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The Perceptions and Experiences of General Education Teachers Toward Cotaught Inclusion Classes

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Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Beth Feustel

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

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Inclusion Classes

by

Beth Feustel

MS, Walden University, 2010

BS, University of Florida, 1981

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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April 2015

Abstract

This project study addressed the low rate of general education teachers volunteering to coteach inclusion classes at a large urban high school in southeastern Georgia. This low volunteer rate caused administrators at this school to assign general education teachers, who did not opt in, to coteach inclusion classes. Teachers' efficacy was negatively impacted when they were required to teach classes that they did not volunteer to teach. The model of cooperative teaching advanced by Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend's work served as the conceptual framework for this intrinsic case study. The purpose of the study was to examine how general education teachers described coteaching inclusion classes, and how they demonstrated effectiveness of cotaught classes. Qualitative data consisted of personal interviews with and classroom observations of 10 general education teachers, as well as lesson plans received from 2 of the participants. The typological analysis revealed that general education teachers perceived a need for training regarding coteaching, increased use of coteaching models in the classroom, development of coteaching partnerships, and administrative support. Based on the results of this study, a coteaching professional development was created that focuses on coteaching methods, strategies, and models for general education teachers involved in coteaching. The recommended professional development may contribute to positive social change by improving teachers' coteaching performance and increasing teachers' efficacy to impact the academic environment of students in cotaught inclusion classes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my best friend – my daughter, Chelsea. She is my cheerleader, my therapist, my advisor, and my editor. She read and reread this paper countless times, making it better each time.

She inspires me to be a better person.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Education in the United States has evolved substantially from the days of one-room schoolhouses for all ages where all students who were allowed to go to school were instructed the same way in the same reading, writing, and arithmetic. Many of these changes, especially those affecting students with disabilities, have come about as a result of social and legal pressure (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Guckert, Thompson, & Weiss, 2013). In the United States, children identified as being disabled have historically received unequal access to public school education (Mastropieri et al., 2013). At the time the rights of students with disabilities were first codified in 1975, more than one million children with disabilities in the United States were denied public education (Yell & Drasgow, 2013). Until 40 years ago, American schools and governments could and did make rules that denied students with disabilities access to public education (West, 2000; ul Hassan, Parveen, & Riffat-un-Nisa, 2010).

Education for students with disabilities in the United States continues to present a major pedagogical problem. Educational leaders struggle to provide the supports students with disabilities need within the diverse general education classroom. General education teachers across the United States are increasingly being asked to coteach inclusion classes (Friend, 2009; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003) without receiving training regarding current coteaching strategies (Mumba & Chitityo, 2008; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). This lack of knowledge will likely negatively impact their efficacy in a cotaught inclusion classroom (Mumba & Chitityo, 2008; ul Hassan et al., 2010). This study

addresses this larger issue by examining the perceptions of the general education teachers being assigned to coteaching partnerships prior to receiving professional development focused on coteaching strategies, and those perceptions are addressed by the creation of a professional development to educate general education teachers about coteaching].

Background

In the 1970s, the civil rights movement in the United States highlighted not only the plight of minority races, but also furthered the rights of individuals with disabilities (Fleischer & Zames, 2005; Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011;). This powerful social movement resulted in the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, which mandated that all children in the United States have access to public education. This groundbreaking legislation was the first federal law requiring that states educate students with disabilities, it did not contain any provisions requiring students with disabilities to receive the same quality of education as their nondisabled peers (Fleischer & Zames, 2005).

While EAHCA gave students with disabilities in the United States access to public education, classroom instruction was not specifically addressed in federal law until the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997, 22 years later. This law required that local governments provide free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities. In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) further clarified the educational quality requirements for students with disabilities by including verbiage that encouraged the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. In addition, IDEA (2004) called for students

with disabilities to receive instruction using the general education curricula and assessments. This legislation was supplemented by the earlier No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB), which focused on improving learning opportunities for students including students with disabilities. To ensure students with disabilities were being afforded the appropriate education, guidelines of accountability for the schools were established in the verbiage of NCLB.

Even with these guidelines and governmental assurances of free and unrestricted education, the ideal of equal education for students with disabilities has not yet been attained (Fleischer & Zames, 2005). Students with disabilities consistently have lower academic achievement levels than their nondisabled peers (Shin, Davison, Long, Chan, & Heistad, 2013). Leaders in public schools also continue to struggle with finding and implementing the most appropriate pathways for improving the academic achievement of their students with disabilities (Florian, 2010; Garrison-Wade, Gonzales, & Alexander, 2013). One teaching method used by educators to improve instruction for all students, especially students with disabilities, is the coteaching model, wherein a general education and special education teacher together teach a class with both students with disabilities and nondisabled students (Dieker, Finnegan, Grillo, & Garland, 2013; Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010).

Coteaching is gaining in popularity in the United States (Conderman, 2011), but little research has been conducted to verify the effectiveness of this teaching method (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010). Although many educational leaders

believe that coteaching has improved education for students with disabilities, in most schools where coteaching is implemented, studies have not indicated the effectiveness of this delivery model (Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, & Hartman, 2009). The studies that have been done, however, indicate that coteaching has the potential to provide the best environment for educating students with disabilities (Friend, 2008; Friend, Reising, & Cook, 1993). This study focuses on coteaching and the possible challenges faced by general education teachers.

Definition of the Problem

The perceptions of general education teachers toward coteaching inclusion classes need to be better understood in order to train teachers appropriately for teaching in inclusion environments. This study specifically examined inclusion teaching at a large urban school in southeast Georgia, hereafter referred to as ABC High School, where special education students not assigned to self-contained classes were assigned to content classes in cotaught inclusion classrooms. These cotaught inclusion classes require a general education teacher and a special education teacher to be present in the classroom. According to an administrator at this high school very few general education teachers volunteered to coteach inclusion classes, meaning that administrators must assign general education teachers in these settings.

General education teachers are crucial to the success of the inclusion instructional delivery method. The lack of understanding of general education teachers' perceptions at ABC High School regarding cotaught inclusion classes was problematic because it prevented school administrators from understanding what general education teachers

needed to feel confident enough to volunteer to coteach an inclusion class.When general education teachers do not perceive cotaught inclusion classes as a useful or viable instructional delivery method, they are less likely to volunteer for such positions and will be less effective if placed in those positions then those who have positive perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes. Greater understanding about the perceptions of general education teachers working in cotaught classrooms - both those who volunteered and those who did not - of cotaught inclusion classes demonstrated how to address the misconceptions about cotaught inclusion classes that these teachers have. This knowledge provided the information needed to develop supports needed to improve general education teachers' perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes, thus improving the efficacy of cotaught inclusion classes at this school.

Several studies have found that coteaching fosters positive learning environments for all students (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012; Conderman, 2011; Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010; Dieker et al., 2013). However, a recent study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (2013) indicated that coteaching is not as effective at improving the academic achievement of students with disabilities as coteaching experts believe it can be. Many general education teachers, including some who believe in the value of cotaught classes, may not be confident teaching cotaught, inclusion classes; therefore, their teaching performance may be ineffective (McCray & McHatton, 2011; Moorehead & Grillo, 2013; ul Hassan et al., 2010). Teachers' level of self-efficacy may directly impact their perseverance and completion of tasks relating to instructional delivery (Bandura, 1994).

The target high school in this study employs cotaught inclusion as the primary method for instruction of students with disabilities. Current research indicates that students with disabilities who are taught in cotaught general education classes will increase their academic success (Conderman, 2011; Dieker et al., 2013; Garrison-Wade et al., 2013). Because general education teachers are a crucial part of the cotaught inclusion classroom model, this study focused on their perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes. The increased understanding from these perceptions and attitudes were used to improve the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes, which will increase the academic success achieved by students with disabilities in those classes.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

ABC High School has offered coteaching inclusion classes since 2003 to comply with federal mandates regarding students with disabilities. Its general education teachers, however, have not volunteered in significant numbers to coteach inclusion classes. The administrator directly responsible for assigning teacher placements noted this problem, saying that she has been hesitant to place general education teachers in cotaught positions when they have not volunteered, but she is often forced to because the number of cotaught classes far exceeds the number of volunteers (Personal Communication, September, 2013). According to Murawski and Dieker (2004), for coteaching to be successfully implemented the teachers must believe that cotaught inclusion classes are a viable instructional method. Murawski and Dieker (2004) further mentioned that unless negative perceptions of cotaught classes are dealt with before cotaught inclusion classes

are implemented teachers will be resistant to participate in cotaught classes and the

"process is doomed before it begins" (p. 53). This study investigated general education

teachers' perceptions toward coteaching inclusion classes. The purpose of this study was

to gain an understanding of the experiences of general education teachers regarding

coteaching inclusion classes that may have shaped their perceptions of this teaching

model.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Coteaching is gaining popularity in the United States as a means of complying

with federal mandates, such as IDEA and NCLB. It is heralded as an effective approach

for providing specialized service for students with disabilities in general education

classes (Conderman, 2011; Conderman & Hedin, 2012; Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).

However there is more to successfully implementing coteaching than just physically

placing a general education teacher in an inclusion setting with a special education

teacher. Research indicates that it is critical that the teachers involved in coteaching are

there voluntarily (Bouck, 2007; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). Proponents of

cotaught inclusion classes believe that teachers' attitudes toward cotaught inclusion

classes influence the effectiveness of the delivery model. In addition, they feel that

teachers are not effective in coteaching inclusion classes unless they volunteer to be part

of this instructional model (Bouck, 2007; Thurmond, 2012; ul Hassan et al., 2010). Some

researchers believe that teachers' attitudes toward coteaching inclusion classes is as

important as teachers' knowledge of the subject matter taught (Avramidis, Bayliss, &

Burden, 2000; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

Definitions

Coteaching: A system for delivering instruction in which a general education teacher is paired with a special education teacher to share the planning, instructional delivery, and assessment responsibilities (Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012). Coteaching involves two or more teachers located in the same classroom delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, some of whom have disabilities (Florian, 2010). There are six models of coteaching:

- one teach, one assist;

- one observe;

- parallel teaching;

- alternative teacher;

- team teaching; and

- station teaching (Friend, 2014; Pratt, 2014).

Differentiation: The practice of actively modifying instructional strategies and assessments based on the needs of the individual students (Chamberlin, 2011).

General education teacher: A licensed educator certified to teach specific grades or subjects, referred to as content specialists (Scheeler, Congdon, & Stansbery, 2010).

Inclusion: A classroom setting where students with disabilities are provided with supports and services while receiving instruction in a general education class alongside their nondisabled peers (Murawski, 2009). The working definition of inclusion used at the high school where this study took place is that inclusion classes are classes supported

by both a content specialist (general education teacher) and a certified special education teacher. This term is used interchangeably with inclusive.

Learning disability: A general term that encompass a wide array of disorders, including a diminished capacity for understanding new or complex information and/or impaired social functioning (Fleischer & Zames, 2005).

Least restrictive environment (LRE): An educational setting that places students with special needs in general education classes where they receive instruction alongside their nondisabled peers, but with the necessary support services to academically succeed in a general education class (Gokdere, 2012).

Self-efficacy: An individual's belief in his or her ability to execute specific actions needed to complete predetermined tasks. Self-efficacy directly influences a person's performance (Breso, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2011).

Self-contained class (special education class): A class containing only students classified as special education students, with a special education teacher being responsible for the education of the students. Students enrolled in self-contained classes spend most of their day with other students with disabilities, but may spend part of the day with nondisabled peers in situations such as lunch, recess, or elective classes (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2011).

Special education teacher: A licensed educator trained to provide supports and differentiated instruction for students with disabilities (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2011).

Significance

Student needs are seldom met when teachers do not have a positive attitude toward the setting in which they are teaching (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Gokdere, 2012). This is similarly true for the successful implementation of cotaught inclusion classes, which is directly impacted by the perceptions of the teachers involved (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Teachers must have the pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge to successfully instruct a diverse group of students. Many general education teachers, however, teach students with disabilities in cotaught inclusion classes, but have limited or no formal training in teaching students with disabilities (Coombs-Richardson, 2001). This problem can be addressed by providing all educators teaching students with disabilities with professional learning opportunities. However, the instructional needs of the teachers must be known before learning opportunities can be developed. The significance of this study was to identify those perceived needs by determining the perceptions of the general education teachers toward inclusive cotaught classes.

At the time of the study, ABC High School did not provide professional learning or training on coteaching inclusion classes for their general education teachers. This study was specifically designed to identify general educational teachers' perceptions of and experiences with cotaught classes. This information was used to inform administrators of teachers' needs and concerns, so as to assist the administration in making informed decisions regarding cotaught classes and improve the coteaching program at the high school. The findings of this study were also used to create a

professional development for teachers that will improve their pedagogical skills needed to effectively coteach inclusion classes.

Guiding/Research Question

This study was designed in part to address the low rate of general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia volunteering to coteach inclusion classes. Coteaching in American high schools is becoming more common nationwide, leading to increased numbers of general education teachers being asked to teach in this setting (Kamens et al.,2003). School leaders at ABC High School, however, were unable to explain the low rate of general education teachers at their school volunteering for coteaching inclusion classes. This caused a significant problem, with school administrators at ABC High School frequently struggling to find general education teachers for these coteaching positions. Because limited prior research investigated this issue, this study was designed to uncover the experiences and perceptions of general education teachers toward coteaching inclusion classes to address this problem.

This qualitative case study examined the experiences with and perceptions of general education teachers toward cotaught inclusion classes. In alignment with the research problem and purpose the following research questions were posed:

RQ1. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia describe coteaching inclusion classes?

RQ2. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia demonstrate the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes?

RQ3. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia document the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes?

These broad, open-ended research questions were posed to focus the study and at the same time remain open-ended to what emerged from the data (Bodgen & Biklen, 2007). Research Question 1 was designed to be answered using interview data, Research Question 2 was designed to be answered using observation data, and Research Question 3 was designed to be answered using document data. As the data was being collected and analyzed, the research questions were refined and modified, leading to additional questions being posed to fit better with how the study was framed, as suggested by Stake (1995).

Conceptual Framework

Coteaching is becoming an increasingly popular method for promoting inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms (Conderman, 2011; Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, & Hartman, 2009; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). This study investigated general education teachers' experiences and perceptions of coteaching. Coteaching grew from the roots of cooperative teaching based on Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend's seminal work (1989). Cooperative teaching began as society called for more integration of special education students into general education classes, and a more cohesive relationship between special education teachers and general education teachers was needed to affect this change (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989).

Using cooperative teaching as a foundation, Cook and Friend (1995) developed coteaching as an instructional delivery method. Coteaching increases the emphasis on the

collaboration of general education and special education teachers while supporting the education of students with disabilities in general education settings. They explained that every implementation of coteaching involves two professional educators who deliver substantive instruction to a diverse group of students (both general education and special education students) in a single classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995). In 1994, the US Department of Education predicted that coteaching would become increasingly common in classrooms (Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). The prediction is coming to fruition as more schools are implementing coteaching (Conderman, 2011).

Implementing coteaching into inclusion classes involves learning the nuances of this instructional delivery method. The key components of coteaching were incorporated into the five coteaching models: one teach, one assist; station teaching; parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2014). Each model addresses the cooperative relationship between the general education and special education teacher.

The first model discussed is one teach, one assist; in this model one teacher functions as the primary teacher, responsible for instructing the class, while the other teacher provides assistance to students as needed. The support teacher may monitor students, assist students having difficulty, address behavior issues, or help with distributing papers (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2014). The support teacher is not directly involved in direct instruction.

Unlike the one teach, one assist model, station teaching requires both teachers to provide direct instruction. In this model, the teachers divide the material into sections.

Each teacher will instruct one aspect of the lesson to their group of students and then switch and repeat the instructions for the other group (Cook & Friend, 1995). This model creates smaller classes giving the teacher an opportunity to provide a more individualized instruction. Friend (2014) cautions teachers to not use this model as a way of replicating special education pull-out classes.

Another model that requires both teachers to instruct the class is parallel teaching. In this model the teachers split the class into two heterogeneous groups where each teacher teaches the same material to their group (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2014). In parallel teaching, teachers may be in the same room- having groups situated so that they are not facing each other- or one teacher may move to another room. Teachers will interact with only one of the groups on that day.

Similar to parallel teaching is the alternative teaching model. Both of these coteaching models require separate direct instruction by the general education and the special education teacher. Alternative teaching serves as a coteaching model in which the teachers agree on specific students to be pulled from the class for a particular lesson or topic (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2014). This model is often used for remediation, preteaching, or any other type of differentiated instruction which will meet the needs of the small group. Alternative teaching does allow a high level of differentiation, however, this model should be used infrequently because there is a high risk that the same students will be pulled out repeatedly which may stigmatize the students (Friend, 2014).

The final coteaching model is team teaching. In this model both teachers instruct the entire class at the same time (Cook & Friend, 1995). An advantage of team teaching

is this model clearly indicates the parity of the coteachers to the students (Friend, 2014). An added benefit of this model is that it effectively models collaboration for students. Friend (2014) warns that team teaching should only be used by teachers with experience coteaching together because of the possibility of talking over one/another.

As coteaching evolved, Friend (2013) added an additional model to the existing five: one teach, one observe. This type of coteaching was added because of the need to make detailed observation of students; this information can then be analyzed by both teachers and used to plan appropriate instruction (Friend, 2014). Since the special education students in the class have IEPs, teachers are often required to document specific behaviors. This model provides teachers with the latitude to collect the necessary data.

All of the coteaching models address the collaborative teaching situation of the coteachers. The model may be used for the entire lesson or blended with other models throughout the class period. All of the coteaching models can be used and adapted to elementary, middle school, and secondary levels. The coteaching model used should be determined based on the students' needs, the students' maturity, lesson content, and the instructional goals (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2014; Murawski & Dieker, 2004).

