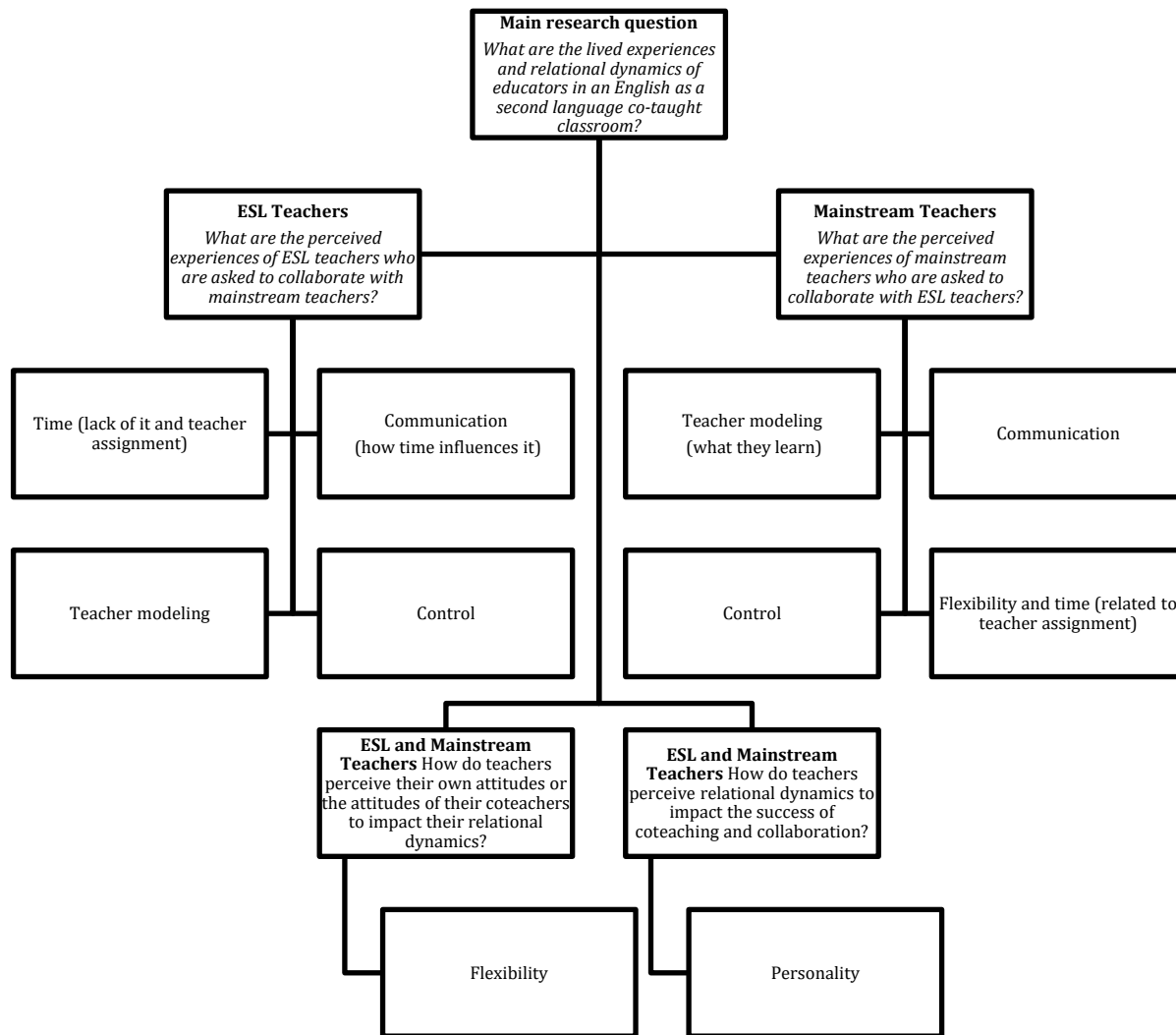
Flexibility

Personality

Figure 3. Organization of results.

Research Question: Lived Experiences

The main research question of this study was: what are the lived experiences and relational dynamics of educators in an ESL co-taught classroom? I broke this down

further by creating subquestions that addressed each teacher group individually: (a) What are the perceived experiences of mainstream teachers who are asked to collaborate with ESL teachers? and (b) What are the perceived experiences of ESL teachers who are asked to collaborate with mainstream teachers? I have organized the following results based on the two teacher groups: ESL teachers and mainstream teachers in order to answer these questions. I also address the themes and subthemes that I previously discussed.

Experiences of ESL teachers. The ESL teachers had passion and intent when I talked with each individually and as a group. As ESL teachers, it is easy to feel marginalized because we are so often entering someone else's space and we are not always welcomed (Hersi et al., 2016; Kong, 2014; Yi Lo, 2014). For this reason, I recognized that all three women conducted themselves professionally and with assertiveness, which are necessary characteristics for a teacher in this field. Their lived experiences were very similar even though they taught in different buildings and different grade levels.

The issue of time. Before we started the focus group, the participants swapped stories of conducting the state English proficiency test. They commiserated with one another and shared the struggles of testing a large number of students in a small amount of time. In addition, they lamented about the lost instructional time. Teacher A, a teacher who has 31 years of experience both teaching science and now ESL, discussed multiple time issues: her assignment to five buildings one year, her role to fill in for teachers, and the excessive amount of time it takes to test kids in multiple buildings. Ultimately, it

takes away time from the students. "In one building, teachers aren't even speaking to me because I'm out [testing] for almost a month" (personal communication, February 6, 2018). Teacher B jumped in "but it's not your fault!" "I know—but you know, it's frustration" (personal communication, February 6, 2018). Lack of time, a common theme, influences and shapes experiences in the co-teaching model.

ESL duties, time, and planning. There was no shortage of discussion about the effects of time both in the ESL teacher interviews and in the focus groups. One of the most challenging issues of time that the ESL teachers face is splitting their time between multiple classrooms or grades. Out of the three ESL teachers I met with, only one was assigned to work with one co-teacher. This had not always been the case, however, and she pointed out that in previous years she had a more undefined role as a "floater" (Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2018). She noted that it was not realistic for her to ever plan with the teachers in this floater role because her schedule had no common planning time with the teachers to whom she provided support.

In her eyes, her situation improved when she received an assignment to one English teacher this past year. Immediately, that assignment to just one teacher made a difference. "Now that I am tied to one grade, I feel like I can really collaborate" (Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2018). Teacher B was excited because the mainstream teacher had requested to the principal to work with her. This showed Teacher B that her co-teacher was interested and willing to work with her. From the start, this

impacted their relationship in a positive way and she said they immediately felt

comfortable with one another. She had great things to say about her co-teacher:

> She's wonderful. She's very open minded, extremely collaborative, and she's
>
> constantly asking me for my input and expertise. I feel really valued by the way
>
> she interacts with me. (Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2018).

She established in our discussion that her co-teaching experience was positive and

that things were working well between her and her co-teaching. But even with a team like

this, who gets along and values one another, time is a significant issue. Teacher B readily

pointed this out in more than one instance. When she discussed planning, she noted:

> I don't always have time [to meet]. Most of the time, I don't get to look at lesson
>
> plans for the following week until Sunday night. Sometimes during the week, they
>
> (eighth grade English team) will pull me in and say this is what we're thinking of
>
> doing, what do you think? It's much better than what I experienced last year but I
>
> think there is room for improvement. (Teacher B, personal communication,
>
> January 4, 2018).

In the focus group, Teacher B revisited both her feelings about her co-teacher and

how time negatively impacts the co-teaching model. She started by sharing how she has

many ideas to share with her co-teacher on activities and strategies that they can

implement. "There are things that haven't been put into place and I think it's not because

she [mainstream co-teacher] doesn't want to—" and this is where Teacher A interjected

"it's time" and Teacher B nodded her head in agreement, "it's time" (personal

communication, February 6, 2018). Teacher B went on to say, "She [the mainstream co-teacher] is thinking this takes time and it does. What I'm envisioning takes a lot of prep work" (personal communication, February 6, 2018). The ESL teachers revealed that problems stem in the teaching team that go beyond the control of teachers.

Time is a constant struggle and Teacher B's co-teaching relationship illustrates how even with two people who are willing to work together, not everything works out as they want because they do not have the time to figure everything out.

Communication and time. For the ESL teachers, communication, another subtheme, closely related to time. Because of the lack of time and often because ESL teachers have more than one assigned class, they have issues with communication. The communication methods that teachers described are not planning periods but rather conversations in the hall, before lunch, at the end of the day, or throughout the day via email. Teacher B described previous years of communication with mainstream teachers as "touch and go" and used the expression "flying by the seat of our pants" when it came to providing support during her role as a floating co-teacher (personal communication, January 4, 2018). When referring to communicating with mainstream co-teachers, Teacher C spoke positively when she said, "the good news is everyone that I need to talk to is generally in the same hallway so we talk in the morning—we have tons of access" (personal communication, January 3, 2018). Her references to proximity revealed the importance of connecting with the mainstream teachers. The fact that she referred to hallway conversations, however, implies that the teachers do not always have the proper

time to sit down and discuss their students. Teacher C went on to say that although they

do have planning time together, "we only get 45 minutes so it's pretty tight. We do a lot

of email and we say we'll talk about this on this day. We usually set one day a week for

planning" (personal communication, January 3, 2018). Upon further reflection on what

the ESL teachers shared, in addition to my own personal experience, this type of

communication is the norm. Although all the teachers noted the lack of time to connect,

they moved on from that idea quickly and focused on how they make it work. I have

found that as an ESL teacher, I constantly must adapt to the situation, whether it is

learning how to interact with different teacher personalities, communicating via email

rather than face-to-face, or figuring out how to support multiple classes with limited time.

All three teachers shared similar experiences with the focus always being how to create

the best support for their students. They move past the challenge and figure out the

opportunity.