Coteaching places general education teachers in an unfamiliar setting which may affect their instructional delivery (McCray & McHatton, 2011). This qualitative study ascertained the experiences and perceptions of the general education teachers thrust into this unfamiliar setting. Since the data collected were narratives regarding teachers' experiences and perceptions, this study took a constructivist approach. According to

Hatch (2002), a constructivist approach is a naturalistic method in which the researcher and the participant construct multiple realities. This type of approach focuses on views and feelings rather than facts (Creswell, 2012). The constructivist approach was the most appropriate paradigm for this study, because I gained an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants within their real-life context. Case studies are common products of a constructivist research paradigm (Hatch, 2002). This case study was conducted using the constructivist paradigm. The dearth of research regarding the experiences and perceptions of general education high school teachers toward coteaching inclusion classes indicated that the voices of this group were not represented in literature.

Review of the Literature

The research topic guides literature reviews; the purpose of any literature review is to develop knowledge on the topic based upon current research studies (Lodico et al., 2010). This comprehensive literature review was related to coteaching, inclusion classes, and related instructional models. A thorough search of databases through Walden library yielded a plethora of current articles. The past works of seminal authors and theorists were also reviewed as a foundation for the current methodologies. Keys terms used in this literature search were inclusion, coteaching, perceptions toward inclusion, and special education. The literature inquiries did, however, reveal a lack of research regarding the perceptions of general education teachers toward cotaught inclusion classes.

History of Legislation Addressing Access to Education for Students with Disabilities

In the United States, prior to the enactment of federal legislation protecting the rights of students with disabilities, more the one million disabled students were denied education in public schools. In fact, many states had statutes specifically designed to ensure the exclusion of certain students, including students who were blind, deaf, and mentally retarded (West, 2000). For example, in 1919, school systems in Wisconsin was still using laws enacted in 1889 as a tool to deny children with disabilities access to free appropriate public education. In one such case, a child was removed from school based on his physical handicap. The child was of average intelligence and records indicated that he was able to keep pace with his nondisabled peers, but he had been paralyzed since birth. This paralysis affected his speech and his control of his voice. Because of this affliction he was unable to regulate the flow of saliva that caused him to drool uncontrollably. The school claimed:

> his physical condition and ailment produces a depressing and nauseating
>
> effect upon the teachers and school children; that by reason of his
>
> physical condition he takes up an undue portion of the teacher's time
>
> and attention, distract the attention of other pupils. State Ex Rel. Beattie
>
> v. Board of Education of City of Antigo, 172 N.W. 153, 153 (Wis.
>
> 1919).

The school board removed the student from the public school he was attending, acting under the authority provided to it by the 1889 laws, Laws 1889, vol. 2, c. 197, § 101, subd. 5. When the parents of the child appealed this decision, the court, using the

statutes above as foundation for their decision, supported the school board saying they had the right to remove the child if the school board agreed that he was a disruption to the learning environment.

Similarly, under New Jersey law N.J.S.A. 18A:46-9(a), children were eligible for education only if they were "educable." In a statute that is still the law in New Jersey, children are deemed educable if they have the ability to learn a vocation and to live independently. Historically, the state summarily denied children who were not deemed "educable," by their standards, access to public education. These mandates are just two of the mandates used by states to deny their mentally and physically disabled citizens access to education and thus condemning them to life within an institution.

These state laws reflected the general treatment of individuals with disabilities, handicapped individuals were often segregated from the rest of society and placed in residential facilities (Braddock & Parish, 2001). This practice of simply removing individuals with disabilities from society and providing separate residential arrangements dates back to colonial times (Horn & Tynan, 2001). As early as 1751, mentally retarded individuals were housed in separate "hospitals" away from the eyes of society (Braddock & Parish, 2001). The federal government was only minimally involved with the administration and implementation of public education in general. What impact the government had pertaining to "educating" individuals with disabilities came in monetary form; states were awarded grants for constructing and maintaining residential facilities promoting education for students who were deaf and blind (Horn & Tynan, 2001). The

practice continued in varying degrees until society began to see the discrimination this population of citizens was suffering (Fleischer & Zames, 2005).

Society's mindset and the corresponding statutorily prescribed discrimination began to change with the civil rights movement, which highlighted not only the plight of minority races, but also the obstacles faced by students with disabilities who were simply trying to go to school (Forlin et al., 2011; West, 2000; Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed. With the passage of this legislation, the federal government began to increase their involvement in education within the states. However the involvement at this point was purely monetary, providing funds for state educational programs with no oversight of the state programs or attempts to ensure that students with disabilities were receiving appropriate education (Yell, 1998). In fact, section 2 of NDEA stated that:

> nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to authorize any
>
> department, agency, officer or employee of the United States to
>
> exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum,
>
> program of instruction, administration, or personnel of an
>
> educational institution or school system" (1958, sec. 2).

Even though NDEA did not require the federal government to become involved in the education of children with disabilities, it did spur Congress to investigate the needs of disabled children. In 1963, Congress provided encouragement and monetary support for colleges and universities to develop curriculum to train future teachers to teach children with a wide array of disabilities (Horn & Tynan, 2001). This increase in

government focus helped set the stage for future advancements that would eventually secure the rights of individuals with disabilities to a free public education.

The courts continued their influence on the rights of individuals with disabilities. In the milestone civil rights case Brown v. Board of Education, decided in 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren said

> In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be
>
> expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an
>
> education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to
>
> provide it, is a right that must be made available to all on equal
>
> terms. (Yell et al., 1998, p. 493)

Even though Brown v. Board of Education, did not specifically address the plight of the disabled, it did provide the impetus for advocate groups to push for students with disabilities to have equal access to public education. In the early 1970s, parents of disabled students began to initiate litigation in an attempt to assert their children's right to a public education under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution (West, 2000). In the 1971 case of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, parents of 13 mentally retarded children and an advocate group known as the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children filed a class action suit in federal court against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Secretary of Welfare, State Board of Education and thirteen school districts scattered throughout the state. The complainants had been excluded from public education based on four Pennsylvania state statues: 24 Purd. Stat. Sec. 13-1375, 24 Purd. Stat. Sec. 13-1304; 24 Purd. Stat. Sec. 13-1330, and 24

Purd. Stat. Sec. 13-1326. These statutes were used by Pennsylvania to deny children with

disabilities a public school education.

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania, highlighted the discriminations students with disabilities experienced

(Horn & Tynan, 2001). The federal court ruled that the school system could not deny

these individuals a public education based on their mental disability, but the court failed

to offer guidance as to how these children should be educated once they were enrolled

(Horn & Tynan, 2001). Even though a federal ruling permitted inclusion of students with

disabilities, school systems across the country still found ways to deny education to

children with disabilities. The leaders of state school boards felt that the additional

financial burden necessary to provide education for children with disabilities was

impossible for the states to absorb (Horn & Tynen, 2001).

In 1972, another landmark case was litigated in federal court. In Mills v. Board of

Education of the District of Columbia, the complainants asked for access to public

education regardless of the costs. The court found in favor of the complainants and

declared that school systems could not refuse to educate children with disabilities

regardless of the costs incurred by the school in providing these students' education.

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and

Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia, and others like them were used

by parents of children with disabilities and advocate groups to bring to light the plight of

students with disabilities. These court cases were critical in contributing to Congress's

enactment of Public Law (PL) 94-142 in 1975, referred to as the Education of the

Handicapped Act (EHA). The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) was later

amended to become the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA).

EAHCA changed the futures of disabled children by preventing the denial of

public education to individuals based on ability (West, 2000; Blewett & Kaufman, 2012).

EAHCA reformed the educational system of the United States by requiring that students

with disabilities have access to an appropriate education in the least restrictive

environment. The authorization of EAHCA allowed Congress to provide funding to the

school districts for providing education for children with disabilities, with the amount of

the funding based on a percentage of the national average per pupil expenditure (Aron &

Loprest, 2012; Horn & Tynan, 2001). State school boards could no longer hide behind

antiquated laws that afforded them the opportunity to preserve state funds by denying a

population of their citizens, access to public education.

To ensure that each student received appropriate instruction, EAHCA instituted

the individual education program (IEP). The IEP outlines the annual goals and objectives

for each student as well as their educational placement, functional academic performance,

length of the school year, and assessment criteria (Conderman, 2011; Magiera et al.,

2005; Yell et al., 1998). An IEP is developed for each special education student. IEPs are

created to meet the particularized needs of each student. A critical component of a

student's IEP is to identify the needed instructional supports and staff requirements to

provide those supports, as well as to specify testing accommodations (Cook & Friend,

1995; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000; Yell et al., 1998).

The IEP served to provide achievable educational goals for students with

disabilities. Although EAHCA required that the IEP identify students' annual goals and objectives, until 1997 there was no system in place to hold schools accountable for ensuring that students with disabilities meet their educational goals (Yell et al., 1998). In 1997, Congress implemented accountability measures that ensured that children with disabilities were learning by passing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Lingo, Barton-Arwood, & Jolviette, 2011). NCLB (2002) articulated improving teaching and learning for students with disabilities through higher accountability for schools. Many school leaders have employed cotaught inclusion classes to satisfy the requirements set forth by IDEA and NCLB (Conderman, 2011; Dieker et al., 2013; Nichols et al., 2010; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

Congress reauthorized IDEA in 2004 because it had been successful at improving the educational situation for students with disabilities. The amendments focused on aligning IDEA with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) (Bryant, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012). NCLB identified students with disabilities as a minority class, which means that they are entitled to a free, quality education in the least restrictive environment. This federal mandate focused attention on the efficacy of the teacher by measuring academic achievement of the students and the school through high-stakes tests (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008; Lingo et al., 2011; Murawski & Lochner, 2010).The requirement of measurable annual goals in the form of district benchmarks and state assessments was designed to allow education leaders, parents, and teachers to accurately evaluate a student's progress as outlined by their IEP (Yell et al., 1998).

With these acts, the federal government built in safeguards to ensure school

systems adhered to the federal regulations. Compliance by the state school districts is assured by the power of the federal purse. Federal funds will be denied if the government has determined that the state has "violated a student's procedural right and the violation results in the denial of a FAPE (free appropriate public education)." (IDEA§§ 1414(b)(2)(A)). School systems were and are federally mandated to provide free, public education in the least restrictive environment for all students, including students with disabilities.

Evolution of Educating Students with Disabilities

As society's attitude toward educating children with disabilities changed, government leaders began actively to pursue legislation that would ensure education for all children including children with disabilities (West, 2000). The legislation enacted by the federal government, such as the Education of the Handicapped Act, required state school systems to allow students with disabilities access to public education (Conderman, 2011; West, 2000; Yell et al., 1998). However, even though the Education of the Handicapped Act provided federal money to assist state school districts in educating handicapped children, the courts did not seek to influence the educational methods of the individual state. As long as the Act's requirements were met, questions of instructional methods could be determined by the individual States. As school districts were left to decide how to provide instruction to students with disabilities, many initially defaulted on the practice of separating students with disabilities from the general student population. Educational leaders placed individuals with disabilities in specialized classes, separate from the general education programs. Many schools felt that these homogenous small

classes were the most appropriate environment for students with disabilities (Kavale & Forness, 2000). However, as public education became enshrined as a right for students with disabilities, advocate groups began to push for students with disabilities to be given access to education in general education classes (Cook & Friend, 1995; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

Mainstreaming

After decades of keeping students with disabilities separated from their nondisabled peers, mainstreaming was proposed as a solution to society's call for including students with disabilities in general education classes (Cook & Friend, 1995). By the early 1980s mainstreaming, which integrated special education students into general education classes, had gained in popularity (Friend et al., 1993; Schumm & Vaughn, 1992). The court cases and the state and federal government policies discussed above, especially EAHC's requirement that special education students be placed in the "least restrictive environment", were the main forces behind the implementation of mainstreaming in public school (Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, & Kukic, 1975). Also, the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 included new verbiage calling for improving teaching and learning for all students, including students with disabilities, and would hold the schools accountable for ensuring academic success (PL 108-446 IDEA, 2004). The intent of IDEA (2004) is to ensure that students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Yell, Katsiyannis, Ryan, McDuffie, & Mattocks, 2008).

Many school systems equated least restrictive environment to the concept of

mainstreaming (Gresham, 1982). Mainstreaming, in its initial conception, was to place

special education students in general education classes with their nondisabled peers for

instructional and societal integration (Kaufman et al., 1975). Because the focus of

mainstreaming was primarily affording students with disabilities access to general

education classes, it failed to address instructional strategies necessary for supporting

students with disabilities in general education classes (Kavale & Forness, 2000).

In the early days of mainstreaming, general education teachers were willing to

make some accommodations for students with disabilities during their classes but not

willing to differentiate instructional strategies during the planning phase (Cook & Friend,

1995; Schumm & Vaughn, 1992). Even though the majority of general education teachers

involved in the early stages of mainstreaming supported the concept of including students

with disabilities in general education classes, not all of those teachers were willing to

include students with disabilities in their own classes (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Many were uncertain of their responsibilities for providing instruction for these students.

Advocates of mainstreaming felt that placing students with disabilities into

general education classes would afford them the opportunity to model the appropriate

social and academic behaviors of their nondisabled peers (Fisher & Rizzo, 1974). The

rationale for this idea was based on the Bandura's modeling theory (1977), which

suggests that most human behavior is learned through observations and then modeled.

Some opponents of mainstreaming felt this theory of modeling did not apply to children

with learning disabilities. In his 1982 article, Frank Gresham postulated that, children

with disabilities do not have the capacity to model behaviors through observations. He,

therefore, concluded that mainstreaming would not be an effective educational setting for these children. Gresham stated "handicapped children do not have the attending, memory, or reproductive skills to benefit from integrated placement into regular classroom" (p. 425). He went on to say that simply including students with disabilities into general education settings would not improve their academic success (Gresham, 1982). Even though many educational leaders vehemently disagreed with Gresham's overall conclusions, they agreed with the limited proposition that simply putting students with disabilities into general education classes without implementing corresponding supports would not increase their academic outcome (Strain & Shores, 1983). These educational leaders felt that implementing a comprehensive plan to integrate the efforts of regular and special educators would provide the supports needed to increase the academic outcomes as well as increase the social skills of students with disabilities placed in general education classes. (Lingo et al., 2011; Strain & Shores, 1983).

As mainstreaming became more popular, it became apparent that students with disabilities had to have the support of special education teachers while in a general education class. The support of a special education teacher in the classroom would ensure that the students received education that met their individual needs (Cook & Friend, 1995). In an attempt to bring about educational reform, inclusion advocates began to introduce instructional methods that would unify the educational system by providing educators with the tools necessary to teach all students (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Inclusion did not simply seek to combine general education classes with special education classes; it was a movement whose ideal goal was to create supportive learning

communities for students with and without disabilities (Kavale & Forness, 2000). This movement sought to change the structure of general education and special education.

Cotaught Inclusion Classes

In addition to requiring school systems to provide education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, NCLB mandated that special education students be instructed by a "highly qualified" teacher (Brownell et al., 2010; Florian, 2010; Nichols et al., 2010). This requirement means that all teachers who teach core academic subjects must demonstrate competence in that subject by having taken classes and passed the test in that subject or be certified in that subject (NCLB). Coteaching blends the content mastery of the general education teacher and the expertise of instructional strategies of the special education teacher to create a rich learning environment for students with disabilities (Friend, 2014). Both educators use their areas of expertise to collaboratively instruct a diverse classroom.

NCLB effectuated change for special education teachers. Prior to NCLB, many special education teachers taught a variety of subjects in resource or self-contained classes, because the certification requirements at the time required that special education teachers only needed certification in special education, not in a content area (Florian, 2010). New regulations required special education teachers to be certified in special education as well as demonstrate knowledge in the subject they were teaching (Brownell et al., 2010). In an attempt to ensure that certification requirements are met, educational leaders turned to cotaught inclusion classes (Florian, 2010). This instructional delivery

method would provide students with disabilities the support they needed from the special education teacher while receiving instruction from a content specialist (general education teacher).

What is Coteaching?

Coteaching was first discussed as an instructional delivery method 20 years ago, but was not implemented as an appropriate method of instruction until recently (Walsh, 2012). The increase in coteaching addresses federal mandates requiring schools to place students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Proponents of coteaching have articulated the academic benefits of coteaching. Cotaught inclusion classes afford students with disabilities access to the rigorous, and challenging, general education curriculum while still receiving their individualized supports (Cook & Friend, 1995; Walsh, 2012). Teachers strive to challenge students academically. By placing students with disabilities in cotaught inclusion classes, they are academically challenged by the high level of standards, but with the support of the coteaching pair, these students are able to academically succeed (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Walsh, 2012).

Educators are responsible for ensuring that all students meet the rigorous standards set forth by the state. This task is more difficult for teachers instructing diverse inclusion classes. Coteachers of inclusion classes are charged with the task of assuring academic success for all students while addressing the individual goals of students with disabilities (Friend, 2014). Teachers involved in coteaching teams collaborate to improve instruction for their students, allowing them to meet the rigorous standards set forth by

the state (Bouck, 2007; Lingo et al., 2011), while providing a type of collaborative teacher support system that most reflects the principles of education in the least restrictive environment (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Mumba & Chitityo, 2008; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). Friend (2014) described coteachers as "professional instructional partners" charged with determining the strengths and weaknesses of students and using that knowledge to collaboratively tailor instructional strategies to meet the exceptional needs of the students so they can succeed academically (p. 2).

Sharing Responsibility

A predecessor of coteaching was team teaching, a pedagogical technique that employed one or more teachers sharing the instructional responsibilities for teaching a course together (Perry & Stewart, 2005) to general education students. Team teaching involves 2 or more general education teachers, with similar areas of expertise, combining classes while sharing instruction (Friend, 2014). Teachers may use this strategy to develop a learning community or to combine different subject areas; for example, language arts and social studies (Friend, 2014).

Coteaching differs from team teaching in that the teachers have different but complementary areas of expertise (Cook & Friend, 1995). Coteaching was specifically designed to address the educational needs of students with disabilities by blending the content mastery of a general education teacher with the instructional strategies (Friend, 2014). Cotaught inclusion classes allow students with IEPs access to a special education specialist, while receiving instruction in a general education class with their nondisabled peers (Magiera, Smith, Zigmond, & Gebauer, 2005).

Roles of Coteachers and Administrators

The foundation of coteaching is parity among the coteachers (Friend, 2014). In a cotaught classroom each teacher shares in the instructional responsibilities of the entire class as well as sharing accountability for the education of all students in the class (Pratt, 2014). Therefore, it is vital for coteachers to determine their roles before entering the classroom (Friend, 2014). Successfully addressing roles in the classroom and instructional responsibilities begins with an open and honest conversation (Bouck, 2007; Moorehead & Grillo, 2013). Coteachers share their level of comfort and feelings prior to entering the classroom and maintain that communication as the partnership evolves. Professional development can help coteaching pairs negotiate their roles and responsibilities (Dieker et al., 2013). According to Bouck (2007), teachers must openly communicate not only their feelings regarding their shared instructional responsibilities of teaching, but also their thoughts on behavior management and discipline. When teachers with varying areas of expertise effectively communicate to serve the students in their diverse classes, all students benefit (Murawski, 2010; Sileo, 2011).

According to most proponents of coteaching, the benefits of coteaching are jeopardized when one teacher assumes the role of lead teacher (Dieker et al., 2013; Lingo et al., 2011; Moin, Magiera, & Zigmond, 2009). For example, in many cotaught classrooms, the general education teacher assumed the role of lead teacher while the special education teacher tended to "play the role of an aid" (Mastropieri, et al., p. 268). The incidence of unequal sharing of responsibilities is more prevalent at the secondary level than at the elementary level. Elementary teachers are more familiar with sharing

instructional responsibilities with another teacher during the day than secondary teachers (Nichols et al., 2010). Secondary teachers are used to a solitary setting where all of the instructional responsibilities fall to them. Coteaching plunges secondary general education teachers into an unfamiliar setting where they must share their control of the classroom with another teacher. In many cases this teacher, the special education teacher, has limited knowledge in the subject they are teaching (Magiera et al., 2005). Because of this limitation, many general education teachers are reluctant to share instructional responsibilities and special education teachers feel unable to lead instruction (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2013). As a result of these perceptions, special education teachers often play a subordinate role to the general education teacher (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2013).

In addition to the roles that teachers play in coteaching, it is important for administrators to play an active role, because attitudes of administrators can directly influence the implementation of coteaching (Thurmond, 2012). Research conducted in Pakistan (ul Hassan et al., 2010) revealed that general education teachers perceived an increase in levels of stress and anxiety because of a lack of support by administration. As a result of this increase in anxiety, the implementation of cotaught inclusion classes in the school was jeopardized. Administrators must be actively involved in comprehensive planning, coordinating effective and continual staff developments, and ensuring resources are available to support coteaching efforts (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996; Walsh, 2012).

In addition to providing the leadership necessary for cotaught inclusion classes to be implemented, administrators must participate in the professional learning opportunities

regarding administrative roles in effective coteaching. According to Friend (2014), administrators are the most "critical professionals when it comes to creating and sustaining coteaching programs" (p. 74). School leaders must be knowledgeable about coteaching and understand the potentials and problems of this method if they are to create an effective program. For example, school leaders, who have limited knowledge of cotaught inclusive settings and have little experience are unable to provide the guidance and support needed to successfully implement coteaching.

In some cases administrators may have negative perceptions toward cotaught inclusion classes and implement this method only because it satisfies federal mandates (Ball & Green, 2014; Florian, 2010). A descriptive study conducted by Ball and Green (2014) revealed that the school leaders participating in the study were limited in their knowledge of cotaught inclusive settings and had little experience relative to special education. This lack of understanding fostered negative perceptions toward cotaught inclusion classes and lead leaders toward limiting inclusive placements for students with disabilities; these administrators did not provide the support needed to sustain cotaught inclusion programs (Ball & Green, 2014).

Expectations of Cotaught Inclusion Classes

General education teachers and special education teachers are expected to work collaboratively to meet the needs of a diverse student population (Nichols et al., 2010; Solis et al., 2012). These needs are guided by the Individual Education Program (IEP) which outlines the goals and objectives of the individual student's educational program (Murawski, 2009; Yell et al., 1998). The IEP is the major blueprint developed through the

collaborative efforts of the teachers, parents, supporting staff, and in some cases, the

students (Walther-Thomas et al., 2000). Effective coteachers work diligently to make the

necessary modifications to the lessons and implement special accommodations according

to the student's IEP. The role of the general education teachers can be especially

challenging, since they are not required to have any special training or certification in

special education, even though they are called upon to provide appropriate instruction to

students with disabilities.

The successful implementation of coteaching may be jeopardized if the general

education teacher has not volunteered to work in a cotaught inclusion class and does not

have a positive perception toward this instructional delivery method (Bouck, 2007;

Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). Many high school general education teachers have

never collaboratively taught with another teacher in the same classroom and are

unfamiliar with coteaching as a service delivery method. This unfamiliarity coupled with

a lack of understanding regarding coteaching may create obstacles which may influence

its efficacy. Collaboration is a necessary ingredient for coteaching. Collaboration is based

on "mutual goals, parity, voluntariness, and shared responsibility" (Friend, 2014, p. 10).

Effective coteaching teams voluntarily work together toward a common goal (Friend,

2014). Proponents of cotaught inclusion classes believe that a teacher's experiences with

and perceptions of cotaught inclusion influences the effectiveness of the delivery model

(Thurmond, 2012).

In addition to ensuring that the special education students receive appropriate

instruction, the general education teacher is also charged with teaching the regular

education students in the class. It is equally important to create a challenging learning environment for these students. General education teachers can interpret the curricular requirements for the course, but need to work closely with the special education teacher to create a learning environment where both general education and special education students flourish. When coteachers collaborate effectively both regular education and special education students benefit academically (Dieker et al., 2013). Regular education students, in cotaught inclusion classes, report benefiting academically because of the smaller teacher/student ratio; not only do they feel they receive more attention but also receive individualized instruction (Lawrence-Brown, 2004).

Even though coteaching is becoming more common, many teachers report little professional education on this method (Florian, 2010; Moin et al., 2009). Some research indicates that some school systems implemented cotaught inclusion classes merely as a way to comply with federal law, with little concern as to the effectiveness of the method (Nichols et al., 2010). Teachers must acquire the knowledge they need before entering a cotaught inclusion classroom. Teacher training supported by administration, is the key to the success of cotaught inclusion (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). Professional development can provide coteachers with the knowledge to be effective in the classroom such as specific training in strategies such as collaboration, peer coaching, effective co-planning techniques, and coteaching models (Cramer et al., 2010).

In addition to providing teachers with instructional skills needed for successful coteaching, professional development needs to also focus on skills necessary for developing and maintaining a personal and professional relationship (Murawski, 2009).

Because coteaching involves two professionals making daily decisions there may be some dissension; for this reason professional development should instruct teachers on techniques for conflict resolution (Pratt, 2014). Coteachers must be able to openly and honestly discuss any issue that may affect the instructional delivery. With continuing professional development, coteaching teams are providing effective instructional strategies (Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker et al., 2013).

The goals of cotaught inclusion classes are to improve the instructional opportunities for all students, improve social skills of students with disabilities, and enhance the academic success of all students including students with disabilities (Hepner & Newmen, 2010; Nichols et al., 2010; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). To accomplish these goals cotaught inclusion programs should have: experienced, highly qualified teachers; special education teachers willing and able to learn the content (especially if teaching high school); continual professional learning opportunities; adequate time for coteachers to plan together, and teachers who are volunteering for coteaching (Bouck, 2007). Change is sustained when coteaching teams are given the time to learn about coteaching and integrate the practices in their classroom (McMaster, 2103).

Challenges Faced by Implementing Cotaught Inclusion Classes

Implementation of cotaught inclusion classes can be a daunting task for administrators. For coteaching to be effective, research indicates that the administration must schedule coteachers with the same planning period as well as incorporate additional staff development opportunities for coteaching teams (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Pratt, 2014; Thurmond, 2012). This task is a difficult challenge, but experts on cotaught

inclusion classes agree that common planning time and ongoing professional

development are necessary for the successful implementation of cotaught inclusion

classes (Friend, 2008; Murawski, 2008; Murawski & Dieker, 2004).

Scheduling common planning time is easier in elementary and middle schools,

where teachers are usually paired together throughout the school day. In high schools,

however, special education teachers may be paired with several different general

education teachers throughout the day, making it more challenging to ensure that daily

face-to-face planning is possible. If common time cannot be scheduled, teachers can plan

electronically. Electronic planning gives teachers the latitude to contribute when they

have time, and teachers can use these collaborative programs to communicate with each

other. Possible avenues for electronic planning currently used by schools are Wikispaces,

PBWorks, and Google groups (Friend, 2014).

Since not all issues should be discussed electronically, coteachers can also

schedule time to meet at lunch, before or after school, or whenever they feel they can

carve time out of their schedule. Administrators can help teachers find collaborative

planning sessions by excusing coteaching teams from extra duties or allowing them to

leave faculty meetings (Friend, 2014). In addition to releasing teachers from extra duties,

administrators can solicit help from other staff members, such as counselors or assistant

principals to cover classes to make time for extra planning (Friend, 2014; Walther-

Thomas & Bryant, 1996). It is important for administrators to view the collaboration time

between coteachers as a requirement for effective cotaught inclusion. If administrators

understand teachers' concerns regarding the time they need to plan cotaught inclusion

classes, they are better able to address their concerns. Helping coteachers find time to plan emphasizes the importance of planning together while also demonstrating support from school leaders.

Another component of coteaching is the cost of implementing this teaching method. A cotaught inclusion class requires two qualified educational professionals to share a group of students approximately the same size as a class taught by a single teacher (Friend et al., 2010). This may seem cost prohibitive at first glance. However, according to the Georgia Department of Education, one regular education class can have up to 35 students, while one self-contained special education class can only have 5 to 8 students, depending on the disability. A cotaught class can have 35 students, some general education and some special education. If 15 of the students in the cotaught class are students with disabilities, without that cotaught class, administrators would have to hire 2-3 special education teachers to teach those 15 special education students. When administrators use cotaught inclusion classes, they reduce the need for self-contained resource classes which reduces the number of special education teachers needed (Walsh, 2012). An in-depth financial analysis of using cotaught inclusive classes versus self-contained special education classes indicated that cotaught inclusion classes are actually more cost effective (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010).

As society began to debate the future of our schools, it called for the creation of a system of accountability (Lingo et al., 2011). NCLB introduced standards to hold teachers and schools accountable for educating all students including students with disabilities (Moorehead & Grillo, 2013). Effectiveness of instruction is measured through

standardized tests covering the state mandated curriculum. Advent of this testing has

negatively affected coteaching (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, &

McDuffie, 2005). All teachers feel the pressure of standardized testing but none as

acutely as coteachers involved in teaching students with learning disabilities. Coteachers

feel pressured to hurriedly cover the required curriculum often at the expense of student

mastery. The students who are most affected are students with disabilities; the increased

pace often negatively affects the academic success of students with disabilities (Nichols

et al., 2010). Students with disabilities often require more processing time than students

without disabilities, therefore the increased pace of the class may negatively impact

concept mastery of students with disabilities. Testing can also be an issue for coteachers

because of testing requirements outlined in IEPs. If a student has a testing

accommodation such as additional time on tests or the test must be read to the student,

both teachers decide how to best make the necessary adjustments so that those

accommodations are met (Nichols et al., 2010).

Benefits of Coteaching

Current research concerning the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes

indicated that coteaching has a positive influence of the success of students with

disabilities (Chamberlin, 2011; Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Nichols

& Sheffield, 2014; Walsh, 2012). For example, students with disabilities in cotaught

classes tend to score higher in state standardized assessments than students with

disabilities taught in self-contained classes (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008; Walsh, 2012). In

addition to standardized tests, high school students (both general education students and

special education students) in cotaught inclusion classes indicated that their grades had improved (Lingo et al., 2011; Wilson & Michaels, 2006). One possible reason for this improvement in academic success is that coteaching increases instructional opportunities for the students (Cook & Friend, 1995). Coteachers determine students' strengths and weakness and then deliver instruction tailored to the exceptionalities of the students (Friend, 2014). Also by having two instructors in the classroom with varying areas of expertise, students are exposed to differing teaching styles (Murawski & Lochner, 2010). Having two professionals sharing their instructional strategies provides various avenues for instruction and can provide the differentiated instructional supports that students with disabilities may need to academically succeed (Lawrence-Brown, 2004; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Tomlinson, 2012).

General education students and special education students academically benefit from cotaught instruction (Dieker et al., 2013; Magiera et al., 2005). Cotaught inclusion classes provide a lower student-to-teacher ratio and both general and special education students benefit academically from the resulting increase in teacher attention and individualized attention (Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). General education students and students with disabilities perceive that a teacher is always available to help them (Friend et al., 1993; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). This sense of support may increase a student's self-esteem which positively impacts their academic success (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

On the secondary level, the curriculum for general education classes and special education classes have traditionally been slightly different. The special education

curriculum has been less rigorous than the general education curriculum (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Students with disabilities were not exposed to the general education curriculum. However, a core requirement of IDEA (1997) enables students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum. A distinct benefit of cotaught inclusion classes for special education students is that when they are placed into general education classes they are exposed the more rigorous and challenging curriculum than the curriculum taught in special education classes (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Nichols et al., 2010). Students with disabilities in cotaught classes are provided with curriculum modifications as outlined in their IEPs (Walsh, 2012). Curriculum modifications do not alter the content but instead modify the way in which the content is presented (Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup, & Palmer, 2010). Coteachers discuss and implement a variety of ways for the students to engage with the curriculum. For example, coteachers instruct the special education students' strategies such as problem solving strategies, self-monitoring skills, and critical thinking skills which enable the student to more effectively learn the curriculum (Scruggs et al., 2007).

Students benefit not only academically from cotaught inclusion classes but also socially. Students with disabilities in self-contained special education classes are sequestered from their nondisabled peers which can create a feeling of isolation (Dieker et al., 2013; Cook & Friend, 1995). When students with disabilities are part of a cotaught class, they are learning alongside their nondisabled peers. Receiving instruction in classes with their nondisabled peers can alleviate that feeling of isolation. In cotaught classes, students with disabilities and students without disabilities have the opportunity to

interact, resulting in students with disabilities becoming more accepted by their

nondisabled peers (Sileo, 2011). Students with disabilities in cotaught classes enjoy

school more than they did when they were placed in self-contained special education

classes (Walsh, 2012). Those students with disabilities who experience greater

acceptance reported that they enjoyed coming to school more and felt better about

themselves (Cook & Friend, 1995; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Walsh, 2012). Students

with disabilities in cotaught inclusion classes also demonstrate improved social skills

(Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). General education students also have an opportunity to learn

social and cultural mores through interactions with peers in a diverse learning community

(Friend, 2014). Developing social skills in this increasingly diverse world, is an important

skill for all students to develop. The ultimate goal of the cotaught inclusion model is for

the success academically and socially of every student in the class (Dieker et al., 2013).

The benefit of coteaching is not isolated to students. Both general education and

special education teachers can benefit from coteaching by combining the expertise of two

educational professionals. The general education teacher is the content specialist while

the special education teacher is the intervention specialist (Magiera et al., 2005). Special

education teachers are trained in providing specially designed instruction for their

students (Friend, 2014). In contrast, the certification requirements for general education

teachers focus on their subject area; general education teachers receive little or no

training for teaching students with disabilities (McCray & McHatton, 2011). By

collaborating with special education teachers, the general education teachers can improve

their knowledge of teaching students with disabilities and increase their arsenal of

instructional strategies. Both teachers, general education and special education, report an increase in professional knowledge as being part of the collaborative coteaching team (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

Teacher Preparedness

One possible reason for coteaching not reaching its full potential is a lack of teacher preparedness. Veteran general education teachers were not afforded special education training during their preservice years; and, therefore, may not be equipped with the knowledge needed to support students with disabilities in their cotaught inclusion classes (McCray & McHatton, 2011). Even though general education teachers may felt confident in their content area, they may not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities (Mumba & Chitityo, 2008). In contrast, special education teachers are comfortable providing instructional supports for students with disabilities, but lack content mastery education teachers. Special education teachers frequently report that they feel subordinate to general education teachers in coteaching teams (Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2013), because for coteaching to be successful, both teachers, special education and general education, must feel prepared to teach the diverse class and share equally in all teaching responsibilities (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012; Bouck, 2007; Conderman, 2011; Moin et al., 2009; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

There have been few studies conducted on the experiences and perceptions of general education teachers regarding cotaught inclusion classes. Those few studies indicate that general education teachers report feeling unprepared to coteach students with disabilities in inclusive classes (Mumba & Chitityo, 2008). Research indicates that

general education teachers have limited knowledge regarding the intricacies of coteaching as well as limited knowledge teaching students with disabilities (McCray & McHatton, 2011; Mumba & Chitiyo, 2008). In fact, according to McCray and McHatton (2011), general education teachers are so unfamiliar with the specifics of coteaching that they are not able to articulate their needs. This gap in preparedness may increase the anxiety of the general education teacher toward coteaching inclusion classes and may prevent general education teachers from volunteering for those positions. Experts believe that teachers are not effective in coteaching situations unless they volunteer to be part of this instructional model (Bouck, 2007; ul Hassan et al., 2010).

Cotaught Inclusion Research

Cotaught inclusion represents a relatively new method for teaching students with disabilities, a method that requires a philosophical change in the practice of educating students with disabilities. Research on cotaught inclusion is limited in scope and depth (Aron & Loprest, 2012). Much of the research that has been published consists of anecdotal descriptions of successful and unsuccessful attempts at implementing cotaught inclusion classes (Murawski & Swanson, 2001). Research is starting to emerge specifically addressing the aspects of coteaching (Friend, 2014). Without continued research on the effectiveness of coteaching in inclusion classes, educators will be unable to gauge the efficacy of this instructional delivery method (Aron & Loprest, 2012).

Factors Influencing Successful Implementation of Cotaught Inclusion

Perceptions of Teachers Impacting Implementation of Coteaching

The perceptions of the educators involved in cotaught inclusion classes can have a profound impact on the successful implementation of the coteaching method (Gokdere, 2012; Mumba & Chitityo, 2008; Thurmond, 2012). If a teacher does not believe that cotaught inclusion classes are an effective method for instruction then they will not be an effective teacher in those classes (Sharma et al., 2008).The views of general education teachers on coteaching supports the belief that teachers' perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes will directly impact the successful implementation of the program (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010). There are many misconceptions regarding coteaching, therefore teachers must receive training explaining the nuances and benefits of cotaught inclusion classes before coteaching can be implemented (Friend, 2014; Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010).