   Dynamics of the relationship. The ESL teachers discussed many elements of the

co-teaching relationship. There were definite common ideas that surfaced as the teachers

discussed their relationships and experiences in the co-teaching model. One significant

subtheme that emerged was how teachers learn from one another.

   The role of teacher modeling. Despite the frustrations such as the lack of time to

enhance their teaching, the ESL teachers expressed empathy for their general education

counterparts. They understand the pressures of state testing and covering a certain

amount of content in a short period. By recognizing this, they enter in the relationship

with the goal to help and support. Apart from time, another subtheme that emerged was how teachers model to one another. The act of modeling, or demonstrating, the teaching strategies and methods goes both ways. They admitted that so many teachers are trying and willing, they just do not always know what to do. "People are doing things. But they might not know what to do," Teacher C shared. "One teacher tries to speak in Spanish all day long but the students do not know the content words in Spanish so what he's doing is confusing them, so I give him ideas" (personal communication, February 6, 2018).

Further in this discussion, the teachers expressed excitement when they saw their co-teaching counterparts implementing ESL strategies on their own. These were strategies that at one point, the ESL teachers had used in the classroom. Teacher C said:

What I've found is that it has been beneficial [to model]—especially with one teacher I work with, it's great. She saw something I did— I put a word bank up and when kids were talking, I wrote down the words and it helped all the kids. I see the teacher now uses this strategy all the time and whether she realizes that's why? It's powerful. (personal communication, February 6, 2018).

Teacher B shared a similar moment when I asked her if she felt like she was enhancing the teaching in the classroom:

Yes. I see her [general education co-teacher] using a lot of different things and she'll say, 'I don't think pictures will work with this, how about other things?' That was so exciting when she was attempting to implement it by herself, she was receptive. What was really cool too was when I heard her say that these paragraph

frames I made are going to be helpful for the whole class. That's when I knew she

was getting it. (personal communication, February 6, 2018).

The results of teacher modeling. All three teachers shared positive experiences. At

times, their conversations went on tangents on the problems with the system but they

always circled back to the benefits of co-teaching. One of the benefits is the joy that

comes from seeing how effective the model can be. Teacher A said it best when I asked

her how she felt after a day of teaching with the two teachers she felt most connected to:

"When I'm done [teaching] I'm like 'damn, I got it—boom! I'm on it, we got it, high

fives'" (personal communication, December 19, 2017). This expression of joy comes not

only from a harmonious relationship but also from their observations of how well their

students are doing.

Shared control. Teacher A attributed the success to the shared *control*, another

important theme, that happened after her and one of the co-teachers established a good,

working relationship. They started implementing a more shared responsibility in a writing

unit where the two teachers more naturally swapped roles to draw on one another's

strengths. "We're seeing huge improvements in writing and writing goes hand-in-hand

with reading and these kids are able to read what they wrote. We're seeing kids popping

up…" (Teacher A, personal communication, December 19, 2017). The joys of success

can motivate the teachers to work at and promote co-teaching. Teacher A admitted that

she tends to put in more time and effort with those teachers who work well with her. Her

description of the successful partnership included those theme buzz words of

communication, flexibility, shared control, and willingness to both teach and learn, or teacher modeling. Teacher B also demonstrated how her and her co-teacher share control as she explained their day-to-day interactions:

> We'll go over some of the logistics: which students should get these accommodations? Will we parallel teach or co-teacher, that type of thing. We try to brainstorm or prepare for hiccups we might see during the day. Sometimes right after first period, we realize 'wow, that really didn't work. We're going to have to change something.' (personal communication, January 4, 2018).

Similar to Teacher A, Teacher B used theme buzz words when she described how her and her co-teacher got worked together. She discussed open dialogue, the importance of communication, and how she feels like they complement one another with the individual knowledge they bring to the team.

Teacher training. Teacher training was a subtheme under preparation that the ESL teachers brought up in the interviews and the focus groups. The most common sentiment towards training was that of frustration in relation to type and their co-teachers.

ESL training. It was clear that the ESL teachers had extensive training on the co-teaching model through the teachers' descriptions. Teacher B explained:

> This district does a really good job at providing monthly training for teachers. Each month there is a different focus. Last year we were primarily looking at lesson plans and how to look at it from an ESL perspective. This year is on how do I teach and help the

content teacher navigate the world of ESL. (personal communication, January 4,

2018)

Teacher C's explanation on training echoed Teacher B when she said "we [the ESL

teachers] were given extensive training in how to do it [co-teach]" (personal

communication, January 3, 2018). She went on to elaborate:

we were highly educated and trained on what models of co-teaching were out

there, how it could look—you could have lead and follow—we were told, I mean

all kinds of things and exposed to a lot of information. We were well trained.

(personal communication, January 3, 2018).

Teacher C and B both acknowledged the positive elements of the training for co-

teaching. They noted that they were equipped to use the model well and they had

knowledge to adapt and manipulate the model to fit the classroom. Teacher A, the third

ESL teacher, was vocal about her dislike of the training. She explained:

I've been trained, but does it help? Not at all. It comes from all those years of

teaching. I've been given manuals, training, hundreds of articles to read and

people who have never seen a classroom in their life are going to tell me how to

do it. (personal communication, December 19, 2018)

Her frustration of training addressed the idea that she did not feel her time was best used.

Teacher C and B did not bring up negatives about their co-teaching training in the

interviews. In the focus group, however, their feelings became clearer on the training and

professional development they received. Teacher B spoke up during the focus group about her feelings first:

> I don't really feel like there is an opportunity to talk because when we get together there's already an agenda. There's already an assigned topic that we're engaging in with our director so there's not really a lot of time to talk about [co-teaching]. (personal communication, February 6, 2018)

Teacher A and C added to this explaining that the initial training feels good and the teachers are geared up and ready to go. They complete the training with other ESL teachers. Then they are released to go implement the ideas and they do not feel like there is a support system. Elaborating on Teacher B's statement above, Teacher A expressed that she wished they had time to just get into groups and share about what is and is not working. She wants time to learn from her ESL colleagues and to bring that back to her co-teaching experiences. Teacher B agreed with her:

> We have a team that works and when we do have the time to collaborate, it's taken up by PLCs (professional learning communities) […] I feel like we're wasting time. We've had to do projects, presentations—I think it's great but we want our time to just be collaborating. (personal communication, February 6, 2018)

Coming full circle, the teachers brought back the issue of time into the conversation. The reference back to time, or lack of it, permeates most parts of the co-teaching experience. When it comes to the prescribed trainings or PLCs, the three

teachers agreed that there are strictly set with agendas and they do not have much say on what is discussed. Their time is limited and so they must stick to the agenda.

The frustrations voiced about trainings and meetings demonstrates one area of contention for the ESL teachers when it came to discussing preparation. If they had a say, they would advocate for time dedicated to talking with colleagues about experiences and working together to figure out how to improve and facilitate collaboration. Teacher A expressed this desire by saying: "Our biggest resource is ourselves and we don't get to [utilize] that. I want to sit there and talk." (personal communication, February 6, 2018).

ESL views on mainstream teacher preparation. The discussion on their own training indicated areas that need improvement. Another area of improvement was the lack of training for the mainstream teachers. The teachers were quick to point out the disconnect. Teacher C said: "The co-teachers did not receive much of anything. They were not given the benefit of training. We were well trained where our co-teachers, unfortunately were very rarely trained at all" (personal communication, January 3, 2018). Teacher B expressed a similar description and pointed out that she thought there needed to be a change. "The content teachers aren't involved in our training and that is one suggestion that I made" (Teacher B, personal communication, January 4, 2018).

The collective frustrations of the teachers were again more explicit in the focus group as the teachers shared stories and expanded on what their colleagues shared. The following discussion is an illustration on their common feelings about training. The

teachers were discussing problems that arise with co-teachers and steps they take to

resolve issues:

> Teacher A: I suggested training for the building.

> Teacher B: see—that's just what I've been saying

> Teacher A: but nobody listens to that…

> Teacher B: yes—I know, my principal says well when do you think it should be
> done, in the summer? I'm like 'no!' if you do it in the summer, people have a
> choice—you've got to do it during the year and make it mandatory.

> Teacher A: Those first weeks, those first half days, give me an hour just to show

culture...

> Teacher B: anything

> Teacher A: just the little things…

> Teacher C: show the Moises video with the kid that's sitting there frustrated –you
> don't have to do a lot.

It was evident their lack of voice was both frustrating because their ideas were not

recognized and because the lack of training for their colleagues negatively affected the

co-teaching team. They saw firsthand how the lack of awareness and training impacted

the instruction for ELLs as well as their co-teaching teams.

> I didn't realize how bad the lack of education in Pennsylvania is as far as teaching
> training but they [mainstream teachers] automatically assume that as an ESL
> teacher you speak another language or a bunch of other things. We're in a heavy

ESL district, you don't know this? Lack of professional development and they're

not going to listen when you say it to them 50 times. (Teacher C, personal

communication, February 6, 2018)

Teacher C was specifically indicating that teachers will not listen to the ESL teachers.

She went on to say that she wishes someone else would tell the teachers the strategies and

requirements for meeting the needs of ELLs.

My Reflections, Part 2.

The heuristic approach provides a system to self-reflect and incorporate my

personal experiences into the process of the study (Moustakas, 1990). This is the second

of three reflections that I made through the analysis and results reporting. My self-

reflection during the periods of time I was collecting data from the ESL teachers was

cathartic. It was, after all, the huge motivator behind choosing this topic or rather, the

topic choosing me (Moustakas, 1990). For years, I had heard similar stories of both

frustration and success from ESL teachers and their involvement in co-teaching. I had a

struggling yet satisfying experience with co-teaching and I wanted to give voice to those

experiences. I had never sat down with the teachers I worked with to get their feelings on

having me in their room or getting "my" kids placed in one of their classes.