Unlike the positive perceptions toward inclusion harbored by special education teachers, the perceptions of general education teachers toward cotaught inclusion tend to be slightly negative (Familia-Garcia, 2001; Forlin, et al., 2011; Hsien, Brown, & Bortoli, 2009). In research conducted by Familia-Garcia (2001), all of the special education teachers interviewed displayed positive attitudes toward cotaught inclusion classes and said they would gladly coteach in an inclusion class. In contrast, only two of the 10 general education teacher participants had positive perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes. In fact, one of those general education teachers that had negative perceptions of coteaching, said "they would rather retire or seek employment at another school" than coteach inclusion classes (Familia-Garcia, 2001, p. 9).

These negative perceptions may stem from a lack of knowledge about coteaching. The research about the perceptions of general education teachers indicates that many general education teachers lack knowledge regarding what inclusion is and how coteaching is implemented in the classroom (Forlin et al., 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Mumba & Chitityo, 2008). Hsien, Brown, and Bortoli (2009) investigated the perceptions of 36 general and special education teachers toward teaching inclusion classes and found that teachers who have received professional learning opportunities in special education tend to possess more positive perceptions of cotaught inclusion classes (Hsien et al., 2009). Similarly, those general education teachers who have gained knowledge about special education by teaching students with disabilities are more likely to exhibit a positive attitude toward coteaching inclusion classes and more likely to volunteer to coteach inclusion classes (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barder, 2000). Negative perceptions and lack of knowledge may impact the success of cotaught inclusion classes (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

Administrative Support

Teachers' perceptions of coteaching are not the only attitudes that can directly impact the successful implementation of cotaught inclusion classes. The attitudes of principals are the most influential component to developing and sustaining cotaught inclusion programs (Thurmond, 2012). Ensuring administrative support is crucial when cultivating a culture of coteaching in a school. Positive attitudes expressed by school leaders had a positive influence on the attitudes of general education teachers toward coteaching students with disabilities in inclusion classes (Friend, 2014). For example,

teachers reticent to coteach in an inclusion class said they would coteach in an inclusion class if they were provided with support from their administration (Familia-Garcia, 2001).

Administrators who are knowledgeable about the philosophy of coteaching understand its potential for improving academic achievement and acknowledge the commitment needed by all stakeholders (Austin, 2001; Garrison-Wade et al., 2013). The philosophy of coteaching is to provide highly engaging, individualized student learning opportunities through the knowledge and skills of the two professional educators in the classroom (Friend, 2014). Changing the philosophy of the school can only happen through the guidance of the principal. All general education teachers are potential coteachers, so the philosophy of coteaching needs to be the expectation of the school and principals are the catalyst for developing and maintaining that philosophy (Garrison-Wade el al., 2013). When implementing coteaching in inclusion classes, administrators should involve teachers in the implementation process which includes scheduling and planning for staff development initially and throughout the year (Pratt, 2014). In addition to these duties, administrators are also responsible for building positive working relationships and assessing the fidelity of the implementation (Friend, 2008).

Unfortunately, even though many administrators have adopted coteaching as a vehicle for addressing current legislation, they do not understand the philosophy of coteaching as a service delivery method (Friend, 2014). An investigation of the attitudes of 138 school principals and assistant principals toward cotaught inclusion classes revealed that the leaders were limited in their knowledge and experience regarding

cotaught inclusive practices; the study further revealed that the attitudes of the school leaders were slightly negative toward cotaught inclusion (Ball & Green, 2014). For coteaching to be successfully implemented in inclusion classrooms, administrators must believe in the validity of this method and possess the knowledge required to lead the educators in developing and maintaining a coteaching culture in the school.

Preparation

A plethora of research and literary articles support the need for professional learning opportunities for teachers involved in cotaught inclusion settings (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008; Davis et al., 2012; Dieker et al., 2013; Gokdere, 2012; Hepner & Newman, 2010; Kamens et al., 2003; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; McMaster, 2013; Pratt, 2014). According to Wiliam (2007), professional development will directly impact student achievement. He believes that if school leaders are committed to improving the learning environments of their students they must first provide professional development for the teachers that meets the teachers' needs (Wiliam, 2007). It is important to nourish our teacher education programs, and we must base our understanding of what is needed in the perceptions of the teachers themselves. Research conducted in urban high schools supported the need for training prior to implementing cotaught inclusion classes (Cramer et al., 2010). Cramer's study discovered a need for restructuring in-school teacher education to provide teachers with specific training in strategies such as collaboration, peer coaching, and effective co-planning as well as training in the various coteaching models (Cramer et al,. 2010).

The investigation by Ball and Green (2014) emphasized the need for continual quality training for administrators and teachers. If teachers do not understand the philosophy and the structure of cotaught inclusion classes then they cannot effectively teach in that setting. Teachers must acquire the knowledge they need before entering a cotaught inclusion setting. A metasynthesis of qualitative research regarding coteaching in inclusive classrooms supports the theory that teacher training supported by administration was key to the success of cotaught inclusion classes (Scruggs et al., 2007). Thirty-two qualitative studies were included in this metasynthesis. The results of that study indicated that the dominant type of instruction used in these cotaught inclusion classrooms was traditional instruction with the special education teacher serving as an assistant, which, as discussed above, is not the appropriate way to implement coteaching, indicating that there is aa need for professional learning regarding coteaching in an inclusion class (Scruggs et al., 2007).

Implications

The education of individuals with disabilities in general education classes alongside their nondisabled peers, is a relatively recent endeavor. The enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975 was a crucial legislation. Prior to this act, some states did allow some students with disabilities into the public school, but the kinds of students with disabilities who were educated and the quality of education that was provided was left to the state's largesse, as there was no federal standard. Even though students with disabilities are no longer denied access to public education, school leaders struggle with providing appropriate instructional service

delivery methods for this population. Responding to both IDEA and NCLB, many schools have turned to coteaching as the best way to include students with disabilities in general education classes while still providing them with an ability-appropriate education (Florian, 2010; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Because of its potential to provide the best environment for educating many students with disabilities, this study focused on coteaching and the possible challenges faced by general education teachers.

The results of this study were used to design a professional development training for teachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes. Professional development is vital to the successful implementation of coteaching, and it is critical that the professional development meet the specific needs of the teachers involved. This results of this study were used to provide the insights to create such a professional development. Once implemented, this learning opportunity will provide teachers with the knowledge and support they need to become more effective in cotaught inclusion classes, which may promote positive educational reform within the school.

Summary

Society has called for changes in the learning environments of students with disabilities (Bauwens et al., 1989; Cook & Friend, 1995). Educational leaders continue to struggle with a response to this need. The most appropriate avenue for educating students with disabilities continues to be debated. The literature reviewed in this study illustrated that many school leaders are implementing coteaching and see coteaching as the most appropriate method of instructional delivery for students with disabilities (Conderman, 2011; Conderman & Heidin, 2012; Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker et al., 2013; Florian,

2010; Friend, 2008; Murwaski & Swanson, 2001). Understanding the experiences with and perceptions of general education teachers toward coteaching provided the information needed to improve coteaching as a service delivery method. Section two of this proposal provides an in-depth discussion of the research design and methodology used in this study.

In Section 2, the qualitative research design, the research sample and setting is discussed. The data collection procedures and data analysis are explained. This section also contains a discussion of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, as well as a detailed analysis of the results of the research project. Section 3 is a discussion of the description and goals of the project as well as the rationale. Section 4 provides a reflection of the process and an explanation of possible implications for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This study examined factors related to cotaught inclusion classes, a service delivery method for teaching students with disabilities in general education classes. These classes, when successfully implemented, have many documented benefits for students with disabilities. The intention of this qualitative case study was to gain an understanding of general education teachers' experiences with and perceptions of coteaching inclusion classes. The specific nuances of the methodology used in this study, including participants, data collection instrumentation, and treatment of the data, are examined in this section.

The primary research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia describe coteaching inclusion classes?

2. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia demonstrate the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes?

3. How do the general education teachers at a large urban high school in Georgia document the effectiveness of cotaught inclusion classes?

This study employed a qualitative approach to address a research gap concerning the perspectives of general education teachers who are teaching in cotaught inclusion classes. The primary research questions posed all begin with the word "how," which is one of the ways research questions for a qualitative study begin (Creswell, 2012). The three primary research questions align with three methods of data collection generally

used in qualitative research: interviews, observations, and documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In Research Question 1, the word "describe" was used to align with the collection of personal interview data. In Research Question 2, the word "demonstrate" was used to align with the collection of observation data, and in Research Question 3, the word "document" was used to align with the collection of document data.

Qualitative Research Design

Even though all qualitative research is focused on uncovering perceptions and views of reality, there are different research approaches within the qualitative design (Merriam, 2009). Each approach shares the basic characteristics of qualitative research, with each design adding its own unique nuances. The six qualitative approaches include phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, case study, and critical qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). The phenomenological approach is used to capture the essence of an experience, and an ethnography focuses on cultural interpretation of a specific group (Merriam, 2009). Grounded theory strives to develop a substantive theory supported by data; the narrative analysis uses participants' stories to understand their personal experiences (Merriam, 2009). A case study is used to investigate a bounded system or a specific person or group of people (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Critical qualitative research is used to critique and challenge current societal beleifs (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The type of qualitative research design chosen for this study was a case study. Since this study focuses on the perceptions of a specific group of people, a qualitative case study was the most appropriate approach. Specifically, this study employed an

intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study is undertaken when the researcher has a personal interest in a particular case and wants a better understanding of the specific social situation (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Stake, 2005). An intrinsic case study approach provides an indepth analysis of the perceptions of the bounded system being studied. In this case, general education teachers made up the bounded system that was studied.

Justification of the Choice of Research Design

I selected an intrinsic case study design for this study because its purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the general education teachers involved in coteaching at ABC High School. An intrinsic case study design was more appropriate tool than an ethnography design since I was not studying a culture-sharing group, per Creswell (2012). Because this study did not seek to create a new theory, using grounded theory was not appropriate (Creswell, 2012). A phenomenological study, which focuses on investigating the essence of a particular issue, did not provide the best avenue for studying the perceptions of general education teachers involved in coteaching since I did not seek to depict the essence of a particular issue; phenomenology would not have provided the information needed to adequately answer the research questions posed in this study (Merriam, 2009). A case study design was therefore the most appropriate qualitative method.

The purpose of this study was to gain a deep understanding of the lived experience of the general education teachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes, which makes a case study a well-suited research design for the study. According to

Creswell (2012), a qualitative case study is appropriate when the researcher seeks to investigate one specific situation, like the experiences and perceptions of general education teachers toward coteaching inclusion classes, to provide in-depth exploration of the issue. The perspectives of the participants provided an opportunity to learn about the intricacies of this issue from those who are living it.

Research Setting

The setting of this study was a large urban high school located in a county outside of Atlanta, Georgia, hereafter referred to as ABC High School. During the 2012-2013 school year, this school served 3,208 students in Grades 9-12 and has a diverse student population. According to the county website, the student enrollment for the 2012-2013 school year was 33% white, 26% African American, 24% Asian, 13% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% multiracial. Special education students make up 9% of the total student population. The special education students in this school receive instruction through cotaught inclusion classes for all of their content classes, including four years of science, language arts, and math; three years of social studies; and some elective classes.

Participants

In a case study, the case is a bounded system consisting of a group of individuals that is being investigated (Creswell, 2012). The case for this study was a select group of general education teachers at a high school who were currently teaching in a cotaught inclusion classroom. This school had a strong need for general education teachers to coteach inclusion classes, but a low rate of general education teachers volunteering to coteach inclusion classes; as a result, school administrators were forced to assign

unwilling general education teachers to coteach in inclusion settings. In this study, one teacher out of 10 volunteered for this assignment.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Any general education teacher currently coteaching an inclusion class at this high school was eligible to participate in this study. Thirteen general education teachers currently involved in coteaching inclusion classes were invited to participate in the study and 10 agreed to participate. Within this sample, one teacher volunteered to coteach inclusion classes and nine teachers did not volunteer but were nevertheless assigned to coteach in these inclusion classrooms.

Justification for the Number of Participants

One of the key determinations in qualitative research is deciding how many participants to include in the study. The typical sample size for a qualitative study is a relatively small amount of individuals (Creswell, 2012). If the sample is too large, it is impossible for the researcher to uncover personal perspectives of the situation. The qualitative researcher attempts to reach both saturation and redundancy, which is when the researcher believes that collecting additional data will not provide any new insights (Creswell, 2012). The appropriate stopping point in collecting data is the point when the researcher no longer finds any new information (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Gruba, 1985). This study explored the experiences and perspectives of 10 general education teachers. The sample size of 10 participants for this qualitative study was a manageable number and sufficient to provide a saturation of data. During the data collection process, redundancy of information indicated that the data collection had reached saturation.

Access to Participants

  I submitted a Local School Research Request Form to the county in which ABC High School is located, as required by county policy. Since the research was also conducted at the school where I am employed, the principal approved and signed the Local School Research Request Form. This form was then sent to the Department of Research and Evaluation at the Instructional Support Center, after which no further approval was necessary under the county procedure for research. I was also separately approved to conduct this study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University on November 13, 2014 (approval number 11-13-14-0142112).

Establishing Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

  I already have a professional relationship with the people who participated in this study since I work at the school where data were collected. However, I do not exercise a supervisory role with the potential participants in the study. Once I acquired permission to collect data, I explained the focus of the study to potential participants during course team meetings. The general education teachers involved in coteaching were invited to participate in the study. The special education teachers were also sent letters of participation. Even though the perceptions of the special education teachers were not part of this study, consent needed to be obtained from these teachers since both the general education and special education teachers were present during observations. In one instance, although a general education teacher agreed to participate in the study, the special education teacher paired with her did not. For that reason, the general education

teacher was not invited to become part of the study. She was sent a letter of thanks but was told that because the sample size had already been reached she could not participate.

Methods for Ethical Protection of Participants

Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and that even if they signed the consent form, they would be able withdraw participation at any time and the data collected from them would not be used in the study. None of the participants withdrew during the study. Participants were asked to respond to the letter of invitation, sent by email, with the words "I consent" if they were willing to be a part of the study. Eleven general education teachers consented via email. All but one of the special education teachers paired with the general education teachers consented. As a result, arrangements were made for data collection with each of the 10 participants. Ethical research is conducted in a way that preserves the confidentiality of the participants while portraying an honest representation of the data collected (Creswell, 2012). To protect the participants from harm and ensure privacy during collection of the interview, observation, or document data, participants were identified by the use of an alphanumeric system of identification for the data collected from each participant. For example, the data collected from the first participant was identified as: (a) interview- I1, (b) observation- O1, and (c) documents- D1. The alphanumeric identifying system was explained to the participants to alleviate concerns of breach of confidentiality (Rea & Parker, 2012).

Data Collection

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of general

education teachers' experiences with and perceptions of coteaching inclusion classes. In a

qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and has

direct contact with the participants of the study (Merriam, 2009). Participants in this

study were contacted via email to set up a time for the interview and the classroom

observation. Data collection progressed in a systematic way. This system ensured that all

data were accurately collected and analyzed. The methods of collecting data were in-

depth personal interviews (which were audio recorded), classroom observations, and

document review. These methods are commonly used in cases studies (Stake, 1995).

Interviews

Interviews are a vehicle used in qualitative studies to explore the lived experience

of those involved in a specific social situation (Merriam, 2009). A personal interview was

conducted with each of the 10 participants. Each interview lasted between 20 minutes and

an hour, according to the wishes of the participant. Each participant was interviewed

once. The interview consisted of eight open-ended questions. This type of question

encourages a flowing dialogue where participants can feel free to express their thoughts

(Merriam, 2009). The interview questions are provided in Appendix B. The interviews

took place outside of instructional time at the school in a location determined by the

participant.

Participants were informed in the consent form that they could choose not to

answer any of the questions posed and that they may also choose to discontinue the

interview at any time. None of the participants discontinued the interview. Two

participants requested additional time, which provided even more information. The

participants agreed to be recorded. Once the interview was complete, I transcribed the

recording. I transcribed each interview on the same day following the personal interview.

A word-by-word transcription was critical in this qualitative study to analyze the data in

detail since I was attempting to gain a better understanding of the participants in the

experience. This information provided detailed accounts of the experiences of the general

education teachers involved in coteaching.

Observations

Data were also collected via classroom observations during the same three-week

period when the interview data were gathered. Each participant was observed once. The

observation lasted for an entire, uninterrupted class period (90 minutes). The observation

was minimally intrusive, which is important because to ensure an accurate description of

the participant's experience, it is important to have only minimal impact on the daily

activity of the classroom during observations (Merriam, 2009).

During the observation, jottings were made recording descriptive and interpretive

notes. The purpose of the observations was to note which of the six elements of Friend's

(2013) coteaching models were used by the teacher being observed. I used the attached

observational protocol (Appendix C), which was based on the coteaching models of

Friend (2014). The observational protocol served as a template for making observations

and taking field notes during the observation (Creswell, 2012) and provided the venue for

recording a chronology of events, frequency of specific occurrences relating to the

research, quotes from the participants, and any other observation relating to the study. Following each observation, I spent time reflecting on the experience by writing detailed field notes from those jottings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Documents

Analyzing documents as a method of collecting data is particularly suited for qualitative studies (Bowen, 2009; Hatch, 2002). According to Merriam (2009), document analysis can provide rich, descriptive information. Many qualitative researchers use document analysis in combination with interviews and observations to corroborate the findings of a study (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis can provide a valuable supplement to the analysis of observations and interviews. Even when great efforts are made by a researcher not to influence the participants during observations and interviews, the presence of an investigator may alter what is being studied (Merriam, 2009). The presence of the investigator will not, however, alter the documents.