Walking into the meetings with the mainstream teachers meant I admittedly had

more negative assumptions and expectations of their feelings and experience than

positive. It was, after all, my experience that the mainstream teachers were the ones who

were more likely to push against the co-teaching model. My initial reaction to what I

heard was surprise. I was surprised at how receptive and positive the three teachers were about co-teaching. In one of my reflection breaks, I asked myself why I was surprised. I believe that so much of what we ESL teachers share with one another, when it comes to discussing co-teaching, is to focus on what is not working, which usually has to do with "blaming" the mainstream counterpart.

Experiences of Mainstream Teachers

There was more range in experience with the mainstream teachers who participated. One teacher had less than five years of experience and the other two teachers had over 15 years of experience. In the similar way that I noted the professionalism and assertiveness of the ESL teachers, the mainstream teachers were the same. They were detailed in their experiences and confident in their descriptions of the co-teaching model.

The theme of *dynamics of the relationship* was at the forefront of the discussion with the general education teachers, especially in the individual interviews. More specifically, the teacher modeling and communication subthemes emerged.

Acceptance of ESL support. The co-teaching experiences that these teachers expressed was in an overall positive way. They had good things to say about the teachers they worked with and focused on the enhancement that the ESL teachers brought to the classroom. Their general openness to an additional teacher in the classroom resonated with how they described feeling when they had to approach a classroom full of ESL teachers. Teacher D described her situation and therefore her readiness for help, "I had a

packed class with only about three students who were native English speakers…"
(personal communication, January 17, 2018). Teacher E shared a similar feeling saying:
"it was really hard for me to try to understand the kids needed. I wasn't sure how to help
them [ELLs] understand English content" (personal communication, January 27, 2018).
Teacher E even went on to discuss that she had training in both co-teaching and some
exposure to English language support in her teaching college. When compared to the
other two teachers, she expressed having the most exposure and training as a general
education teacher and yet she was still not clear on the best strategies for language
learners.

In the focus group, Teachers D and F agreed that often when teachers hear about
ESL students and the co-teaching model, their reaction is one of panic. Teacher F added
to that description by explaining:

> You don't know what levels they [English language learners] are starting at, how
> many will be in the class, will we have support, do we have resources necessary
> to make the accommodations?
>
> It's scary because you need to make sure you are meeting their needs and
> you need to have the ability to do so. (personal communication, February 15,
> 2018).

As the two teachers went on to discuss how they felt about getting ESL support,
they used words like "relieved" and "thankful." For them, the ESL support was a happy
addition.

Recognition of control. In my description of the themes, I noted that the ESL teachers spoke more directly on the issue of control between the co-teachers. The theme of *control* did thread in an out of focus group conversation, however, in a subtler way, especially in the interviews. The ESL teachers had expressed that some teachers did not want them in their classrooms, and they likened this issue to one of control. These three general education teachers noted their desire for the ESL teacher and therefore indirectly expressed that control of the classroom was less of an issue for them. Teacher E, however, was more explicit in her awareness of control. She shared that one of her goals was to give over more control and that she was constantly working on making a conscious effort to do so. In the focus group, Teacher F was more candid about working in a teaching team: "You have to admit you don't have all the answers—you have to reach out for support, resources, and ideas anywhere you can get it" (personal communication, February 15, 2018). Part of handing over control comes with a teacher's ability to understand that a co-teacher may have a better way of approaching a teaching point or a more effective strategy for the content.

Flexibility and time. Another consistent point that emerged from the discussions with these teachers was that of flexibility and time. Teacher F explained that this year there was a shortage of ESL teachers and therefore there was an inconsistency in the co-teaching support that she received. Even when she did have consistent help, however, she noted that she would sometimes have to reach out to the ESL teacher to make sure that she had support on a given day. In essence, she was used to making the classroom work

with her ESL students even without the ESL support. Teacher D echoed a similar

experience by pointing out that she had to initiate many of the conversations with the

ESL teacher about the classroom and the ESL support. She supported her nonchalant

attitude of having to initiate support by explaining that she felt the ESL teacher had too

many responsibilities. In the same way that the ESL teachers noted the lack of time to

plan and discuss, the mainstream teachers spoke up on the issue of time. While the ESL

teachers mentioned the sometimes-hectic life as an ESL teacher with multiple classroom

or building assignments, the mainstream teachers expressed their perceptions of the

schedule struggles for their ESL counterparts. Teacher D showed sympathy by

explaining:

> We very rarely got to sit down and plan together. I would go to her before school
>
> in the morning and say to her 'here's what I'm doing, here's the quiz, here's the
>
> worksheet.' I felt bad about asking her to make modifications because she wasn't
>
> just supporting my class, she was supporting English language arts and they
>
> pulled her to do other things such as testing, lunch duty, detention, or to cover a
>
> class for a teacher that was out. (personal communication, January 17, 2018)

Teacher F talked about how she was always prepared to figure things out on her own if

her ESL teacher was not available:

> There were times where I understood the constraints of the ESL teacher where
>
> they have to be in five different classrooms at the same time […] sometimes, I'm
>
> just going to take the time and I'm just going to modify these couple pages, or I'm

going to find a more modern version of the text […] if you're available [the ESL

teacher], and you can read this and help break it down for the kids, great—if not,

I'm going to do it. I'm going to find a way to do it. (personal communication,

January 23, 2018)

Their awareness helped them to make things work even when the ESL teacher was not

available.

Likewise, when the ESL teacher was available and able to support, these teachers

were eager to have the help. The ESL teachers described some of their mainstream

partners as frustrated or confused when the ESL teachers were pulled to other tasks.

Teacher D and F do not fit this description. It may be experience or time, it may be

personality, but their ability to describe the ESL teachers' dilemma with balancing

everything is perceptive. Flexibility for them was making it work no matter what the

circumstance and having the ability to move beyond the prescribed role of mainstream

teacher and support teacher. Teacher's F conclusion for what makes co-teaching work

draws on this idea of flexibility and thus fluidity in the partnership:

I've noticed with a good teacher, one I have a really good relationship with, in

addition to flowing, it doesn't matter who is content and ESL and it doesn't

matter which kids are identified. It doesn't matter if you're an ESL student or

not—I'm going to support all the kids. The more you have the relationship with

the co-teacher, the more your classroom is a cohesive unit. It flows and it doesn't

matter your position or how the student is identified. It just goes and works. They

kids aren't afraid to ask either person for help because they have a good

relationship with both teachers. (personal communication, February 15, 2018)

Preparation. As presented in the themes section, the teacher preparation theme

broke down into experience and training. The ESL teachers focused mostly on the

training for co-teaching. The mainstream teachers had a range of responses from no

training at all to training in undergraduate courses. Teacher F, however, did not reveal her

opinions about lack of training until she participated in the focus group discussion.

Initially she shared that she had received training as a new teacher and had the option for

ESL training every year. Teacher D, who was quick to point out in the interview she had

no training for co-teaching for ESL support, brought this up again in the focus group.

"We had no training. There is no training with ESL teachers" (Personal communication,

February 15, 2018). This prompted Teacher F to share a bit more candidly about when

her training was and what is offered:

> I remember years ago having ESL training up here. That's probably been six or
>
> seven years. A lot of people haven't had that training and I know anyone in my
>
> building who has been hired in the past seven years hasn't had any of those
>
> [training sessions]. (personal communication, February 15, 2018)

The mainstream teachers did not focus much on their lack of training but rather

focused on another topic of training. In the focus group, Teachers F and D started a

discussion on the need for mainstream teachers to have cultural training. Teacher F

explained how an ESL teacher in her building notifies teachers of coming holidays and

customs that are central to the cultures of students that attend the high school. She noted that it allows teachers to understand and make connections with the kids.

> I've been here 16 years and I still don't know about all the cultures and holidays. What if you have a brand-new teacher coming in? We have 23 new teachers this year.

> I see a lot of new teachers across the district that are in a high stress building, high stress job. They aren't in tune to other cultures—they may not care. It would be great to have some sensitivity training. (personal communication, February 15, 2018)

Teacher D went on to support this idea by illustrating how some teachers are unaware of how culture impacts their students. She said that some teachers assume a student is lazy if her head is down or she does not do her work when in reality, she has just been married off to someone.

Experience. Another layer to this discussion on teacher training was teacher experience. Both teachers mainly discussed new teachers when they talked about culture training. The reference to new teachers was something that they felt affected their teaching teams as well. To them, an experienced ESL teacher is needed for a teaching team to be strong. Teacher F explained:

> As appreciative as I am of new ESL supporting teachers, sometimes it's teaching them about the content and about the kids as much as teaching the kids themselves, so it's a lot more time and effort up front. I'm always appreciative of

the help but it's really nice when the teachers already know who the kids are and

those things about them such as how the school works. (personal communication,

February 15, 2018)

Teacher D referenced experience and knowledge as a contributing factor to her success

with her co-teacher saying:

She [the co-teacher] was a very experienced ESL teacher and I was a very

experienced science teacher. I think it's twofold [that contributes to a successful

team]—it's the experience of both ESL teacher and content teacher and the

personalities. The more experienced the teachers are, they can hopefully be more

accepting. (personal communication, February 15, 2018).

Teacher F chimed in to add to this: "The more experience you have, the more you

know how to work with other people and with other types of teacher" (personal

communication, February 15, 2018). Both teachers felt that experience for an ESL

teacher was valuable before having the ESL teacher involved in a co-teaching

instructional model. They explained that time and communication were building blocks

of a team. Teacher F added:

The biggest issues I've heard of is when there are newer teachers both content or

ESL. They are still learning how to do their thing plus a second person add to

that—they don't have the knowledge base and resources to do everything that's

needed to actually have effective co-teaching. It's a lot of planning and a lot of

time that goes into making it work. (personal communication, February 15, 2018)

The strong point of view of these two mainstream teachers was unique when compared with the rest of the group of teachers.