The information found in documents in this study was used in the same way as data gleaned from interviews and observations (Merriam, 2009). I encouraged the participants to share existing documents relating to their coteaching experiences. Documents were collected during the data collection period. Even though only two participants provided documents, these documents provided a deeper understanding of the underlying meaning of the interview and observation data. Documentary data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home for at least 5 years.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Since I work at the school where data were collected, I had access to the contact information of the potential participants. I used the school's email system to contact these teachers regarding the upcoming study. I used the same email system to communicate with these teachers to invite them to participate in the study and ask them to respond with the words "I consent" if they chose to participate in this study.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role at the location of this study has been as a classroom teacher in the science department, primarily as the general education teacher in a coteaching team. Since I am a teacher, I have worked closely with the general education teachers in the science department for the past 8 years. Several other general education teachers in the science department also coteach inclusion classes and were invited to participate in the study. General education teachers involved in coteaching from other departments were also invited to participate. At least one general education teachers from each department agreed to be in this study. Even though I am at the same location as these teachers, because of the large size of the school, I have had little interaction with those teachers outside of the science department.

Since the location of the study was the school where I am teaching and where I coteach inclusion classes, it may raise the fear of bias. Even though I am a coteacher, working with potential participants in the study, I am not in a position of authority over any teachers; and therefore cannot exercise any influence over them. Also, to assure confidence in the results of this study and allay any concerns of personal bias, I employed

strategies of credibility, including triangulation and member checking (Creswell, 2012).

Two of the participants of the study agreed to be part of the member checking process. I

met with each of the participants after data collection was complete to check for accuracy

of their accounts (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, once the textual data are gathered, this it must be combined

and condensed into manageable information that the researcher can use to analyze what

the participants are saying. Data analysis is the "process of making sense out of the data"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 175). According to Merriam (2009), this complex, systematic,

interpretive process requires both inductive and deductive reasoning. This qualitative

study took place in an urban high school. Data collection began on November 17, 2014

and continued for one week.

Data were collected through document analysis, classroom observations, and

personal interviews. The data collected were analyzed immediately after collection.

Participants were invited to share any documents that would illuminate their coteaching

experience. The documents that were provided were examined for patterns and

relationships with the typologies. The personal interviews were transcribed into textual

information. Classroom observations were coded and recorded by typology. The

observational data were then recorded in a table summarizing the typologies evident in

the observations. The detailed notes taken during the classroom observations were

rewritten and reread. This textual data were reviewed for patterns and relationships with

the typologies. The data were examined for examples that support the emerging patterns

and examples that refute those identified patterns. Relationships among the emerging patterns were identified; then generalizations were made. The raw data were reviewed for information that supported and refuted the generalizations made. Two methods of data analysis were used for this study: typological and inductive.

Typological Analysis

This case study used Hatch's (2002) idea of typologies or a priori codes to analyze the data. Typology is a classification system in which predetermined categories (codes) are used to answer the research questions (Hatch, 2002). These categories or codes are identified prior to data analysis. The six models of coteaching outlined by Friend (2014) -- one teach, one assist; one teach, one observe; parallel teaching; alternative teaching; team teaching; and station teaching -- served as the predetermined codes for the typological analysis of the data collected in this study. The six coteaching models are approaches for delivering instruction. According to Friend (2014), all of the coteaching models can be implemented across grade levels and subject areas. Coteachers should vary their use of these models based on the lesson and the needs of the students (Friend, 2013).

Data were analyzed after data collection was complete. The perceptions and attitudes of general education teachers in cotaught inclusion classes were examined using Hatch's (2002) approach to data analysis:

1. Identify data that relates to your typologies.

2. Read entries according to typology. Record main ideas surfacing as data is analyzed.

3. Search for patterns and relationships among the main ideas.

4. Reread coding entries according to the identified patterns and relationships.

5. Search raw data for information that will support and refute identified patterns and relationships.

6. Write generalizations that represent the patterns and relationships discovered (p. 153).

Documents gathered from the teachers were analyzed to identify any related typologies. The classroom observations were summarized in a table according to the typologies observed during the data collection. Personal interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed into textual data. All of the data was read and any links between that data and typologies were identified. The data were then reread according to the typologies. Main ideas were written out. Those main idea entries were then analyzed for relationships to the typologies. Once main ideas were recorded and analyzed for emerging themes, the raw data were reread for examples that would support and refute the identified patterns. Generalizations were written based on the discovered patterns and relationships.

Descriptive Data

There were a total of 10 general education teachers participating in this study. The 10 participants were randomly assigned numbers. Each number was combined with a letter denoting the type of data collection: I -- personal interview, O -- classroom observation, and D -- document. Of the 10 general education teachers, only one volunteered to teach a cotaught inclusion class. Administrators assigned the other nine

teachers. Of those nine, eight felt that they would volunteer to teach one or more cotaught

classes in the future. Even though most of the general education teachers did not

volunteer to coteach inclusion classes, they indicated that they acknowledge the

importance of this teaching strategy and felt that they would be more likely to volunteer

if they had appropriate training. Experience levels with coteaching varied among the

participants. Table 1 shows demographic information of the participants in the study.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant code	Number of years in coteaching inclusion classes prior to this one	Subject area
1	0	Academic Elective: Forensics
2	6	Math
3	0	Math
4	7	Social Studies
5	22	Science
6	2	Science
7	0	Science
8	2	Math
9	3	Language Arts
10	5	Language Arts

Document Analysis

Document analysis combined with observations and personal interviews can

provide a wealth of information. Participants were asked if they would like to provide

documents pertaining to their coteaching experience. Documents such as lesson plans can

reveal coteaching models used. Lesson plans can also illustrate the roles and

responsibilities of each teacher during the lesson. Documents outlining class activities

can also expose coteaching models employed in the class. The documents collected

during the data collection period were analyzed in an effort to a description of the experience.

When the participants were asked if they had any documents to share to help to illuminate their coteaching experience, only D1 and D7 responded. D1 provided the documents for their small class accommodations. A requirement of small group settings is a common assessment accommodation for many students with disabilities. D1 had compiled a document for her own use that listed the students needing small groups for assessments as directed by their IEPs.

D7 provided the lesson plans that she and her coteacher had developed for the day I observed their class. The review of this lesson plan illustrated the importance of coteachers planning together. D7 and her coteacher had divided the instructional time so that each teacher would take a turn at leading the instruction while the other assisted students. All participants shared the attitude that co-planning is a critical component to successful coteaching. D7, for example, reported that as coteachers "we share the responsibility for taking care of our students."

This consistent attitude, however, does not reliably translate into coteachers actually planning together. Five of the 10 participants (1, 2, 5, 6, and 7) had planning time in common with their coteachers, but only D7 indicated that they actively plan together. Participant 2 indicated that she wanted to plan with her coteacher, but her coteacher is not willing to plan with her. Participant 2 said her coteacher believes that special education teachers do not have the time to share in the instructional duties of teaching, such as planning or grading, because of the case load every special education

teacher has. The overwhelming theme expressed among the general education teachers in the study was that successful coteaching pairs need to be afforded common planning time and to take advantage of that time to plan together.

Observations

Participants were observed teaching in their cotaught inclusion classes. During these classroom observations, data were collected relating to the identified six typologies, the six coteaching models as identified by Friend (2014). Every 10 minutes, notes were made regarding the coteaching model being employed in the classroom. Jottings were also made recording descriptive and interpretive notes. In addition, at the completion of all of the classroom observations, the number of coteaching models observed during the class was totaled. The codes or typologies were used to review the status of coteaching models being used in this target school. This coding led to a more detailed and concrete understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The results of the classroom observations indicated that coteaching models are not being used on a regular basis in most of the inclusive classes at this high school. In some observations, the special education coteacher either came in to the class after class began or left before class was over. These occasions were noted in the jottings. The number of coteaching models observed in the classroom during the data collection period is shown in the Table 2.

Table 2

Coteaching Models Observed During Classroom Observations

Participant	One Teach One Observe	Station Teaching	Parallel Teaching	Alternative Teaching	Team Teaching	One Teach One Assist	No Coteaching Model Evident
1			X			X	
2	X					X	
3	X						
4							X
5							X
6						X	
7						X	
8						X	
9						X	
10				X			

The data collected indicated that the most common coteaching model used at this school was One Teach, One Assist. In this model, one teacher takes the responsibility of instructing the class while the other teacher assumes the support role (Friend, 2014). Leading experts on coteaching Murawski (2009) and Friend (2014) say that the One Teach, One Assist model should be used infrequently -- less than 20% of the time. Also, when this model is employed, the roles of lead teacher and assistant should change often so that one teacher is not always relegated to the position of assistant. One of the key components of effective coteaching is establishing parity among the teachers (Friend, 2014). Using this coteaching model too frequently and incorrectly can jeopardize that equality.

During the classroom observations, Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 employed

the One Teach, One Assist model at some point in their class time. Participants 1, 3, and

6 used this model during the first 20 minutes of class. Participants 2, 7, 8, and 10 used the

One Teach, One Assist model sporadically throughout the class period. In all of these

situations, except for participant 7's class, the general education teacher assumed the role

of lead teacher while the special education teacher assumed the role of assistant. During

the observation of participant 7, the roles would change often. At one point during O7,

after the special education teacher concluded her review of the vocabulary words, the

general education teacher said "It is my turn now." This comment, as well as the

documents provided by D7 discussed above, seemed to indicate that the coteachers had

previously discussed the plans for the day and divided up the instructional

responsibilities. Only one of the 10 pairs of coteachers using One Teach, One Assist,

exhibited equally shared teaching responsibilities.

Another coteaching model that was observed was One Teach, One Observe. This

model is used for the purpose of collecting data regarding student academic progress,

behavior, or social skills (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). After class, coteachers should

analyze these data and use these to plan future instruction. Although the One Teach, One

Observe model is a valuable method for gathering important data, there is a risk that the

special education teacher is always relegated to the task of observer, which may lead

students to believe that the special education teacher is not really a teacher (Chanmugam

& Gerlach, 2013). Friend (2014) noted that if the data collected are not used for

instructional purposes, there is no point in using this model. This model was seen during

the observations of participants 2, 3, 8, and 9. In each case, the special education teacher

was observing while the general education teacher was leading the instruction. During

O3, O8, and O9, the special education teacher was collecting data on students' academic

achievement by checking homework for completion. It was unclear which data the

special education teacher was collecting during O2.

Parallel teaching is another model of coteaching. During parallel teaching the

class is split into two groups and each teacher leads her own group. Both teachers are

teaching the same material. Parallel teaching was observed only during O1. The teachers

used this method as a way to review previously taught concepts. This method was used

for 78% of their class time. According to Friend (2014), this method establishes a true

partnership between the teachers, with both coteachers equally contributing to student

learning, but teachers must be careful to avoid creating high and low groups that can

make students feel labeled. The teachers in this coteaching pair avoided this pitfall by

allowing the students to choose their own groups.

Alternative teaching was another coteaching method observed during data

collection. In alternative teaching, students are divided into two groups, one large group

and one small group. This method is employed when some students need specialized

attention, such as during remediation or assessments (Friend, 2014). A benefit of this

model is that it creates a smaller pupil-to-teacher ratio that leads to more individualized

instruction (Peetsma, Vergeer, Roeleyed, & Karsten, 2001). Alternative teaching can be

effective when implemented correctly (Bouck, 2007; Friend & Cook, 1996; Kloo &

Zigmond, 2008; Pratt, 2014). This model is often misused by teachers, however, and

creates situations where the same students are continually pulled out, which can stigmatize the students (Murawski, 2009). Teachers also need to use care when deciding which teacher should direct the instruction in each group. In many cases, the special education teacher leads the small group while the general education teacher instructs the large group. Continually following this arrangement may further stigmatize the students that are always in the group taught by the special education teacher (Murawski, 2009). During classroom observations, alternative teaching was only observed in O10. When the special education teacher came into the class, she selected certain students and took them to a different room for instruction.

During the data collection time period, no other coteaching models were observed in the classes. According to Murawski (2009), one of the key components of effective coteaching is the use of a variety of coteaching models. Even though it is natural to gravitate toward a model that is comfortable, Murawski (2009) advises "be sure not to overly rely on the same approaches over and over again" (p. 188). Which coteaching model to use in class depends on the content being taught that day, both teachers' comfort level with the content, and the personalities of the students. Successful coteachers analyze data, look at the makeup of the class, and plan a variety of coteaching models to use as they create their lesson plans. An overarching theme gleaned from the analysis of this observational data was that teachers were not using the models of coteaching in their classrooms, possibly because they had not been educated in the strategies and models of coteaching.

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were conducted with each of the 10 participants. According to Merriam (2009), interviews are used to reveal the lived experience of individuals involved in a specific social situation. Each interview ranged in length from 30 minutes to an hour. The length of the interview was determined by the participant. The participants of this study seemed to be forthcoming in their views and attitudes toward coteaching inclusion classes. Notes were taken during the interviews. Since it is impossible to write everything down, each of the interviews was recorded with 2 audio recorders. Recording the interview data ensures that all of the data are preserved for analysis (Merriam, 2009). I then transcribed the recordings word-by-word. Verbatim transcriptions yield the most accurate database for analysis (Merriam, 2009). The transcriptions and recordings were labeled according to the alphanumeric code assigned to the participant. The same interview questions were asked of each participant; additional questions were asked as needed for clarification.

A complete and thorough analysis of the information collected during personal interviews was performed to gain an understanding of the lived experience of the general education teachers. Hatch's (2002) procedure for data analysis was used as a guiding force for data analysis. I immediately transcribed the recordings following each interview. After transcribing the recordings, I then read the transcriptions and identified comments related to the six typologies. The main ideas of the participants were gleaned from this information and patterns emerged.

Data collected from personal interviews was coded and analyzed for common themes. The importance of professional education emerged throughout the personal interviews. The importance of teachers being knowledgeable and confident in the classroom emerged as a theme in two different capacities. First, participants expressed their own need for education in the area of teaching students with disabilities. Even though most of the participants did not volunteer to coteach, they acknowledged the possible benefits of coteaching. They felt, however, that they lacked the appropriate skills. I4 was the only teacher who mentioned having prior training in coteaching methods. She is a first-year teacher. She learned about coteaching methods in college and spent part of her student teaching in a cotaught setting. She reported that "what the model is supposed to look like is different than I have seen in action [at this school]." I6, who is a veteran teacher but is coteaching for the first time, stated that she is "not confident teaching students with disabilities." She felt that she needed training in coteaching to be prepared to coteach inclusion classes. I9 and I5 also stated that they had "no previous training" preparing them for their coteaching assignments. I9 strongly felt that "coteaching can be effective" but teachers need training before they begin teaching in a cotaught setting, saying that you "can't just show up and expect kids to succeed." Several participants expressed the desire to learn how to work as a team and the need for professional learning opportunities focused on coteaching. Two participants, I3 and I9, specifically said that coteachers, both general educator and special educator, need to learn how to communicate openly and honestly as well as learn how to resolve conflicts. I2 said that she would like to see effective coteaching partnerships in action.

The second theme related to the need for education was the need for special education teachers to have content knowledge in the class they were teaching. For example, I4 felt that special education teachers should only be teaching in areas in which they are knowledgeable. All participants verbalized the need for special education teachers to know the content being taught. I2 stated, "Even though there are people [special education teachers] who are labeled highly qualified, they are not confident." Effective coteaching means that each teacher is an equal teaching partner in the classroom (Friend, 2014). I8 said that she is the main teacher; her coteacher doesn't seem to want to learn the content and "shied away from responsibility." She commented that the coteacher would routinely show up at the beginning of class and say "I'm here. What are we doing today?" When asked to describe her most recent experience teaching in a cotaught classroom, I2 responded, "It doesn't feel like I have another teacher in the class."

Similar sentiment echoed throughout the interviews. I6 stated that the special education teacher needs to know the content; the special education teachers "have to be a true teacher, not just Vanna White to my Pat Sajak." I8 noted that because the special education teacher was weak in content, the students would not ask that teacher questions. Students began to view the special education teacher as a helper, not an authority figure. I10 said that during her six years of coteaching, she has had the "extremes:" some coteachers knew the content, some did not. She said that the coteaching experience "depends on with whom I am working." I9 said that the most effective coteaching team has two teachers strong in content. In fact, I9 felt that this is the most critical component

of coteaching. Each of the participants noted at some point in their interviews that the special education coteachers needed to be confident and have a mastery of the content.

An additional issue that emerged was the need for administrative support. Every participant mentioned the need for administrative support of various kinds. One type of support that all participants agreed on dealt with scheduling. All participants felt that the administration must give coteachers common planning time for the teaching team to be successful. Research supports this need (Conderman & Hedin, 2012; Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Friend, 2014; Moin, et al., 2009; Murawski, 2008). I4 expressed the need for common planning not just for lesson planning but also to discuss common goals, develop assessments, and grade papers. Scheduling is beyond the control of teachers, so teachers rely on administrators to be sensitive to the importance of coteachers having the same planning time and design schedules accordingly. In addition to scheduling common planning, several participants said that the administration limiting the class size in cotaught classes was a critical component to an effective cotaught class. I1, I6, I7, and I9 all said that smaller class sizes were necessary to meet the needs of their diverse student populations. I7 said that even with two teachers it is difficult to tackle the high work demands of teaching students with disabilities in inclusion classes.

Most participants also felt that administrators should seek the input of general and special education teachers in creating the schedule, particularly regarding which teachers are scheduled to teach together. The participants explained that coteachers' having compatible personalities was crucial to the success of a coteaching team. The participant therefore felt it was necessary to have a voice in the pairing process. When asked what

could be done to improve coteaching, I3, for example, said that a lot of the success of the coteaching team "depends on the personality of the coteachers." She went on to say that "it [coteaching] works great when coteachers are on the same page [and] share the same philosophy." I9 expressed concern that when administrators are assigning coteaching team they give no thought to personalities. Several participants felt when administrators are scheduling teaching assignments, general education teachers should be able to request their coteaching partner or, if they are already part of a coteaching team that works well together, they should be allowed to stay together. Friend (2013) agrees that teachers should be involved in scheduling but contends that schedules should be based on "student needs rather than teacher preference or convenience" (p. 74). Murawski (2009) acknowledges the important role that coteachers' personalities play; in fact, she compares coteaching to managing a marriage. She argues, however, that teachers volunteering to teach in a cotaught setting can learn to trust one another, establish parity, and blend their talents to create a positive and successful learning environment for all students.

All participants felt that the administrators need to provide direction and support for the cotaught inclusion program at the school. According to Murawski (2009), "coteaching requires a commitment -- from teachers as well as administrators" (p. 60). I2 felt that there is a "lack of direction" at the school as well as a lack of communication between the general education administrators and the special education administrator regarding coteaching. I9 said, "we [coteachers] get forgotten about." I10 felt that administrators give little thought to what coteaching is when assigning partnerships. Knowledge and importance of coteaching needs to come from the top down (Kloo &

Zigmond, 2008). I2 stressed that for general education teachers and special education teachers to work collaboratively in cotaught classes, administrators from both departments would need to work together. When asked what kinds of supports are needed to be successful teaching in a cotaught class, I2 commented that the vision of coteaching "has to come from the top." Similarly, I5 felt that administrators need to have conversations with teachers regarding what is expected of coteachers. Many of the participants expressed the need for open communication between administration and teachers.

Some participants indicated that the administration did not understand what coteaching is. One participant said that administrators should experience cotaught classes to gain an appreciation of this instructional delivery method. According to Friend (2013), administrators are the most critical factor when developing and maintaining effective coteaching programs. Before they can create and sustain a program, they must have sufficient knowledge about coteaching.

Discrepant Cases

As the data were analyzed, overarching themes emerged, such as the need for professional education and administrative support. Some data, however, did not fit into any of these themes. One such example came from the interview with participant 7; she mentioned that the work load is more demanding when coteaching inclusion classes. This participant has had experience teaching honors and advanced classes. She said that in cotaught inclusion classes a teacher is required not only to differentiate to meet the diverse needs of their student population but also to attend additional meetings such as

IEPs, reevaluations, and 504 meetings. Teachers teaching honors classes or advanced placement classes do not have these additional meetings. I2, who has also had experience teaching advanced classes, expressed the need to "somehow even out the work load" between the two types of classes. Participant 7 said she would like to see coteachers excused from meetings that did not deal with their student population and have meetings tailored for coteachers. Friend (2013) has made similar suggestions, proposing, for example, that administrators release coteachers from extra duties like lunch duty or bus duty and allow coteachers to use this time for the added planning time coteaching requires. Friend also asserts that coteachers should be excused from meetings that will not enhance their coteaching abilities and they should be given the opportunity to attend meetings tailored for their unique teaching situation.

The extra meetings and additional work involved in coteaching inclusion classes can sometimes make it difficult for special education teachers to both manage their caseloads of students and be equal partners in coteaching. During four separate occasions in the classroom observations, the special education coteacher was absent for part of the class. During O2, the special education coteacher came to class 17 minutes after class had begun; during O5, the special education teacher did not come to class until 20 minutes after class had begun, and during O10 the special education teacher came to class 10 minutes after class had begun. Even though a special education teacher helped begin the lesson in O8, the special education teacher left the room for about 10 minutes in the middle of class. Even though the special education coteacher was present the entire class period in O3, participant 3 mentioned during her interview that punctuality is a recurring

problem with her coteacher. She contends the culture of the school is one that does not see the importance of both teachers being present for the entire class. Murawski (2009) and Friend (2014) both assert that strong coteaching teams are possible only where both teachers are equally invested in the teaching of their students.

Findings

Analysis of the three sources of data revealed four commons themes: the need for professional development, the need for increased use of coteaching models in the classroom, the need for the development of coteaching partnerships, and the need for administrative support. The first theme that emerged was the need for professional learning opportunities on coteaching. Coteachers depend on the support of their administrators to schedule professional learning opportunities that will provide them with the knowledge they need to establish and implement a successful coteaching team (Friend, 2014; Pratt, 2014). I6 said that she "was not confident working with students with disabilities; she needed training." Similarly I7 felt that the school should "tailor [staff development] meetings for coteachers." Other participants felt that coteachers should not have to attend meetings that do not directly apply to the cotaught service delivery method. Friend (2013) has suggested that "on district professional staff development days, [administrators should] arrange for coteachers to be exempt from part of the planned activities" (p. 59). Professional development focused on the instructional tools needed to improve the expertise of the coteaching team will positively impact the learning environment of the students (Moin et al., 2009).

The data showed that there was a lack of evidence of Friend's (2014) six models of coteaching being used in the classes. Only one participant mentioned learning about coteaching models in college; however, she had not received training in the specific models. Friend's coteaching models provide a blueprint of what teachers can do to make coteaching successful (Florian, 2010; Pratt, 2014). Research showed that teachers involved in coteaching need professional development to effectively coteach (Gokdere, 2012, McCray & McHatton, 2011; Walsh, 2012). Professional development can help educate administrators and teachers about the areas of need in the coteaching program at the high school and specifically address the common themes that emerged from this study.

The general education teachers also talked about the need for their special education teaching partners to understand the content. Several participants said they did not completely trust their coteacher to lead instruction because they did not think their coteachers were strong enough in the content. I10 admitted that she was unwilling to be flexible enough to give up control of her classroom; she needed to be the "alpha" member of the partnership. Flexibility is key to establishing parity. Coteachers need to "share with each other whether [they] are a procrastinator or a type-A control freak" (Murawski & Dieker, 2008, p. 42). I3 said that to be a successful team "you must be flexible -- you can't be a control freak." Blending the expertise of both general education and special education teachers while building a professional relationship based on parity is a key component of the foundation for all effective coteaching partnerships (Dieker, et al., 2013; Friend, et al., 1993; Pratt, 2014). Research showed that coteaching professional

developments must include communication skills and components for establishing professional relationships (McMaster, 2013; Pratt, 2014). I3 said that coteachers "have to be honest with each other." Strong collaboration skills and a willingness to communicate are essential when creating effective coteaching teams (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Friend, 2014; Gately & Gately, 2001).

The final common theme that emerged was the need for administrative support; that support took a variety of shapes. As mentioned above, coteachers rely on administrators to provide relevant professional learning opportunities. Also, several participants felt that the administrators were not knowledgeable in the nuances of the coteaching model and did not appreciate the additional time it takes to coteach. In her interview, participant 1 said that she felt there needed to be "more buy-in from administration" for coteaching to be effective. I7 felt that her administrator does not seem to be aware of the additional time it takes to coteach. She said that coteaching takes more time and effort in planning and that "we have more demands on our time because of all the meetings we have to attend, like IEPs." Effectively implementing coteaching takes additional time (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Research has showed that it is critical for administrators to understand all aspects of the coteaching service delivery method (Ball & Green, 2014; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008).

Participants also expressed concern that administration did not allow coteaching partners to stay together from year to year. I10 said that when assigning coteachers "it seems like nobody is interested in what I think. I'm not sure they [the administrators] put a great deal of thought into the chemistry of teachers." All participants felt that the

effectiveness of coteaching partnerships would be better served if teachers had input and could remain together. I10 said that she was "envious of teams that were allowed to remain together year after year; they became better and better every year." Successful coteaching teams rely on cohesive relationships that develop through the dedication of both teachers and will improve over time (Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker et al., 2013).

Additionally, school leaders must prioritize the needs of coteaching teams when scheduling, which is clear from the theme of the importance of common planning that emerged from the data collected. All participants voiced their need for common planning with their coteaching partner. One participant (I3) noted that the "biggest thing [for effective coteaching] is to have time together." Scheduling is beyond the scope of a teacher's prerogative. Teachers depend on administrators to schedule coteachers for common planning. Common planning is essential to the success of coteaching teams (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2008; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). To establish parity both teachers must be involved in all aspects of the instruction of the students, which begins with planning.

Conclusion

Cotaught inclusion classes have increased the academic success of students with disabilities (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010; Hepner & Newman, 2010). However, these academic aspirations are only realized when both teachers are willing participants in the coteaching partnership (Bouck, 2007; Gokdere, 2012; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). Participant 2 summed up the importance of this study: "coteaching is not a good model unless you are actually doing it." Even though the participants did not explicitly say they

did not know how to coteach, the lack of coteaching models evident during data collection indicated a lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of coteaching, including Friend's models of coteaching. The literature discussing coteaching indicates that the coteaching situation of the teachers at this school is not unique; coteachers across the country are not yet fully utilizing the models of coteaching in classrooms (Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Florian, 2010; Moin et al., 2009). The data collected in the document analysis, personal interviews, and observations revealed that although most of the teachers were not knowledgeable on the best methods of coteaching, most saw the importance of cotaught inclusion classes.

This prior research has also indicated that general education teachers are not familiar with coteaching strategies and sometimes have trouble articulating their needs in terms of what knowledge they lack (McCray & McHatton, 2011). During the personal interviews conducted during this study, for example, only one out of 10 teachers (a first-year teacher who learned about coteaching in college) mentioned studying coteaching models. This teacher also expressed a wish for more opportunities to acquire knowledge about coteaching. The data collected from the interviews, then, suggest that underuse of the six models of coteaching at ABC High School could be due to a lack of knowledge, and that teachers at this school would benefit from administrators offering professional developments in coteaching.

The data also indicate that another fundamental component of successful coteaching - a professional relationship between the coteachers - may be lacking in many partnerships. Participants were concerned that their special education partners were not

sufficiently competent and confident in the subject area being taught. One participant suggested leaving special education teachers paired with the same general education. Not only would that allow the pair begin to build a professional relationship, the special education teacher would become increasingly knowledgeable with the content material.

The need for broader administrative support resounded with every participant. Developing and maintaining an effective coteaching program requires administrative support (Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Pratt, 2014; Walsh, 2012). A positive and effective coteaching culture will only be established when administrators are actively involved (McDuffie et al., 2007; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). To successfully lead teachers into a collaborative coteaching culture, administrators need to have a complete and thorough understanding of the potential of coteaching as well as the problems associated with this method of instruction (Friend, 2014; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014).

Finally, a common need evident in the document analysis, personal interviews, and observations was the need for shared planning time. Even though common planning alone does not ensure effective coteaching, for coteachers to be an effective instructional team, they must plan every aspect of the class together (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Pratt, 2014; Thurmond, 2012). It became evident that a lack of shared planning time to prepare class instruction negatively affected the successful implementation of lessons by both teachers. Teachers depend on administrators to schedule coteaching pairs for common planning.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Coteaching's status as a recommended teaching strategy in secondary education in the United States significantly predates 21st-century reforms (Cook & Friend, 1995). The strategy's use notably predates both the 2001 No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) requirements that teachers be held accountable for providing high quality education to students with disabilities, Since the enactment of federal mandates requiring schools to provide students with disabilities education in the least restrictive environment, however, school leaders in the United States have increasingly implemented cotaught inclusion classes (Conderman, 2011). Cotaught inclusion classes allow school systems to meet the federal guidelines by providing students with disabilities access to a general education teacher who is a specialist in the class content, in the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom. Previous research on this topic has collected information from the perspectives of special education teachers, but there is a gap in the literature about the perceptions of general education teachers toward cotaught inclusion classes and what kind of training and support they perceive they need (Casale-Giannola, 2012; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010).

Extant research on coteaching indicates that teachers involved in this service delivery method need training to be effective (Moin et al., 2009; Pratt, 2014). This section of this doctoral study presents the professional development project developed from this study and created based on the data collected from the general education

teachers involved in coteaching at this high school. This professional development was based on Friend's work (1985). According to Friend (2014), teachers should frequently employ multiple coteaching models in their classes. During the data collection, coteaching models were not evident during classroom observations, indicating a lack of knowledge of the coteaching models or of the importance of using them when coteaching inclusion classes.

Effectively cotaught inclusion classes have been shown to significantly improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities (Hapner & Newman, 2010; Lingo et al., 2011; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). One aspect of effective coteaching is establishing a professional relationship between the special education and general education coteachers. According to coteaching experts the coteaching relationship should be based on parity; to effectively blend the expertise of the two teachers, every aspect of the students' education should be shared equally between the coteachers (Friend et al., 1993; Pratt, 2014). Before a coteaching pair can build a professional relationship, the teachers must be able to communicate openly and honestly with each other (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Pratt, 2014; Scruggs et al., 2007). When teachers are not able to communicate honestly with each other disagreements may occur. Students can tell when teachers are not working together which will negatively impact the efficacy of the coteaching team (Murawski, 2009). Professional development will provide teachers with the communication skills they need to build and maintain professional relationships with their coteaching partners.

Before any innovative program, such as coteaching, can be successfully implemented in a school, that program must first have the support of the administration. When implementing a coteaching program, there are specific supports needed from administrators (Moin et al., 2009; Pratt, 2014; ul Hassan et al., 2010). Although administrators often understand the importance of coteaching as a method for meeting federal requirements (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010: Yell & Rozalski, 2013), they may not know what supports are needed from them to fully implement coteaching in a school (McCray & McHatton, 2011). Even though administrators do not need to understand all aspects of coteaching, such as the six coteaching models, they do need to understand what supports are necessary for successful coteaching, such as common planning (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Friend, 2008; Thurmond, 2012) and professional development (Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Pratt, 2014).

The project developed as part of this study is designed to ensure that administrators at the research site are knowledgeable regarding coteaching. Administrative support is critical to creating and maintaining a successful coteaching program (Thurmond, 2012). As a result, the project includes an informational session designed to educate administrators about the supports recommended by experts in the field of coteaching and the needed supports identified by the participants in this study. Administrators attending this session will learn what supports they need to provide in order to develop and sustain a successful coteaching program.

Description and Goals

Educating teachers about the coteaching models and how to use them positively impacts the effectiveness of coteachers and consequently impacts the academic success of all students, including students with disabilities (Friend, 2014). The findings of this study identified the needs of the general education teachers involved in coteaching. Those findings were used to guide the creation of a 3 day professional development. One goal of this professional development program is to examine the frequency of the implementation of coteaching models in cotaught inclusion classes. According to coteaching experts, once teachers become trained in the six coteaching models, they should employ all of the models with varying frequencies (Friend, 2014, Murawski, 2009). Another goal of the professional development is to examine the effectiveness of coteaching teams. The attainment of the goals of the professional development will be measured by using data collected from evaluative surveys specifically designed to assess the goals of this professional development (Appendix A).

Administrators play a crucial role in implanting new education programs. School administrations need to be aware of the types of supports that are recommended by experts in the field of coteaching. This is true even when coteaching is already established at a school; at ABC High School, for example, this study determined that participants wanted more support from the administration. If administrators are not willing or not knowledgeable enough to provide those supports, a coteaching program cannot be successfully implemented or operated. For that reason, I designed an

administration informational session that is informed by recommendations of administrative supports from the study participants and on their perceived needs.

The informational session consists of a dissemination of the findings of this study, a Power Point presentation on coteaching using current research, and a question and answer period. It is designed to inform the administrators about the supports they need to provide for their coteachers according to the findings of the study and coteaching experts, as suggested by Friend (2014). Evaluating the administrators' attainment of coteaching information is not part of this project. The focus of this project is the evaluation of coteaching partnerships and their implementation of coteaching models. Providing time for administrators to ask questions at the end of the session will help address any lingering concerns administrators may have. Each administrator will also be provided with a selection of current literature confirming the recommended supports. These components are designed to assist administrators in implementing and sustaining an effective coteaching program.

I also developed a professional development curriculum for teachers that was informed by my study findings. This curriculum is specifically designed to improve teachers' classroom instructional strategies and the overall effectiveness of the coteaching partnerships at the research site. The professional development is based on the teachers' perceived needs and the characteristics of effective coteaching according to coteaching experts.

One important goal of this professional development curriculum is examining the effectiveness of the coteaching partnerships. During the professional development

sessions, teachers involved in coteaching will take part in activities such as role play, direct lecture, and group discussions, designed to help them build coteaching partnerships based on theories espoused by Friend (2014) and Murawski (2009). To measure the attainment of this goal, teachers will complete an evaluative survey at the end of the semester (Appendix A). This survey is designed to assess the teachers' coteaching partnership.

Another goal of the professional development is to evaluate the implementation of the six coteaching models in the classroom by the teachers involved in the professional development. A survey measuring the frequency of coteaching models implemented in the classroom by the coteachers will be administered at the end of the semester (Appendix A). According to Friend (2014), coteachers should employ the six coteaching models within their classroom. The specific model chosen by the coteachers depends on the content being taught and the needs of the individual students in the classroom. The data collected from this survey will be used to evaluate the attainment of this goal.

This study's professional development curriculum for teachers is designed to be implemented over three days. The professional development is multifaceted, consisting of 12 modules. The first module of this professional development is an introduction to the professional development. Teachers at the research site do not find out who they will be coteaching with until the week before school begins, which is called preplanning. The professional development will occur during preplanning. On the first day of the professional development teachers will learn whom they will be coteaching with during the school year. During Module 2 teachers will learn the skills they need to develop open

communication with their coteacher and build a professional relationship based on equality. The focus of Modules 3-8 will be Friend's (2014) six models of coteaching. In each of these modules, one of the models will be discussed and teachers will be given the opportunity to practice the models. In the ninth module, we will discuss the importance of shared planning. Since most general education teachers have never shared instructional responsibilities with another teacher, they will need to learn how to collaborate effectively- beginning with lesson planning.

Teachers will also be given the opportunity to develop lessons based on Friend's (2014) coteaching models with their coteacher. In Module 10 teachers will learn how to convey to their students and parents that the coteaching relationship in their classroom is truly based on equality. A parity or equality checklist will help teachers present that collaborative relationship. In module 11 the facilitator will form partnerships between coteaching teams. These peer partnerships will serve as an ongoing support system throughout the year. In module 12 teachers will be asked to provide feedback and evaluate the professional development.

During the professional development, coteaching partnerships will be paired with other coteaching partnerships to establish coteaching peer communities. These partnerships will learn how to use nonevaluative observational protocols during the professional development and will employ these protocols to observe the partnership they have been paired with in the classroom. Since the teachers involved in these coteaching partnerships are peers with no authoritative roles over each other, the observations are collegial sharing rather than evaluations. The coteaching peer partnerships will observe

each other within the first month following the professional development. The coteaching

peer partnerships will meet monthly throughout the school year to share with each other

the observations. The place and time of these monthly meetings will be determined by the

two coteaching partnerships.