The ESL teachers were noncommittal when it came to describing whether experience was a factor in success or failure of a teaching team. In fact, their experiences were a mixed bag. Teacher A described one new teacher being completely resistant to her support and help. In the same conversation, however, she noted that some teachers who did not wish to co-teach were experienced teachers. Teacher C explained that one of her best teaching team scenarios was with a mainstream teacher who, like herself, had multiple areas of expertise and certifications. Together, the team was a powerhouse of information and that showed in the collaboration and success in the classroom.

Dynamics of mainstream teachers in the data collection process. A unique element to my conversations with the mainstream teacher came up when I compared the discussion between the individual interview and the focus group. I found that with this group especially, the teachers were more open and recalled more information in the focus group setting. The ESL teachers knew one another even though they worked in different buildings because they had monthly meetings. The two teachers in the general education focus group did now know one another, but they quickly bonded in their shared conversations. This element positively influenced the ability to share and Teacher F, who was more reserved in our one-on-one discussion, shared more openly about her experiences.

Final Research Questions

The final two research subquestions broke down the ideas of "lived experience" even further and I sought to understand the complexities of the relationship by including this idea of attitude and relationship dynamics. These final two questions were: (a) How do teachers perceive relational dynamics to impact the success of co-teaching and collaboration? and, (b) How do teachers perceive their own attitudes or the attitudes of their co-teachers to impact their relational dynamics?

The impact of one's attitude. When teachers discussed their general attitudes when it came to interacting with their co-teachers, the theme of flexibility surfaced in different forms.

Flexibility. The mainstream teachers talked about the necessity to be flexible in all areas of having an ESL co-teacher in the room. Teacher D noted the importance of a positive attitude in the relationship even when not all went the way she wished. "I was very flexible, it did not bother me that things did not go exactly as I had planned for it to go and so I think it made it really a working relationship" (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Teacher E shared that a level of excitement to team teacher contributed to their positive attitudes, "[at the start] we would look at each other and say, 'I'm so glad you're here to help.' We were excited to start off together" (personal communication, January 27, 2018). She went on to explain the need for flexibility, however, as time went on and responsibilities grew. She explained, "We still have a level of excitement and yet we're bogged down with other responsibilities outside of the

classroom" (Teacher E, personal communication, January 27, 2018). She expressed how her and her co-teacher had to work around busy schedules and limited planning time to be successful. The need for flexibility looks different for every team. It was evident through the conversations, however, that flexibility must be something that individuals are prepared for having when working in a co-teaching model.

From the ESL teachers' perspectives, approaching their co-teaching counterparts with a good attitude helped to avoid problems in the working relationship. Teacher C described a scenario that demonstrated her attention to a positive attitude in her approach to improve instruction. She described the scenario where a teacher she worked with valued sustained silent reading (a period time where all the kids read independently). Teacher C knew that this is not something that is effective with lower level ELLs. Her co-teacher attempted to hand out books in the students' native languages, but the students could not even read them. Teacher C went on to say:

> So I suggest, maybe that this is a good time for me to take a small group and do some shared reading and that's kind of what we did and it worked so much better. Rather than going and saying to the teacher 'you're wrong about this. This is really bad.' I didn't try that, I just said 'let's try this.' It turned out a lot of the kids saw what I was doing with the other kids and wanted to do it too. Now we're doing more interactive read alouds. It just flowed. (personal communication, January 3, 2018).

Teachers from both groups demonstrated their awareness that attitude and how they approach each other in the working relationship is important to consider. The teachers recognized the importance of professionalism and about resolving conflict by starting a conversation with the teacher and not rushing to talk with a supervisor.

Perceptions of relationship dynamics and the impact on co-teaching. Personality is everything and became a final subtheme that I highlighted within the *dynamics of a relationship* theme.

Reflection, Part 3. During a reflection break, I thought about my experience with the two co-teachers I worked with for two years. Personality not only influenced our initial success but it also trickled into affecting our day-to-day routine within the co-teaching model. Every teacher who participated, at some point, brought up the topic of personality and the impact on a co-teaching relationship. The unanimous descriptions came down to this: the success of the team relies heavily on the personalities of the teachers. Their references of personality developed in two ways: (a) from their definitions of co-teaching and (b) more subtly, in the ways they described their own, working co-teaching relationships.

None of the participants described their co-teachers as a friend despite their descriptions of successful relationships. They did use descriptions, however, that created a vision for an upbeat and positive team. Words like "trust", "confidence", and even "laughter" made it into their descriptions of their interactions with co-teachers. They smiled as they shared and complimented the actions and knowledge of their co-teachers.

Their words and actions pointed to the fact that they got along well with the teachers they referenced.

   General impact of personality differences. As I noted about personality not only influencing the initial relationship, the teachers also discussed how the good or bad personality impacted the day-to-day routine. Teacher C described how she has a routine at the start of class with one co-teacher where they banter back and forth about the lesson of the day. She will say something like "Hey, Ms. X, can you remind me what we're talking about today…." And they will go back and forth with one another while the students look on. Teacher C was quick to point out that she and her co-teacher know what is going on, but they wanted to give the kids a reminder. In turn, this positive interaction helped students reorient and focus for the lesson. Similarly, Teacher D described how her ESL co-teacher would often ask her science questions or to explain science concepts to help her understand. The ESL teacher was really asking for herself, but she also became a model for the students. Teacher D said, "I believe that it helped the students and perhaps made them more at ease in asking for help when they didn't understand" (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Both teachers credited their relationships with their co-teachers as an avenue to make these conversations happen comfortably and naturally. Teacher F pointed out how the students have the ability to perceive how the relationship is between teachers. She said they always ask her if she is friends with the co-teacher and whether they hang out after school:

Whether there is personality conflict or teacher style conflict, it definitely affects

what the students are learning and how well they're learning and you can sense

that—you can tell when there is tension in the classroom and the kids pick up on

that regardless of their English ability. (personal communication, February 15,

2018)

In addition, Teacher F went on to explain the importance of establishing a

relationship with one's co-teacher in order to set the team up for success. She emphasized

that teachers need to work for it and not assume everything will fall into place at once.

She circled back to highlight the importance of communication by saying, "You want to

be effective and say 'hey, what do you think of this?' and also meet beforehand to avoid

conflicts before just coming together in the classroom" (personal communication,

February 15, 2018).

In the ESL focus group, the teachers agreed that personality can have the potential

to make or break a team. However, as the teachers shared stories and situations, they

concluded that it is hard to distinguish just one thing that can break down the relationship.

Teacher A described a good relationship she had with one of her assigned co-teachers out

of the classroom and yet when it came to co-teaching together, it did not work. "It

bothered her that I would say 'hey, tomorrow can we try this'—she'd say, 'no, I already

have my lesson plan'" (personal communication, December 19, 2018). Thus, the

conclusion they drew from this was that there were multiple factors that influenced the

teaching team.

Beyond that, the relationship dynamics ebb and flow. Personalities might match up, but additional factors of time, experience, and even content knowledge can alter how the team works together. Teacher C summed it up a consistent experience of teams:

> Everyone goes through a struggle with co-teaching. Usually there's the honeymoon period, then you have the 'we aint' jiving' period because you don't know where things are coming from. Then you kind of go to respect…if you can keep it. (personal communication, February 6, 2018)

Summary

Both ESL and mainstream teachers find that co-teaching can be a challenging yet rewarding experience for both themselves and the students. The lived experiences they shared highlighted the complexities of making the relationship and the model work. Making a team successful comes with a degree of awareness to one's own practices and the elements that make a teamwork such as flexibility, attention to communication, personality, and control. In addition, teachers felt that time was at the forefront at negatively impacting their experiences with the model. Overall, however, the attitudes and perceptions of the dynamics were positive and the teachers collectively promoted co-teaching for ESL support purposes.

With these results recorded, I am able to discuss my findings in Chapter 5 in relation to my conceptual framework and literature review. In addition, I talk about the social implications and impact that these findings can have on future studies.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English language instructional setting. Teachers deliver language support in many ways. Co-teaching, an inclusive model that started in the field of special education, has started to take a more prevalent role in the field of English language instruction (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). In recent studies, researchers have started to draw attention to the function and dynamics of co-teaching for language support (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Gladman, 2014; Im & Martin, 2015; Kong, 2014; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014). As more and more schools and districts choose co-teaching as their English language instructional model, researchers must focus on areas of study to understand the many facets that contribute to the model. Gaps are present in the literature on the use of co-teaching for second language instruction, specifically on the teacher teams and the impact of their relational dynamics on the functionality of the model. More information on the relationships and experiences of co-teachers may contribute to a better understanding of the potential value of a co-teaching model for second language instruction.

The lived experiences of both the ESL and mainstream teachers shared many commonalities, demonstrating that both sets of teachers undergo similar challenges and successes. The four themes that showed up consistently throughout the data were as follows: (a) the value of time, (b) the issues of control, (c) preparation, and (d) the

dynamics of a co-teaching relationship. The complexities of the co-teaching model connected back to each of these themes through the descriptions that teachers shared about their experiences. In addition, the results showed that the teachers valued the co-teaching model for ESL support. The mainstream teachers voiced their acceptance of the model in how they described their positive feelings toward their co-teachers. The ESL teachers shared an understanding of their roles as both a support teacher and as a teaching model to their co-teachers.

Interpretation of Findings

I chose to focus on the relationship dynamics of the teaching team for ESL support. The topic started with me, the researcher, by incorporating my own interaction with the same lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1990). I had experienced the many layers of a professional co-teaching relationship and I wondered how understanding these relationships would further inform educators and administrators about the co-teaching model for language support.