Rationale

The catalyst for this study was the lack of understanding of general education

teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding cotaught inclusion classes. When those

implementing the program do not understand the perceptions of teachers on which the

program relies, the success of the coteaching program may be hindered. Understanding

the perceptions of general education teachers is an important first step in effectively

implementing coteaching in a school. Knowing what general education teachers who are

currently coteaching know about coteaching methods can help school leaders address any

gaps in their knowledge of coteaching methods. Knowing the perceptions and

experiences of general education teachers regarding coteaching can help school leaders

address any misconceptions or lack of knowledge about coteaching. Providing

professional development for teachers on coteaching methods may improve the

effectiveness of coteaching in the classroom (Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Pratt, 2014;

Solis et al., 2012; Walsh, 2012; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996).

General education teachers at the research site typically do not volunteer to

coteach inclusion classes. Administrators decided to assign general education teachers to

cotaught inclusion classes. Administrators did not understand why general education

teachers were hesitant to volunteer to coteach inclusion classes. This study provides some

insight into why general education teachers at this research site were not volunteering to coteach. The findings of this study indicated that general education teachers did not feel prepared to coteach inclusion classes. They expressed the need for professional development. Providing the teachers involved in coteaching with the knowledge to coteach through professional development may increase the number of general education teachers volunteering for a coteaching position.

This study revealed that only one participant out of 10 acknowledged ever hearing about coteaching methods. Most of the participants said they lacked the knowledge they needed to coteach inclusion classes. The findings of this study indicated a perceived need for professional development. Experts support the need for professional development focused on coteaching (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). For that reason the project I chose to create was a professional development. The type of professional development chosen for this school is a training model which includes content delivery, exploration of techniques, demonstrations of newly acquired practices, and feedback (Easton, 2008; Guskey & Sparks, 2004; Tallerico, 2005). This type of professional development was chosen because it best fits the participants expressed desire to actively learn about coteaching.

A professional development was developed based on the findings of this study and a literature review. This professional learning opportunity will provide teachers involved in coteaching with the knowledge they need to establish an equitable coteaching team and implement the six coteaching models in their inclusion classes at this research site (Friend, 2014). The professional development will introduce teachers involved in

coteaching to the models of coteaching inclusion classes. The goals of the professional

development are to evaluate the frequency of implementation of the coteaching models

and examine the effectiveness of the coteaching teams

An informational session for administrators will present the administrators at the

research site with the recommended administrative supports for coteaching programs.

Experts say that if administrators are not willing or knowledgeable in the supports

recommended for creating and maintaining a successful coteaching program, the program

may not be effective (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). With the support of the

administration and effective professional development, this school can build and sustain

effective coteaching partnerships in all of their inclusive classrooms.

Administrative Informational Session

The project will begin with an informational session for the administrators at the

school. School leaders began implementing cotaught inclusion classes to meet federal

mandates (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Nichols et al., 2010). Some schools, in their haste to

adhere to federal guidelines, implemented coteaching without understanding the staff

supports needed (Florian, 2010; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). In this learning session,

administrators will have the opportunity to learn what effective coteaching teams need

from administrators using a PowerPoint presentation. Many schools use coteaching as a

means of satisfying federal mandates (Florian, 2010; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010;

McCray & McHatton, 2011) but coteaching can be more than just meeting federal

requirements when the administrators provide the recommended supports (Pratt, 2014;

Thurmond, 2012). In the informational session, administrators will learn that effective

coteaching programs need certain administrative supports which may improve the

academic achievement for students with disabilities (Murawski & Swanson, 2001;

Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Walsh, 2012).

Coteaching Basics for Teachers

The professional development for teachers will begin by discussing the

characteristics of effective coteaching. According to leading authorities on coteaching,

coteaching is an instructional delivery method in which all students, including students

with disabilities, receive specialized instruction from two educational professionals

(Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Murawski, 2009). Key definitions of terms linked to

coteaching will be examined to give participants a complete understanding of coteaching.

Data collected in this study revealed that most participants identified themselves

as the teacher in charge. In an effective coteaching team, however, both teachers are

equally in charge and responsible for every aspect of the student's learning (Friend, 2014;

Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). Establishing parity between the coteachers, where both

teachers share equally in the education of all of their students, is essential in effective

coteaching (Murawski, 2009). Parity refers to a condition of equality which means that if

parity is established, teachers are equal partners, sharing every aspect of the education of

students, including accountability for outcomes, daily planning, daily instruction, and

creating assessments (Friend et al., 1993; Friend et al., 2010; Murawski & Dieker, 2008).

The proposed professional development will provide teachers with the collaboration and

communication skills to build a professional relationship based on parity.

The second perceived need of the participants in this study was for providing professional development, focused on coteaching, for teachers involved in a cotaught inclusion setting. The literature review confirmed that need for professional development for coteachers (Friend, 2014; Kamens et al., 2003; Lieber, Hanson, Beckman, Odom, Sandall, Schwartz, Horn, & Wolery, 2000; Moin et al., 2009; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014; Walther-Thomas et al., 2000). Participants indicated that professional learning should focus on the knowledge they need to be effective coteachers.

Learning the six coteaching models will be an integral point of the professional development. Coteaching is not simply two teachers in one classroom; coteaching is a service delivery method with specific requirements and models (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). Teachers cannot be expected to use the strategies developed for effective coteaching if they are not trained in those strategies (Bradshaw, 2009; Friend, 2014; Pratt, 2014). The six coteaching models will be explained, discussed, and demonstrated during the professional development and will provide teachers with the strategies they need to meet the needs of a diverse, inclusion class (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). Additionally, during the professional development, teachers will be allowed to practice those six models of coteaching in a supportive, non-evaluative environment, surrounded by other coteachers.

Coteaching Partnerships

Participants expressed the need for a professional development that would teach them how to observe other coteaching pairs in a supportive, non-evaluative manner. I2 for example, said she would like to visit other coteaching teams and be given the

opportunity to work closely with other coteaching teams. Coteachers at this research site currently do not have the opportunity to collaboratively work with other coteaching teams unless they set up times outside of school hours to do so. I2 felt that meeting with and observing other coteaching teams is an important factor for the coteaching program to be effective. The project will establish coteaching peer partnerships between coteaching teams. Peer coaching support is a process in which individual colleagues or groups of colleagues work together to share ideas, knowledge, observations, and feedback (Bruce & Ross, 2008). This type of peer coaching will allow teams of coteachers to observe other coteachers then provide feedback to the coteaching team (Scheeler et al., 2010). Peer coaching affords teachers with continual, non-judgmental support while also providing knowledgeable feedback between the peer groups (Easton, 2008; Sun et al., 2013). Establishing coteaching peer partnerships encourages the diffusion of coteaching knowledge and expertise throughout the coteaching community.

Once the professional development is concluded and coteaching peer partnerships have been established, coteaching partnerships can observe each other and share their observations to improve the effectiveness of their coteaching. With the support of administration, teachers will be afforded the opportunity to visit their coteaching partner's classrooms to observe coteaching strategies implemented. When observing each other in a non-evaluative setting teachers are more likely to share constructive feedback that may improve instructional strategies (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Easton, 2008; Huston & Weaver, 2008). Following the observations, the partnerships will meet to provide feedback on the coteaching strategies observed. Through coteaching partnerships,

coteaching teams have the opportunity to observe other coteaching teams and foster a collaborative community through communication.

Collaborative Meetings with Coteaching Peer Partners

The findings of this study revealed that the general education teachers involved in coteaching felt disconnected from other coteachers in the school. I4 said it felt as though "the coteachers were forgotten." Most participants expressed the need for a supportive community. Coteaching peer partnerships can positively impact instructional improvement (Borko, 2004; Bruce & Ross, 2008). Coteaching pairs can learn from each other when they communicate openly and honestly about their practices (McDonald, 2001). During the professional development, coteaching pairs will be assigned to another coteaching partnership in an effort to create a support system among the coteachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes (Walsh, 2012; Walther-Thomas et al., 2009). Establishing these connections between coteaching teams will help develop a collegial coteaching community at the school (Borko, 2004; Doolittle, Sudeck, & Rattigan, 2009).

Coteaching peer partnerships will be instructed to meet monthly. Scheduling monthly collaborative meetings with their coteaching peer partnerships, following the professional development, will allow coteaching pairs to share classroom observations with other coteaching pairs and share coteaching strategies that were successfully used in their classes. The collaborative meetings may help establish a professional support community where coteachers can reflect on their practices and seek support from other teachers in the same unique setting.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this literature review was to investigate coteaching as a service delivery method for inclusion classes and examine aspects of professional developments and how they impact a teacher's professional growth. Specifically, the focus of the literature review was the advantages and disadvantages of coteaching, professional development in education and in coteaching, professional development models, and the potential impact of professional development in students' academic success. This literature review was conducted using education databases such as ERIC, Education Research Complete, and SAGE. These databases were accessed through the Walden library. Librarians at Walden aided this literature review by providing assistance finding specific articles and by advising how to decide on key terms for searching educational databases. When exploring current literature, key words pertaining to this study were used to narrow search efforts. Search words included coteaching, inclusion, adult learning, professional development, education, peer coaching, and models of professional development.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Coteaching

Students with disabilities are being introduced into general education classes with increasing frequency. Placing students with disabilities in general education classes with their nondisabled peers is referred to as inclusion (Gur & Uzner, 2010; Kamens et al., 2003). Including students with disabilities is a relatively new concept. The educational practice of inclusion was introduced in 1986 with the passage of Public Law 94-142, which required all public schools accepting federal funds to provide equal access to

education for students with disabilities (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011). Initially, inclusion was not readily accepted by school systems. Although school leaders were required to provide some form of education for students with disabilities, they were not bound by the law to include students with disabilities in general education classes nor were they required to monitor the quality of any inclusion programs present in their school (West, 2000). However the advent of the legislation NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) changed the landscape of education regarding inclusion classes. NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) specifically addressed the requirement of school systems to provide students with disabilities a quality education in the least restrictive environment. Many educational leaders believe that the least restrictive environment is a general education class with their nondisabled peers (Solis, et al., 2012). NCLB (2001) specifically required students with disabilities to be instructed by a teacher highly qualified in the content area. Previously, students with disabilities often received instruction from a special education teacher not certified in the content area. Federal mandates such as NCLB ushered in an increasing need for inclusion classes lead by a highly qualified general education teacher and supported by a special education teacher (Yell & Rozalski, 2013). School leaders attempting to adhere to the federal requirements began increasing the number of cotaught inclusion classes offered at their schools (Conderman, 2011; Murawski & Dieker, 2008).

Cotaught inclusion refers to diverse classes that include both students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers being taught by a general education and a special education professional (Friend, 2014; Friend et al., 2010; Moin et al., 2009). Coteaching satisfies federal mandates such as IDEA and NCLB (McCray & McHatton, 2011; Yell &

Rozalski, 2013), but some feel that coteaching is too costly (Jones & Harris, 2012).

Opponents argue that requiring two educational professionals to teach one class is cost

prohibitive (Friend et al., 1993; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). One study

mathematically refutes this claim; their study compared the cost of educating students

with disabilities in a typical resource class containing an average of 6 students, to a larger

cotaught class with an average of 11 students with disabilities, and found that staffing

resources classes of this size is actual more expensive than providing two teachers for a

cotaught class (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Proponents of cotaught inclusion classes

acknowledge that coteaching can be more costly than traditional solo teaching, depending

on the class sizes, but they contend that the diverse needs of students in inclusion classes

require the blended experience of a content specialist and a special education specialist

(Friend, 2008). Coteaching experts do agree that coteaching is not cost effective if the

instruction is not qualitatively different than in a traditional classroom but they assert that

coteaching is cost effective when both teachers are actively participating in the

differentiating instruction to meet the needs of their diverse student population (Friend, et

al., 1993; Friend, 2014; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Murawski, 2009).

Not all educators believe that the coteaching instructional delivery method meets

the needs of all students with disabilities (Florian, 2010). Some educators view the

inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes as negatively

impacting the academic environment of the classroom (Bradshaw, 2009). Some educators

believe students with disabilities should not be placed in general education classes even

when supports are present (Bradshaw, 2009). Proponents of coteaching claim that the

cotaught methodology has the potential to meet the needs of all students (Friend, 2014, Marshak et al., 2011; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). They caution, however, that negative attitudes toward cotaught inclusion classes impede the success of the program (Sharma et al., 2008). Educational experts agree that if coteaching is to be successful, the educators involved need to believe in the potential positive impacts of coteaching (Bradshaw, 2009). Educators involved in coteaching also caution that not all students with disabilities should be included in general education classes It is critical to place students in the appropriate setting based on their unique needs; not all students with disabilities should be included in general education classes (Klingner, Vaughn, Schumm, Cohen, & Forgan, 1998; Luster & Durrett, 2003). Coteaching experts believe, however, that the needs of most students can be met through the use of coteaching strategies (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). Cotaught inclusion classes have the potential to improve the academic success of students with disabilities (Conderman, 2011; Friend, 2014; Jones & Harris, 2012; Lingo et al., 2011; Murawski & Dieker, 2008). Proponents of coteaching contend that individuals with disabilities can be academically successful when provided with the appropriate supports (Friend, 2014; Solis et al., 2012).

Some educators feel that coteaching may improve students' learning but feel that more research is needed before a definitive statement regarding the efficacy of coteaching can be made (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Even though there is limited research on the effectiveness of coteaching, the research available indicates it is a successful method for providing students with disabilities quality education in the least restrictive environment (Conderman, 2011;

Friend, 2008). Proponents point to the quantitative and qualitative research that has been conducted, which indicates that when students with disabilities receive instruction through coteaching methods, the academic outcomes of these students have improved (Lingo et al., 2011; Marshak et al., 2011; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Walsh, 2012).

What is Needed to Make Coteaching Effective

Research regarding the effectiveness of coteaching indicates that for coteaching to be effective, teachers must have administrative support and must learn the appropriate strategies relating to this service delivery method (Friend, 2014; Murawski & Dieker, 2004). Professional development focused on coteaching strategies can be used to help teachers develop the skills they need to be successful in cotaught inclusion classes. Peer coaching is a teacher-teacher support system that can be used to enhance the coteaching program.

Professional Development in Education

Professional development refers to learning experiences that further an individual's knowledge in their profession (Hirsh, 2007). Learning opportunities for professionals can focus on current "best practices," support programs, or specific knowledge (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Effective professional learning should be designed and carefully structured to meet the specific needs of the target population (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara, & Miratrix, 2012). The expanding competitive global environment of industries has challenged business leaders to promote learning and professional growth for themselves and their employees (Campana, 2014; Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008). Society's leaders appreciate the importance of professional

learning. Industries employ formal and informal learning to improve the knowledge and skills of their employees (Campana, 2014). Professional learning has become an important avenue for improving an individual's skills and productivity.

Professional learning is important for many professions, including education. It is critical for educators to have access to current, effective professional development (Friend, 2014; Lee, 2005). "In the history of education, no improvement effort has succeeded in the absence of thoughtfully planned and well-implemented professional development" (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p.497-498). Professional development for educators has been an integral part of education for decades. In 1916, the American Educational Research Association was founded to encourage scholarly endeavors among educators for the purpose of improving education (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010). School leaders began to believe that "schools can be no better than the teachers and administrators who work within them" (Guskey & Sparks, 2004, p. 12). Initially professional developments were used to provide teachers with the basic teaching skills, meaning lesson planning, and were generic for all teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010). In more recent years, however professional development has shifted to be more focused on providing activities and knowledge specific to the educational situation in which the professional development is being provided (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Guskey & Sparks, 2004).

This shift away from generic professional development and toward more targeted professional developments has resulted in more effective and useful professional development. Not every professional development, "even those with the greatest

evidence of positive impact, is of itself relevant for all teachers" (Avalos, 2011, p. 10).

Research indicates that teachers are more likely to change their instructional practices

when they receive professional development focused on their specific pedagogical and/or

content needs (Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Weiss & Pasley, 2006). Characteristics of

quality professional developments include a focus on the content to be taught and how

the students will acquire the content, active learning opportunities during the professional

development, and collaborative participation of groups of teachers (Desmone et al.,

2012). Some research suggests that professional developments for teachers should

include most of these characteristics (Garet et al., 2001). When choosing professional

developments for teachers, educational leaders should consider these factors, but they

ultimately should base their decisions on the needs of their student population and the

needs of their teachers (Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey & Sparks, 2004; Heller et al.,

2012; Helenius et al., 2014; Weiss & Pasley, 2006).

Quality teaching is planned and requires time and effort in designing and

implementing learning opportunities that provide teachers with the knowledge they need

to become effective teachers. Administrative leadership and support is critical to the

success of any professional development (Pratt, 2014; ul Hassan et al., 2010; Walsh,

2012). If administrators expect quality teaching in "every classroom, all teachers must be

supported in turn by skillful principals who work in systems that support their sustained

development as instructional leaders" (Sparks, 2002, p. 1-1). To create and maintain

improvements in education, administrators must carefully plan and implement

professional developments for the teachers in their school (Guskey & Yoon, 2009;

Lieberman & Miller, 2001). Implementing an effective coteaching program requires professional developments specifically designed to meet the needs of teachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes. Experts recommend that administrators implementing or maintaining effective coteaching programs should provide time for coteaching teams to attend professional developments together (Bouck, 2007; Cramer et al., 2010; Friend, 2014). The professional development model used by the school leaders depends on the specific needs of the coteachers at the school. Even though all effective professional developments are structured to educate teachers on current methodologies and strategies in education based on experts in the field (Guskey & Yoon, 2009), not all professional developments meet the needs of the teachers. The professional development should be specific to the needs of the teachers who will be participating.

Traditionally, the cultivation of professional knowledge for teachers has been through professional development workshops. Professional developments can vary dramatically in length, structure, and focus. Some programs are short programs teaching educators one specific required task such as how to register students for the upcoming school year. For example, teachers at the research high school are required to attend a one-hour professional development every year explaining the new course offerings and teaching them how to register students for these classes. In contrast, professional developments can be long-term, lasting over 100 contact hours such as the professional development given as part of a research study conducted to assess the efficacy of teachers who participate in year-long professional development (Lumpe, Czerniak, Haney, & Beltyukova, 2011).