The literature on co-teaching, for both ESL and special education support, addressed how the teaching relationships can be complex (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Steyn, 2016). Many ideas surfaced within this study that align with the literature as far as what teachers experience in a co-teaching model and the dynamics of a working relationship.

Time

Multiple studies discussed the component of time and its contribution to a working team (Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Gunning et al., 2016; Peercy et al., 2015). The results of this study addressed similar concepts of time that aligned with the literature. In this study, participants indicated how they were often desperate for time to plan. The participants in this study expressed how planning was essential to structuring a co-taught classroom and they needed time to make it happen. This echoed one study where researchers indicated how co-teaching was time-consuming with time they did not have (Kong, 2014). The participants in this study recognized the value of time and the importance it holds for the co-teaching model to work well. Researchers revealed similar results, noting that with time, teachers enhanced their collaboration and had more success as a team (Gunning et al., 2016; Percy et al., 2015).

Communication. Another concept that related to time was that of communication. The teachers in this study explained how they communicate with teachers despite the lack of time. Participants explained their creativity of communicating with co-teachers in order to make sure they were prepared for lessons and addressed students' needs. A few examples the teachers provided were that communication happens via quick conversations such as before and after school, or during lunch. In addition, because of limited time, teachers often use email for communication. Jao and McDougall (2016), as well as Seo and Han (2013) also discussed how teacher collaboration often resorted to happening via online communication. Communication was further reiterated

by the literature in that studies indicated the importance of communication for a functioning, co-taught classroom (Luo, 2014; Park, 2014). The participants in this study also emphasized that even though they are restricted by time, they must communicate in order to make co-teaching work.

New finding. A unique focus of time that emerged from this study was the value that the teachers put on the amount of time working with their partners. All the teachers involved referenced the importance of time spent working with the same co-teacher. They noted how it could take a couple years for co-teachers to get to know one another's styles and grow together as a teaching team. With each year, the partnership grows stronger and the ease that teachers have with one another contributes to the functioning of the co-teaching model in a positive way. This was not something that emerged as I reviewed the literature.

Control

The literature on special education co-teaching included studies that discussed the idea of one-sided responsibility (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Berry & Gravelle, 2013). Mainstream teachers tended to think the support teacher was the only teacher in charge of the students with needs; a common co-teaching model was that only the mainstream teacher would lead lessons while the support teacher was simply support (Bryant Davis et al., 2012; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). The participants in this study also addressed inequality in roles by suggesting that it was an issue of control. The control, however, was only attributed to the mainstream teacher. The ESL teachers

described a feeling of inferiority at times, inferring that the mainstream co-teacher mainly held the power or control. In addition, two of the mainstream teachers described their roles in the classroom as more authoritarian when comparing themselves to their ESL counterparts, suggesting they had more control. This is consistent with literature, where studies found that the mainstream teachers held more power in the classroom and ESL teachers fell more naturally into the support-only role (Hersi et al., 2016; Yi Lo, 2014).

All the ESL teacher participants mentioned that for the teachers who they worked well with, there was shared control. The role of lead teacher was fluid and at times, indistinguishable. Research supports this idea of shared control as a positive element of co-teaching by pointing out the benefits of shared responsibility and equality in the classroom (Bell & Baecher, 2012; Martin- Beltrán & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015).

Contrary to literature. Though the literature demonstrates that the power tends to lie with the mainstream teachers (Hersi et al., 2016), the mainstream teachers in this study freely expressed the awareness of giving over control and the importance of equal footing when it came to teaching with an ESL colleague. They admitted to unequal footing at times when it came to power over the classroom. Even so, they recognized the importance and value of giving over the control in the classroom to reach a positive equilibrium. The mainstream teachers' voice in this study runs counter to that voice that literature gives to mainstream teachers. Researchers noted that the mainstream teachers' habits of teaching in isolation impairs their ability to recognize and eventually have equality in the classroom (Hersi et al., 2016; Kong, 2014; Yi Lo, 2014).

Relational Dynamics

The participant descriptions as to what is co-teaching and what makes a successful team was consistent with much of the literature. As discussed, participants noted the importance of communication, even when they had limited time to meet. Studies also showed that communication was valuable and essential to a working team (De Lay, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015).

Personality. The participants discussed that a successful team often resulted from complimentary personalities and teaching styles. The participants described partners with complimentary personalities, noting that this made a difference in their ability to co-teach. Their descriptions of partners they had success with included enjoying one another's company, laughing together, and expressing excitement to work together. Likewise, all the participants at one point expressed a unified goal in that they wanted the best for their students. The descriptions implied a genuineness to their relationships that tackled the good and bad. Comparably, researchers found that co-teachers tend to be examples to students of authentic relationships, modeling conversations and collaboration (Chandler-Olcott et al., 2014; Gladman, 2014).

Expertise and flexibility. Both sets of teachers expressed how they saw their co-teachers as a resource and someone from whom they could learn. In the literature, the studies specifically on ESL co-teaching revealed that the ESL teacher is sought out for his or her expertise (Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, & Sweet, 2015; Park, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Another important element within this research consistent with the literature was

flexibility. Although the literature more strongly indicated that support teachers appeared to be more flexible in the team (Stefandidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013), this study demonstrated awareness from both teacher groups.

The ESL teachers and mainstream teachers spoke about the need to be flexible and open when working within a co-teaching classroom. Their awareness demonstrated that it was not just the support teacher who understood the importance of flexibility. Participants shared that flexibility was an ongoing characteristic central to co-teaching. With flexibility, teachers could smoothly switch roles within a lesson. They could easily accept an interjection by their co-teacher without getting thrown off, and they could fill in the strategies at a moment's notice when their co-teacher was pulled elsewhere. The teachers described situations of naturally switching back and forth between lead and support teacher when working with an equal partner. This corroborates Park's (2015) findings who noted that teachers demonstrated a strong relationship when they allowed fluidity between teacher roles.

Preparation

This study briefly touched on the experiences that teachers had with preparation for co-teaching and collaboration.

Preservice preparation. Only one of the six teachers noted that she had exposure to co-teaching and collaboration in her preservice education. Teacher E taught for four years and was the teacher with the least amount of years taught in the group. Her experience, and the other teacher's lack of preservice preparation, is consistent with what

recent literature expressed. The recent literature indicates the need for preservice training in collaboration and co-teaching (Frey & Kaff, 2014; Jimenez-Silva, et al., 2016; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Rodriguez, 2013; Turner, 2016). Teacher E's awareness of the dynamics of co-teaching and her standing with her co-teacher resonated with researchers' findings that preservice exposure to collaboration and co-teaching improves an individual's ability to work with peers (Turner, 2016) and value the knowledge that each person brings to the team (Pellegrino et al., 2015).

Training. What the ESL teachers and mainstream teachers from this study voiced about their training was consistent with the literature. From this study, the ESL teachers had mixed feelings about their training. As Pancsofar and Petroff (2013) indicated, the teachers found that training had benefits to equipping and encouraging the teachers. The problem that the ESL teachers in this study noted, however, was that their co-teaching partners did not receive the training as well. This created a disconnect between what they knew about the co-teaching model and what their co-teacher partners knew. The fact that mainstream teachers expressed having little to no training was uniform with multiple studies that indicated lack of training for teachers in co-teaching or collaborative relationships (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Pratt, 2014; Stefanidis & Strogilos, 2015a; Takala & Uusialo-Malmivaara, 2012).

Collaboration and Connectivism

Through the analysis and report of the findings, I also took into consideration the conceptual framework for my study.

Collaboration. Friend and Cook's (1992) framework for collaboration provided fundamental components of a successful teaching team. I used this framework to view how the teachers described their experiences and how the teachers defined co-teaching. The co-teaching definitions that the teachers shared with me did not vary that much despite talking to six different teachers. Most of the teachers seemed well versed in a textbook-like definition that included shared responsibility, mutual respect, and equality in the classroom.

The reporting of their lived experiences, however, strayed from the definitions because it revealed the reality of the co-teaching experience. Friend and Cook (1992) asserted that two important elements of collaboration are that 1) individuals participate voluntarily and 2) the team members have equal responsibility and voice. It is clear from the participants' descriptions that these components are the makings of an ideal situation. When a district decides to implement a teaching model that requires collaboration, no one has the power to opt out and therefore participating is not a choice nor is it voluntary. Although all the teachers described successful and positive experiences with co-teaching where teachers worked well together and share responsibility, equality is still hard to achieve. The reality is that the ESL teachers have complex schedules and usually work with more than one teacher. Even if the co-teachers want equality in the form of responsibility and decision-making, that is hard to do when one of the team members answers to more than one team.

It was evident from collected data that both the ESL teachers and mainstream teachers declared that individual expertise that they brought to the partnership was important. The ESL teachers spoke of how they functioned as teaching models to the mainstream teachers. The mainstream teachers served as the content expert when oftentimes the ESL teachers lacked content knowledge. Bringing in each person's experiences and background contributes to the makings of a strong team (Friend & Cook, 1992). Every teaching team is unique. Viewing the data through the lens of Friend and Cook's framework helped to see how teaching teams function well and what is and is not realistic within the day-to-day interactions of that team.

Connectivism. The second element to the conceptual framework for this study was the theory of connectivism. The participants shared the intricacies of communicating with one another when time was limited. Technology is a tool that allowed teachers to connect when they did not have the time to sit down together and did not see each other apart from the time they were teaching. Another corresponding idea with connectivism that emerged was that teachers expressed learning from one another as a significant element of co-teaching. Connectivism puts emphasis on learning and communicating and the fact that this does not always happen in a linear way (Siemens, 2005). The ESL teachers noted how traveling through many classrooms exposed them to ideas and techniques that they later implemented or tried. It also helped them to discern what strategies or methods do not work well. They expressed that they serve as a teaching model and have seen how their co-teachers implement their ESL strategies in future

lessons. Connectivism starts with the individual's knowledge; that knowledge travels through networks and expands from that individual (Siemens, 2005).

Limitations of the Study

The participants in this study were ESL or content area, kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers. They had to have at least 1 year of experience co-teaching for ESL support. I did not account for length of years taught, gender, age, or education. Paying attention to any one of these demographic elements in the context of the study may have altered my focus and results. I should make clear that I deliberately chose not to restrict demographics since my goal was to focus only on the lived experience and relationships in the teaching model. I did not focus on or include interview questions that asked about the impact of external factors on the co-teaching experience.

By limiting the study to include only teachers, the study did not account for the voice or experiences of administrators nor of the students. Including administrators may have provided information on how the leaders choose ESL instructional, pair teachers, and allot structure and time for teams. Hearing from students may have contributed to the discussion on how the relationship of the teaching team affected instruction and success in the classroom. The findings of this study were restricted to the perceived experiences of the teachers only for the sake of better understanding how teams function in the model.

I pulled a small number of participants from one school district, which could affect transferability. Although a small number of participants is appropriate for a phenomenological, heuristic study (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2015), a small number of

participants also makes it challenging to generalize. I recruited teachers from one, urban school district in Pennsylvania. This also limits the study and impedes transferability. This district is unique in that all the schools use the co-teaching model for ESL and there is one main administrator for ESL teachers across the whole district. The results of this study did not include experiences of teachers from private, parochial, suburban, or rural schools and therefore the results cannot be generalized for these populations.

A final note on the limitations is the attention to the method and data collection. I collected and analyzed data according to my plan outlined in the first three chapters of this dissertation. It is important to note that since I conducted this study for the purpose of my dissertation, my experience was limited to my education in the doctoral program. Moustakas (1990) indicated that a researcher using the heuristic inquiry approach may live with the data for a long period of time before sharing the results. Because of the program constraints, my time with that data was limited to two months. This may have altered my analysis and reporting of the data. The issue of researcher bias can impact analysis and data as well. I followed the process that Moustakas outlined to involve my experience according to the guidelines of heuristic inquiry and avoid bias to impede my analysis and interpretations. I also provided reflections in my results section to be transparent with my perceptions and experiences.

Recommendations

In this study, I sought to uncover the teaching experiences and relational dynamics of mainstream and ESL teachers who work in co-taught classrooms. The

literature I reviewed for this study covered a wide range of topics addressing English language support with a co-teaching model. There is a continued need to increase the research so that studies corroborate and expand the findings on co-teaching for English language instruction.

Future studies can expand on the findings of this study by conducting similar studies with changes to demographics and school-type. By examining teaching relationships in other schools, comparisons across different demographics and school types would provide further depth to understanding the co-teaching model. It is important to know the difference between universally shared elements of ESL co-teaching to elements specific to the district and school type. Another recommendation to truly understanding whether the co-teaching model is successful for ESL support would be to conduct studies that address student achievement. One component of knowing if the model is useful and successful is to look at where it starts, with the teachers. Taking it one step further, however, would be to evaluate if and how students progress in their English proficiency within the model.

Implications

A discussion on how co-teaching functions allows educators and administrators to evaluate what success looks like. Co-teaching has the potential to provide many benefits to both teachers and students (Chandler et al., 2014; Chandler-Olcott, & Nieroda, 2016; Gladman, 2014; Kong, 2014; Martin-Beltran, & Peercy, 2014). It also has the potential to be an extremely challenging model to implement and use (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014;

Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Simply by giving voice to co-teaching teachers empowers them to make possible changes and improvements. The themes of *time*, *control*, *preparation,* and *relational dynamics* can inform administrators in many ways. Administrators oversee putting teams together; with an understanding of what contributes to a successful team and the challenges that arise, administrators can better pair and support co-teaching teams. In addition, when teachers have exposure to what co-teaching looks like and hear about peer experiences, they can better prepare themselves to enter in a co-teaching relationship.

Positive Social Change

Making learning accessible to all students is a common goal among educators. Schools and teachers must be equipped to work with diverse populations. Likewise, districts and administrators need to be well informed on the methods and approaches that they can help their teachers implement to reach all students. The population of ELLs continues to grow in schools across the United States, challenging the idea that traditional modes of instruction are best (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2014). Understanding the best practices and language instructional models to help students reach proficiency in English is important.

This study can contribute to the research describing the different English language instructional models. By evaluating different instructional models, researchers can provide educators and administrators information on the components of each instructional model. It may then better inform administrators and districts will on what

model is best for their ESL population. An instructional model is multi-faceted and therefore must be dissected and explored in depth. To understand the co-teaching model for ESL instruction, researches must conduct studies on co-teaching curriculum, student achievement, professional development, and culture, in addition to the relationships among teaching teams.

In a more specific way, sharing the findings with the district involved can help to bring about positive social change in the district. Teachers expressed elements of their co-teaching experiences that could improve. Sharing this information with the board and administrators of the district can help to give voice to the teachers and possibly provide a discussion for possibly improvements to support and foster positive co-teaching experiences.

Social change is already occurring in the lives of the students who are under the tutelage of these teachers. As I conducted these interviews, the teachers sought to express their experiences in order to give voice to their district and their students. Each teacher referenced, without prompting, their passion for their profession and their care for their students. Teachers need empowerment and encouragement to speak about their experiences, good or bad, to improve the educational system and ultimately provide the best education they can for their students.

Recommendations for Practice

This study provided a glimpse into one district's ESL co-teaching model. The experiences of the teachers provided guidance to how to improve and support the co-

teaching model in this district. This information can help to outline important elements of teacher training and implore administrators to implement more common planning or professional development time that caters to co-teaching teams. At a greater scale, other districts and schools can use this information to construct training as well as guidance for teacher conversations on co-teaching. With open dialogue, district leaders and administrators can hear from the teachers as to what challenges they face and support the need to execute the co-teaching model successfully. If anything, this study demonstrated the importance of giving teachers voice to understand what is going on in schools.

Conclusion

The ELL population is just one diverse population among the student population in schools in the United States. Their needs span from cultural, familial, and academic, and yet they are rooted and start with language development. One model that supports these language learners in an inclusive setting is co-teaching. The co-teaching model for English language instruction addresses the needs of language learners within a mainstream classroom, alongside native English-speaking peers. The co-teaching model is complex because it involves two teachers, one with the content and one with the language expertise. The teachers must maneuver through personality, teaching style, and experience differences to make the teamwork. To understand the experiences of the co-teachers is one step for understanding the model in general. The lived experiences of both the mainstream and ESL teachers need to be heard and understood for evaluating the co-teaching model. The teachers in this study provided a glimpse into their experiences as

co-teachers for ESL support. They voiced their successes and their challenges. This study

can serve as guide for other studies to both corroborate and expand on the findings that

discuss the ESL co-teaching model. Educators will be better informed with stronger and

greater evidence on the use co-teaching for English language instruction.

References

Alibakhshi, G., & Dahvari, N. (2015). EFL teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development: A case of Iranian high school teachers. *Profile, 17*(2), 29-42. doi:10.15446/profile.v17n2.44374

Al-Natour, M., Al-Zboon, E., & Alkhamra, H. (2015). Examining collaboration and constrains on collaboration between special and general education teachers in mainstream schools in Jordan. *International Journal of Special Education, 30*(1), 64-77. Retrieved from http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ije

Al-Saaideh, M. A., & Al-Zyoud, M. (2015). Benefits of teaching interdisciplinary subjects collaboratively in Jordanian pre-vocational education. *Educational Research and Reviews, 10*, 2702-2712. Retrieved from http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/ERR

Bell, A., & Baecher, B. (2012). Points on a continuum: ESL teachers reporting on collaboration. *TESOL Journal, 3*, 488-515. doi:10.1002/tesj.28

Berry, A., & Gravelle, M. (2013). The benefits and challenges of special education positions in rural settings: listening to the teachers. *Rural Educator, 34*(2), 1-13. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1013121

Brinkmann, J., & Twiford, T. (2012). Voices from the field: Skill sets needed for effective collaboration and co-teaching. *National Council of Professors of Educational Administration*, *1*, 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.ncpeapublications.org/

Bryant Davis, K., Dieker, L., Pearl, C., & Kirkpartick, R. (2012). Planning in the middle: Co-planning between general and special education. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 22*, 208-226. Retrieved from http://www.Tandfonline .com/loi/hepc20

Chandler-Olcott, K., Nieroda, J., & Crandall, B. (2014). Co-planning and co-teaching in a summer writing institute: A formative experiment. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education, 3*(2), 15-34. Retrieved from http://scholarworks .wmich.edu/wte/vol3/iss2/3

Chandler-Olcott, K., & Nieroda, J. (2016). The creation and evolution of a co-teaching community: How teachers learned to address adolescent English language learners' needs as writers. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*, 170-182. doi:10.1080/10665684.2016.1144830

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

De Lay, A. (2013). The role of collaboration in secondary agriculture teacher career satisfaction and career retention. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 54*, 104-120. doi:10.5032/jae.2013.04104

DelliCarpini, M. (2014). Modeling collaboration for ESL teacher candidates. *The New Educator*, *10*, 129-144. doi:10.1080/1547688X.2014.898486

Department of Education United States of America. (2016). *Non-regulatory guidance: English learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*

(ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Retrieved from

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners92016

.pdf

Douglass, B., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know.

Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 25(3), 39-55. Retrieved from http://journals

.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022167885253004

Dove, M., & Honigfeld, A. (2010). ESL coteaching and collaboration: Opportunities to

develop teacher leadership and enhance student learning. *TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 4-

22. Retrieved from http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-journal

Dove, M., & Honigsfeld, A. (2014). Analysis of the implementation of an ESL co-

teaching model in a suburban elementary school. *NYS TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 62-

67. Retrieved from http://journal.nystesol.org/

Ereş, F. (2016). Problems of the immigrant students' teachers: Are they ready to teach?.

International Education Studies, 9(7), 64-71. doi:10.5539/ies.v9n7p64

Forte, A.M., & Flores, M.A. (2014). Teacher collaboration and professional development

in the workplace: A study of Portuguese teachers. *European Journal of Teacher

Education, 37*(1), 91-105. doi:10.1080/02619768.2013.763791

Frey, L., & Kaff, M. (2014). Results of co-teaching instruction to special education

teacher candidates in Tanzania. *The Journal of International Association of

Special Education, 15*(1), 4-15. Retrieved from http://www.iase.org/

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1992). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals.* New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Friend, M., Cook, L., Hurley-Chamberlain, D., & Shamberger, C. (2010). Co-teaching: An illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation, 20*(1), 9-27. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hepc20

Gladman, A. (2014). Team teaching is not just for teachers! Student perspectives on the collaborative classroom. *TESOL Journal, 6*(1), 130-148. doi:10.1002/tesj.144

Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Kim, E.S., & Miller, R. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leaders, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. *American Journal of Education, 121¸* 501-530. Retrieved from http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/aje/current

Günay, R., & Aslan, D. (2016). Educational faculty members' perceptions on multicultural teacher. *Journal of Education and Learning, 5*, 136-148. doi:10.5539/jel.v5n2p136

Gunderson, L. (2008). *ESL (ELL) literacy instruction*: *A guidebook to theory and practice.* New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Gunning, P., White, J., & Busque, C. (2016). Raising learners' awareness through L1-L2 teacher collaboration. *Language Awareness, 25*(1-2), 72-88. doi:10.1080 /09658416.2015.1122022

Hallam, P., Smith, H., Hite, J., Hite, S., & Wilcox, B. (2015). Trust and collaboration in PLC teams: Teacher relationships, principal support, and collaborative benefits. *NASSP Bulletin, 99*, 193-216. doi:10.1177/0192636515602330

Hamilton-Jones, B., & Vail, C. (2013). Preparing special educators for collaboration in the classroom: Pre-service teachers' beliefs and perspectives. *International Journal of Special Education*, *28*(1), 56-68. Retrieved from http://scimagojr .com/journalsearch.php?q=33328&tip=sid&clean=0

Hersi, A.A., Horan, D., & Lewis, M. (2016). Redefining 'community' through collaboration and co-teaching: A case study of an ESOL specialist, a literacy specialist, and a fifth-grade teacher. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and Practice, 22*, 927-946. doi:10.1080/13540602.2016.1200543

Holmstrom, K., Wong, L., & Krumm, A. (2015). No need to talk about teaching. Examining the effects that an instruction and assessment system has on collaborating teachers' discourse. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 14*, 104-133. doi:10.1080/15700763.2014.983130

Honingh, M., & Hooge, E. (2014). The effect of school-leader support and participation in decision making on teacher collaboration in Dutch primary and secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 42*(1), 75-98. doi:10.1177/1741143213499256

Hopkins, M., Lowenhaupt, R., & Sweet, T. (2015) Organizing English learner instruction in new immigrant destinations: District infrastructure and subject-specific school

practice. *American Educational Research Journal, 52*, 408-439.

doi:10.3102/0002831215584780

Hussin, M., & Hamdan, A. (2016). Challenges of co-teaching in Malaysian inclusive

classroom: administrators', teachers', and parents' overview. *Social and*

Behavioral Sciences, 217, 477-486. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com

/science/journal/18770428?scrlybrkr=77135323#

Im, S., & Martin, S. (2015). Using co-generative dialogues to improve co-teaching for

language learner (ILL) students in an inclusion science classroom. *Asia-Pacific*

Journal of Teacher Education, 43, 355-369. doi:10.1080/1359866X

.2015.1060295

Jao, L. & McDougall, D. (2016). Moving beyond the barriers: supporting meaningful

teacher collaboration to improve secondary school mathematics. *Teacher*

Development, 20, 557-573, doi:10.1080/13664530.2016.1164747

Jhagroo, J. (2015). I know how to add them, I didn't know I had to add them. *Australian*

Journal of Teacher Education, 40, 108-119. doi:10.14221/ajte.2015v40n11.6

Jimenez-Silva, M., Merritt, J., Rillero, P., & Kelley, Michael. (2016). Working together

to prepare teachers of science and language: Examining the value of collaboration

among science and language faculty. *Electronic Journal of Science Education,*

20(3), 73-91. Retrieved from http://ejse.southwestern.edu/

Kamens, M., Susko, J., & Elliot, J. (2013). Evaluation and supervision of co-teaching: A study of administrator practices in New Jersey. *NASSP Bulletin, 97*, 166-190. doi: 10.1177/0192636513476337

Kelly, J., & Cherkowski, S. (2015). Collaboration, collegiality, and collective reflection: A case study of professional development for teachers. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 169*, 1-27. Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/j/ISSN-1207-7798/

King-Sears, M., Brawand, A., Jenkins, M., & Preston-Smith, S. (2014). Co-teaching perspectives from secondary science co-teachers and their students with disabilities. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 2*, 651-680. doi:10.1007 /s10972-014-9391-2

Knapp, M. & Vangelisti, A. (2009). *Interpersonal communication and human relationships*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Kong, S. (2014). Collaboration between content and language specialists in late immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 70*(1), 103-122. doi:10.3138/cmlr.1607

Luo, W. (2014). An inquiry into a collaborative model of teaching English by Native English-speaking teachers and local teachers. *Asia-Pacific Edu Res, 23*, 735-743. doi:10.1007/s40299-013-0147-0

Martin-Beltran, M. & Peercy, M. (2014). Collaboration to teach English language learners: Opportunities for shared teacher learning. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*, 721-737. doi:10.1080/13540602.2014.885704

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Applied social research methods series: Vol. 41. Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mcclure, G. & Cahnmann-Taylor, M. (2010). Pushing back against push in: ESOL teacher resistance and the complexities of co-teaching. *TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 101-129. Retrieved from https://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-journal

McGriff, M., & Protacio, M.S. (2015). Similar settings, different story lines: The positioning of ESL teachers in two middle schools. *Reading Horizons, 54*(1), 1-25. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/

Merriam, S. & Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A Methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mishra, R. (2014). Innovation in education. *International Journal of Innovative Social Science & Human Research, 1*(2), 43-51. Retrieved from http://seahipaj.org/index .php/journals/education-social-sciences-and-arts/ijisshr/

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: design, methodology, and applications*. Retrieved from http://methods.sagepub.com/

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

    Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412995658

Owen, S. M. (2015). Teacher professional learning communities in innovative contexts:

    'ah hah moments', 'passion', and 'making a difference' for student learning.

    Professional Development in Education, 41(1), 57-74. doi:10.1080/19415257

    .2013.869504

Pancsofar, N., & Petroff, J. (2013). Professional development experiences in co-teaching:

    Associations with teacher confidence, interests, and attitudes. *Teacher Education*

    and Special Education, 36(2). 83-96. doi:10.1177/0888406412474996

Park, J. (2014). English co-teaching and teacher collaboration: A micro-interactional

    perspective. *System, 44,* 34-44. doi:10.1016/j.system.2014.02.003

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peercy, M., Martin-Beltrán, M., Silverman, R., & Nunn, S. (2015). "Can I ask a

    question?": ESOL and mainstream teachers engaging in distributed and

    distributive learning to support English language learners' text comprehension.

    Teacher Education Quarterly, 42(4), 33-58. Retrieved from http://www

    .teqjournal.org/

Pellegrino, A., Weiss, M., & Regan, K. (2015). Learning to collaborate: General and

    special educators in teacher education. *The Teacher Educator, 50*, 187-202.

    doi:10.1080/08878730.2015.1038494

Pereira, N., & Gentry, M. (2013). A qualitative inquiry into the experiences of high-potential Hispanic English language learners in Midwestern schools. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 24*(3), 164-194. doi:10.1177/1932202X13494204

Pratt, S. (2014). Achieving symbiosis: Working through challenges found in coteaching to achieve effective co-teaching relationships. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 41*, 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2014.02.006

Prizeman, R. (2015). Perspectives on the co-teaching experience: Examining the views of teaching staff and students. *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland, 29*(1), 43-53. Retrieved from http://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/journals /reach-journal-of-special-needs-education-in-ireland(062e1869-20d3-4f6a-ae44-d859830bb731).html

Reeves, J. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language learners in mainstream classrooms. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(3), 131-142.

Rodriguez, A. (2013). Bilingual and ESL pre-service teachers learn about effective instruction for ELLs through meaningful collaboration. Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, 7, 12-34. Retrieved from http://www .publicacionesunica.com/gist/index.php/gist/index

Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 52*, 475-514. doi:10.3102/0002831215585562

Russell, F. (2014). Collaborative literacy work in a high school: Enhancing teacher
    capacity for English learner instruction in the mainstream. *International Journal
    of Inclusive Education, 18*. 1189-1207. doi:10.1080/13603116.2014.884642

Scientific Software Development GmbH, (2016). *The world of data in your hand
    Atlas.ti7*. Retrieved from http://atlasti.com/

Seo, K. & Han, Y.K. (2013). Online teacher collaboration: A case study of voluntary
    collaboration in a teacher-created online community. *KJEP, 10*, 221-242.
    Retrieved from http://eng.kedi.re.kr/

Shaffer, L. & Thomas-Brown, K. (2015). Enhancing teacher competency through co-
    teaching and embedded professional development. *Journal of Education and
    Training Studies, 3*, 117-125. doi:10.11114/jets.v3i3.685

Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. *International
    Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, 2*(1). Retrieved from
    itdl.org.

Stefanidis, A., & Strogilos, V. (2015a). Union gives strength: Mainstream and special
    education teachers' responsibilities in inclusive co-taught classrooms.
    Educational Studies, 41, 393-413. doi:10.1080/03055698.2015.1018872

Steyn, G. M. (2016). Teacher collaboration and invitational leadership in a South African
    primary school. *Education and Urban Society, 48*, 504-526. doi:10.1177
    /0013124514536441

Strogilos, V., & Stefandis, A. (2015b). Contextual antecedents of co-teaching efficacy: Their influence on students with disabilities' learning progress, social participation, and behavior improvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 47*, 218-229. Retrieved from http://www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education

Strogilos, V., & Tragoulia, E. (2013). Inclusive and collaborative practices in co-taught classrooms: Roles and responsibilities for teachers and parents. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 35*, 81-91. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2013.06.001

Szczesiul, S., & Huizenga, J. (2015). Bridging structure and agency: Exploring the role of teacher leadership in teacher collaboration. *Journal of School Leadership, 25*, 368-410. Retrieved from https://rowman.com/page/JSL

Takala, M., & Uusitalo-Malmivaara, L. (2012). A one-year study of the development of co-teaching in four Finnish schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 27*, 373-390. doi:10.1080/08856257.2012.691233

Turner, M. (2016). Emergent identify and dilemmatic spaces: pre-service teachers' engagement with EAL collaboration. *Teachers and Teaching, 22*, 570-585. doi:10.1080/13540602.2016.1158466

Tzivinikou, S. (2015). Collaboration between general and special education teachers: Developing co-teaching skills in heterogeneous classes. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 64*, 108-119. Retrieved from http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/pec/

United States Census Bureau (2015). *Census bureau reports at least 350 languages spoken in U.S. homes.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-185.html

Yi Lo, Y. (2014). Collaboration between L2 and content subject teachers in CBI: Contrasting beliefs and attitudes. *RELC Journal, 45*, 181-196. doi:10.1177/0033688214535054

Appendix A: Email of Initial Contact

My name is Christina Simmons and I am currently working on my dissertation for my PhD degree in education through Walden University. I have been in the field of education for 10 years primarily as an ESL educator.

I am looking to recruit a handful of teachers to take part in my research study and would so appreciate your consideration to be involved if you fit the criteria.

My dissertation is focused on exploring co-teaching used for ESL instruction. Therefore, I am looking for teachers who are either 1) ESL certified and have taught in a co-teaching model with a content area counterpart or 2) Content area certified and have taught in co-teaching model with an ESL teacher. Your experience with co-teaching can be current or past.

Involvement will require approximately two interviews, each taking between about 60 and 90 minutes. In addition, there will be some email work verifying that your comments have been accurately recorded.

Please contact me if you have any interest in providing evidence that will advance knowledge about this topic.

Thank you for your time!

Christina Simmons
717-342-3887
christina.simmons@waldenu.edu

Appendix B: Follow-Up Email Sent to Those Interested

In my 10 years of teaching ESL, I have experienced many different instructional models whether it being pulling my ESL kids out of the classroom or being paired with a general education teacher to co-teach. These experiences have shown me the vast opportunities and approaches to ESL instruction and have made me question "what works best?" One of the major road blocks that came up as I sought to answer this question through the review of research was that while research is out there, there are not a lot of specifics on what is best. Also, I have noticed that researchers kept revisiting the idea. Working together to service ESL students can be extremely challenging and extremely rewarding. This can vary on the model, the support, the experience, and the attitudes of the teachers. With some of the research, I resonated because it sounded like my own experiences and with other research, I have wondered how this might apply to my teaching career.

From here, I decided to focus my dissertation topic to the specific model of co-teaching of ESL students—a model I have observed is starting to take more of a central focus in the field of ESL—and to explore the attitudes and perceptions of teachers when they are put together to co-teach. I want to know how you feel and what is encouraging and/or discouraging about this process because the voices of teachers need to be heard when policymakers and administrators are making decisions!

I would love to discuss the specifics of my study further if you have continued interest in participating. I have attached a consent form which explains in more detail your potential involvement in the study for you to review. It may address some initial questions you have. Please feel free to reach out for any other questions you might have. It is my hope and desire that this research can have a positive impact on further providing the best education to our kids!

Thank you so much for your consideration!

Christina Simmons
717-342-3887
christina.simmons@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in research addressing the perceptions and attitudes held by ESL and general education teachers when working together in a co-teaching setting. Participants will be ESL teachers and general education teachers who have had experience (past or present) working in a collaborative or co-teaching setting. I have received permission to recruit participants from the school district. Thus. I have obtained your contact information through the school board approval process. Signing this form is part of the informed consent process and will allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Christina Simmons, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to understand the teaching dynamics as well as the attitudes and perceptions held by teachers (specifically ESL and general education) who work together in a co-teaching setting for ESL instruction.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes (done in person or via skype)
- Participate in a focus group with other teachers of the same certification area (either ESL or any content area) involved in the study. These sessions will also last for about 60 to 90 minutes.
- Be available, if possible and needed, for a final follow-up interview. Time may vary depending on the topics that need to be clarified or expanded upon but will be approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Upon your consent, this final follow-up can be done through email or via phone.
- Provide confirmation and clarification feedback to transcripts of the two meetings. While the review of a transcript will take approximately 30 minutes to review, you will have about a week to review it. This is to ensure that what you have shared has been accurately communicated.

Sample Questions

One-on-one Interview
- How were you first introduced to co-teaching?
- What preparation did you and your co-teacher have in order to conduct a co-teaching model together?
- How would you describe your relationship with the co-teacher?
- How do you feel about the interactions you have with this teacher?

Focus Group Interview

- Describe the general attitudes of the ESL department in your school with regard to collaboration and co-teaching with your general education peers?
- What is your perception of the views of content teachers when they find out that they have a high number of ESL students?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at school district will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress, or becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The study's potential benefits are that findings will provide a deeper understanding of the working dynamics between ESL teachers and general education teachers. Findings may also suggest ways in which these working relationships can be fostered and supported in the educational community. Finally, results of this study have the potential to inform administrators and districts about the potential strengths and weaknesses that the co-teaching model has for ESL instruction and the teachers involved.

Payment

This is a voluntary study and therefore no compensation will be granted from the researcher nor will there be any compensation from the school district if you choose to participate.

Privacy

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of

this research project. Data will be kept secure by a password protected computer and computer storage. Additionally, codes will be used to replace actual names. Your names and contact information will be stored and protected separately from the data and will be deleted after the study's conclusion. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email: christina.simmons@waldenu.edu or phone (717) 342-3887. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210 Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep at the start of the first interview.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing this form and bringing it to our first interview where the research will sign and provide a copy to you to keep.

Printed Name of Participant

_____

Date of consent

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Researcher's Signature

_____

Appendix D: One-on-One Interview Question Guide

1) Can you please identify the role (ESL or general ed), the grade, and if applicable the subject that you co-taught or are currently co-teaching in?
2) How many years have you been teaching?
3) How many years have you had experience collaborating or co-teaching with ESL or general education teacher?
4) What is your definition of co-teaching?
5) How were you first introduced to co-teaching?
6) What preparation did you and your co-teacher have in order to conduct a co-teaching model together?
7) What were your first impressions of co-teaching? What were your first impressions of your co-teacher?
8) How receptive was your co-teacher to your teaching and knowledge expertise when you first started working together? Has this changed?
9) What does a typical day look like for you when it comes to working with an ESL (or general education) teacher?
10) What is your opinion on co-teaching in a classroom with ESL students?
11) How would you describe your role in the classroom versus your co-teacher's?
12) How do or did your roles develop as you worked together in collaboration?
13) How do you feel about your assigned roles? Could you identify any strengths or weaknesses?
14) How would you describe your relationship with the co-teacher?
15) How do you feel about the interactions you have with this teacher?
16) If there is anything you would like to happen or change related to the co-teaching model, what would it be?
17) What are the expectations, if any, of the administrators when it comes to the co-teaching relationship?
18) In what ways does your relationship with your co-teacher impact your instruction?

Appendix E: Focus Group Question Guide

For ESL teachers:
1) Can you discuss the general feelings that the ESL department has when discussing ease in collaboration and co-teaching with your general education peers?
2) As a team, what have you learned from working on collaboration with other teams? (Probe—does it take the support of YOUR department to be successful in collaboration across departments?)
3) What happens when you have a problem with a teacher you've been paired with? How are issues resolved?
4) What support systems are in place for your co-teaching teams?
5) How does the success or failure of one teaching team impact other teaching teams?

For General education teachers:
1) What's the general feeling among content area teachers when they find out that they have a high amount of ESL students or are paired to work with an ESL teacher for class instruction?
2) As a grade-level or content area team, what have you learned from working on collaboration with other teams (and more specifically ESL)? (Probe—does it take the support of YOUR department to be successful in collaboration across departments?)
3) What's the process for resolution when two teachers who are working together have issues or complaints about one another?
4) How does the success or failure of one teaching team impact other teaching teams?
5) What support systems are in place for your co-teaching teams?

Appendix F: Alternative Qualitative Methodologies

Methodology	Grounded theory	Narrative study	Ethnographic study	Case study
Defining features	Developing a theory rooted in one's discoveries (Patton, 2015).	Focuses on stories that evolve from participants with a beginning, middle, and end (Patton, 2015).	Examining trends and commonalities in a culturally defined group (Patton, 2015).	Has boundaries in place such as place and time and incorporates a very small number of participants such as one case or one participant (Patton, 2015).
Reason for rejection	The concept and format of co-teaching is pre-existing and theories around working relationships exist.	Piecing together different experiences that are not necessarily chronological is important understanding the topic of working relationships.	This study will not be exploring culture or trying to understand the cultural aspects of the experiences.	This study focuses on the dynamics of a relationship and needs to explore more than one or two cases in order to find significant trends.

Source: Patton (2015)