Educational leaders choose professional development programs for their school based on what their teachers need to become more successful in the classroom. Thus, professional development programs vary depending on the needs of the teachers and the needs of the administrators. Most professional developments are one to three day workshops focusing on a single topic (Dunst & Raab, 2010). Research shows that although this type of professional development may be effective on its own, coupling it with continuing support increases the effective implementation of new strategies in the classroom (Dunst & Raab, 2010; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Parker et al., 2008). Many educational leaders feel that professional development workshops that offer no sustained support system, such as peer coaching, are a "waste of both time and money" (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 496). Tienken and Stonaker (2007) claim that if a school district changes its professional development department from "one-shot topics to a system" based on continual professional development it will create a culture of learning that will allow teachers to improve professionally throughout the school year (Tienken & Stonaker, 2007, p. 24).

Professional Development for Coteachers

The literature review indicated that professional development is a critical component for coteachers to grow professionally (Hirsh, 2007; Ho, 2000; Huston & Weaver, 2008; McDonald, 2001; Tillema & Van der Westhuizen, 2006). Since coteaching is a relatively new instructional delivery method, many veteran general education teachers are not familiar with the strategies needed to be effective coteachers (Kamens et al., 2003). According to Murawski (2009), "general education teachers often

state that they do not know the role the special service provider nor what they are supposed to do in the cotaught setting" (p. 21). Teachers frequently admit they need professional learning opportunities in coteaching strategies, such as the coteaching models, collaboration, and differentiation (Murawski & Dieker, 2008). This lack of knowledge regarding coteaching strategies and models was also revealed in the findings of this study. Research shows that professional development opportunities increase teachers' knowledge of coteaching strategies, which will improve the quality of inclusive practices (Gokdere, 2012; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Pratt, 2012; Supovitz & Turner, 2000; Walsh, 2012) and thereby improve student learning (Friend, 2014; Gurgur & Uzner, 2010). Even though special education teachers have had specific instruction about teaching students with disabilities, few have taught in an inclusive setting, so both general education and special education teachers would benefit from a professional development focused on coteaching strategies (Friend, 2013).

To learn how to become effective coteachers, teachers must receive professional developments that are tailored to meet their specific needs (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009; Wiliam, 2007). Coteaching experts believe that professional development for coteachers needs to relate directly to all aspects of coteaching, which includes establishing parity, planning lessons, developing assessments, defining roles and responsibilities, and learning the six models of coteaching and how to utilize them in the classroom (Friend, 2014; Moin, et al., 2009; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). For example, research on coteaching shows that the special education teacher often assumes the subordinate role of assistant, (Magiera et al., 2005; Scheeler et al., 2010) even though

coteaching is most effective when the special education teacher and general education teachers in a coteaching partnership equally share the instructional responsibilities of the class (Friend, 2014; Murawski & Dieker, 2004; Murawski, 2009). The findings of this study also indicated a lack of parity among the coteaching teams. This lack of parity can be addressed by a professional development which teaches participants tools for establishing equal coteaching partnerships. Dramatic reform is possible when teachers are given the tools to coteach.

Because a strong, equitable partnership is the basic foundation upon which a successful coteaching team can be built (Friend, 2014, Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014), it is important for both the general education and the special education teacher to attend professional development focused on coteaching strategies together (Friend, 2014; LaPorte, 2010; Murawski, 2009). Both teachers can learn the coteaching models and how to build an equitable professional relationship. Once this professional relationship is established, coteachers can focus on implementing coteaching models to improve the learning environment in their classroom.

Even though I found a plethora of research supporting the need for professional developments specifically focused on coteaching (Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014), there was a surprising dearth of research actually creating those needed professional developments for coteachers. The lack of professional developments specific to coteaching inclusion classes emphasizes a gap in educational practice and the potential educational value of my project. The literature review revealed the importance of professional development programs for all educators (Hirsh, 2007; Ho,

2000; Huston & Weaver, 2008; McDonald, 2001; Tillema & Van der Westhuizen, 2006) and also revealed the need of professional developments specifically for teachers involved in coteaching (Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Murawski & Hughes, 2010; Pratt, 2014). The findings of this study supported the revelations of the literature review. Teachers feel they need, and experts agree, coteachers need a complete working knowledge of the strategies of coteaching to effectively coteach inclusion classes.

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is a professional support system that can be used to enhance professional development programs, particularly in the realm of coteaching (Goldman et al., 2013; Kazempour & Amirshokoohi, 2014; Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008). Peer coaching offers sustained support for coteachers by providing teachers with on-going support and knowledge acquisition through a community of individuals sharing a similar circumstance (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Easton, 2008; Lu, 2010; Sun et al., 2013; Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013). Peer coaching is underutilized by educational leaders in the United States (Huston & Weaver, 2008), and teachers cannot be expected to participate in peer coaching without first having professional development focused on how to peer coach (Scheeler et al., 2010). When teachers understand the nuances of peer coaching, it may provide teachers with a support system (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Goker, 2006) where teachers can "share their unique knowledge base and expertise, allowing exploration of new ideas and expansion of professional skill repertoires" (Little, 2005, p. 83).

Peer coaching has been used to promote effective teaching strategies through peer observation and feedback (Goker, 2006; Sun et al., 2013; Goldman et al., 2013; Troen &

Boles, 2010). However, some teachers become defensive about their peers observing

them during class and perceive the observations as threatening (Goldman et al., 2013;

Showers, 1984). Professional development regarding what is expected of teachers

participating in peer coaching (Scheeler et al., 2010) and encouragement and support

from school leaders early in the stages of implementing peer coaching can alleviate those

barriers (Showers, 1984). When teachers understand the unique advantages of peer

coaching, they are able to support each other and promote the diffusion of knowledge

throughout the coteaching community (Lu, 2010).

Peer teachers act as mentors to each other. For peer coaching to be effective,

teachers must not be in a position of authority over each other; peers interact in a

nonevaluative manner fostering a trusting relationship (Goldman et al., 2013; Parker,

Hall, & Kram, 2008). Teachers entering into a peer coaching relationship provide mutual

support through reciprocal classroom observations and sharing thoughtful feedback

(Huston & Weaver, 2008). This supportive interaction is an educational process

encouraging teachers to acquire new strategies and implement them in the classroom

(Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013).

The findings of this study indicate that the participants felt a need for collegial

discourse with other coteachers which can be accomplished through a program such as

peer coaching. Research supports this perceived need for a collegial support system

(Bruce & Rosse, 2008; Conderman et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2013). This need can be

satisfied by establishing a peer coaching program for teachers involved in coteaching.

Coteacher peer coaching may involve teachers observing each other for the purpose of

sharing observations in a non-evaluative manner (Huston & Weaver, 2008). During the

professional development, created as a result of this study and literature review, teachers

will learn to use the observational protocol which serves as a template for making

observations objectively without judgment, then share that feedback with their coteaching

peers (Murawski & Lochner, 2010).

Professional Development Models

As discussed above, when educational reform is needed, the teachers involved in

implementing that change must be afforded the opportunity to learn the appropriate tools

and be supported in the implementation of the new skills (Garet, Porter, Desmone,

Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Heller et al., 2012; Hirsh, 2007; Moin et al., 2009; Walker-

Dalhouse, Risko, Esworthy, Grasley, Kaisler, McIlvain, & Stephan, 2009). Professional

development is a learning opportunity that school leaders use to ensure teachers continue

to strengthen their craft and improve job related strategies (Heller et al., 2012; Guseky &

Sparks, 2004; Supovitz & Turner, 2000). Even though all professional developments are

learning opportunities, they do not all have the same program formats or model.

Professional development models are learning tools which differ in the format for

presenting the information. Professional development models vary depending on the

activities, the content, and the target population. A leader should consider each of these

aspects before deciding on the professional development model (Lee, 2005). Each model

can be an effective learning tool.

Individually-guided professional development is a model where the teachers

themselves plan and pursue activities that will improve their knowledge (Bruce & Ross,

2008; Kazempour & Amirshokoohi, 2014; Tallerico, 2005). The teachers determine the

content to be pursued based on the activities they feel will promote their own professional

growth. Examples of individually-guided professional developments include grant

writing, professional organization committee work, professional conferences, and grant

writing (Lee, 2005). This type of professional development is determined by the interests

of the teacher themselves. One potential deficit of this model is that it is based on an

assumption; the assumption that teachers can appropriately judge their own professional

learning needs (Lee, 2005; Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; Tallerico, 2005).

Another professional development model, the observation and assessment of

teaching model, provides teachers with feedback based on classroom observations

(Tallerico, 2005). In this model, teachers first meet and each teacher identifies areas she

or he would like the observer to pay special attention to during the observation. Teachers

serve as classroom observers for each other. Following each observation, the teachers

meet for a post-observation conference to share observations and provide collegial

feedback regarding those areas of concern (Tallerico, 2005). This type of professional

development, which is a type of "peer coaching" in which teachers learn from other

teachers, can be an effective professional development process (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Sun

et al., 2013). For this model to be effective, teachers must commit to meeting regularly

"in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding" (Erikson, Brandes, Mitchell, &

Mitchell, 2005, p. 787). This type of professional development is effective when both

teachers are highly engaged in the process (Scheeler et al., 2010). However, this model

will not be effective if teachers gather information but do not use that data to improve

their practice (Sparks & Louchks-Horsley, 1989; Tallerico, 2005).

The involvement/improvement process model is another type of professional

development. This model engages teachers in the process of improving the academic

environment of the school through designing programs and developing curriculum

(Guskey & Sparks, 2004). This professional development process is similar to Tallerico's

(2005) collaborative problem solving model which involves teachers in problem solving

endeavors at the school where they teach. This model empowers teachers to explore

personal areas of concern within their school where they feel improvements can be made.

The teachers then engage in activities to bring about improvements relating to pedagogy

or an area of the curriculum (Fang, 2013). This professional development model is action

oriented, providing the teachers with hands-on practical experience (Tallerico, 2005).

This model is based on a teacher's observation of a perceived problem and his or her

desire to solve that problem (Sparks & Loucks-Horsely, 1989). In some cases, teachers

may perceive that a specific curriculum is weak or ineffective. Teachers may design and

improve a school's curriculum but may not be in a position to actually change the

program's curriculum.

A fourth type of professional development model is the action research model. In

this model one or more teachers identify an area of instructional interest, collect data, and

make appropriate changes based on the analysis of the data (Tallerico, 2005). This model

requires teachers to decide on an area of research which will improve their practice,

develop a plan for gathering and analyzing data, execute that plan, and then share results

with colleagues (Bradshaw, Gallastegi, Shohel, & Younie, 2014; Mills, 2003). Action research empowers teachers to potentially effect change in their school (Binnie, Allen, & Beck, 2008). This model can be used by individual teachers, by small groups of teachers, or by entire faculties (Guskey & Sparks, 2004). One important requirement for this model is that teachers should be actively engaged in research; so teachers may find this approach demands too much of their time (Sparks & Loucks-Horsely, 1989). Additionally, very few teachers have experience conducting research (Grace, Rietdijk, Garrett,k & Griffiths, 2014).

The final model of professional development is training (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Tallerico, 2005). This model differs from all models in that specific skills and knowledge are identified by experts in the field, not by the teachers; teachers then acquire content knowledge through group instruction and activities (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sparks & Loucks-Horsely, 1989; Tallerico, 2005). Training is the model typically associated with professional developments for teachers. This model is often used for providing professional development for large groups (Tallerico, 2005). Teachers frequently view this model as too sedentary; to combat the traditional lecture format, Tallerico (2005) says that the training model should have practice activities and feedback in addition to the knowledge base.

Professional Development Model Chosen

Since most general education teachers have never cotaught an inclusion class, they feel unprepared without effective professional development (McCray & McHatton, 2011). The findings of this study agreed with the research. The general education

teachers felt ill prepared to coteach an inclusion class. They sought professional

development to add to existing knowledge of coteaching or provide new knowledge.

Providing professional development targeted to meet the needs of the teachers involved

in coteaching will improve the instructional expertise of the teachers (Borko, 2004;

Casale-Giannola, 2012; Desimone et al., 2002; Friend, 2014; Sun, Penuel, Frank,

Gallagher, & Youngs, 2013).

The professional development model chosen depends on the needs of the teachers

and the students of their school; leaders should consider these needs before deciding

which professional development model to use (Tellerico, 2005; Zepeda, 2012). Even

though all professional developments have the potential to improve teaching, which in

turn improves student learning (Avalos, 2011; Guskey & Sparks, 2004; Mizell, 2010), the

model chosen should fit the needs of the population (Easton, 2008, Tallerico, 2005). The

model chosen for this professional development was training because it addresses the

needs of the teachers at the research site. The teachers at this research site expressed the

desire to learn the specific strategies needed to effectively coteach. They also said they

would like to experience coteaching activities. The training model will provide teachers

with the opportunity to learn the content identified by experts in coteaching, explore

current theory, actively practice, and provide and receive feedback (Tallerico, 2005).

The findings of this study indicated that the general education teachers involved

in coteaching perceive they need effective professional development that will give them

the tools to transition from isolated teaching to collaboratively sharing a class with

another educational professional. Research supports the findings of this study (Friend,

2014; Moin et al., 2009; Murowski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). School leaders "interested in improving student achievement may be well-advised to attend, at least in part, to the preparations" of their teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 32).

The purpose of the professional development is to provide teachers with knowledge of the six coteaching models If the professional development is to be successful, it must include knowledge of coteaching strategies according to experts in coteaching (Friend, 2014), activities with direct applications in the classroom, and opportunities for the learners to actively engage in the strategies being taught (Garet et al., 2001). The professional development model chosen as a result of the findings of this study, the training model, intentionally provides active opportunities for teachers to engage with each other and to practice new coteaching strategies learned.

Academic Success of Students

Research indicates that by providing the appropriate professional development, the academic achievement of students is likely to improve (Conderman, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Dieker et al., 2013; Guskey, 2004). Effective professional developments can positively change the practices of teachers which will influence the academic environment of the school (Guskey & Sparks, 2004; Guskey & Yoon, 2009). As teachers increase their professional knowledge, their teaching practice may improve; improving teacher effectiveness has been directly linked to student achievement (Avalos, 2011; Guskey & Sparks, 2004; NSDC, 2001). The role of a teacher is to effectively instruct students in a content area. Therefore, it is the responsibility of an educator to seek out learning opportunities that may improve the quality of the classroom instruction

(Allington, 2013). A direct relationship exists between effective professional development opportunities for teachers and the academic improvements of students (Avalos, 2011; Guskey & Sparks, 2004; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sparks, 2002).

Summary

The results of this study indicated a perceived need for professional development by general education teachers involved in coteaching. Literature supported the premise that teachers asked to coteach, need professional development to develop effective coteaching partnerships and learn the coteaching models (Borko, 2004; Doolittle et al., 2009; Florian, 2010; Huston & Weaver, 2008; Kamens et al., 2003; Mizell, 2010; Moin et al., 2009; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Pratt, 2014). Providing coteachers with a deeper understanding of coteaching and the coteaching models to be implemented in the classroom may improve student learning (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). The content and the model chosen for this professional development was guided by the results of this study and the extensive literature review.

The first goal of this professional development is to examine the effectiveness of the coteaching partnerships. Attainment of this goal will be measured using an evaluative survey (Hand-out #12). This survey is based on knowledge from current coteaching experts (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009). Data collected from the survey will reflect the implementation of the characteristics of an equitable coteaching team taught during the professional development.

Developing a strong professional relationship is the foundation of all successful coteaching teams (Cramer et al., 2010). The professional development will provide the

coteachers with the skills they need to build professional relationships and to define their roles and responsibilities. The "practice of coteaching is based on creating a strong professional relationship" (p. 51, Friend, 2014). Teachers need to have the communication skills to establish and refine a professional relationship with their coteaching partner (Conderman et al., 2009; Dieker et al., 2013; Moorehead & Grillo, 2013; Murawski, 2009).

One of the focuses of the professional development is to help teachers establish a collegial support system through peer coaching. Peer coaching provides a network for teachers to share strategies, observe each other, and discuss ideas and critiques (Sun et al., 2013). One of the outcomes of peer teaching is a professional relationship that improves instructional strategies through collegial conversations (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Zepeda, 2011). Coteaching partnerships will be paired with other coteaching partnerships. During the professional development, teachers will learn how to observe each other and share feedback in a non-evaluative, objective manner. The facilitator will explain that all comments and observations should be shared only between the coteaching partnerships; all information gathered during observations is confidential. An observational protocol will be provided to the coteaching teams to serve as a guide when observing classes (Appendix A- Module 11).

An important focus of this professional development will be teaching the six models of coteaching and how to implement them (Friend, 2014). One of the goals of professional development is to evaluate the frequency of the implementation of the coteaching models. The six models of coteaching, as outlined by Friend (2014), are One

Teach, One Observe; Station Teaching; Parallel Teaching; Alternative Teaching; Teaming; and One Teach, One Assist. Each of the models has advantages and disadvantages. Teachers will learn how and when to use these models to best meet the needs of their students.

Implementation

The professional development created as the culminating project for this study will be implemented at the high school where this study was conducted to address the perceived needs of the general education teachers. To ensure successful implementation of the professional development, I have confirmed the support of the administration and secured the necessary resources. I have created a proposed timetable for implementation of the professional development and anticipated potential barriers. I have taken steps to overcome them.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Participation in professional development is a part of the state's certification renewal process for teachers. The administration of the school where the study was conducted recognizes the importance of professional development and provides mandatory sessions for teachers on a variety of educational topics. That established professional development program, however, is completely lacking in any professional developments offered specifically for teachers involved in coteaching.

The professional development for coteaching developed as a part of this study will include power point presentations based on current research regarding coteaching practices. After the power point portion of the presentation, teachers will be given the

opportunity to practice the implementation of the models they learned about with their peers. Coteaching partnerships will be paired with other coteaching partnerships. These peer coaching teams will allow coteachers to continue practicing and thinking about the coteaching models throughout the semester. Following the completion of the professional development, each team will have the opportunity to visit each other's classes to see coteaching in action. Specifically, the coteaching partnerships will be instructed to arrange for classroom observations within one month of the professional development. Once the initial classroom observation has been completed, the coteaching pairs will meet to share their observations. The peer coaching teams will meet monthly and can share their observations during this meeting or arrange for another meeting time. During the monthly collaborative meetings, teachers may share the observations they made and discuss coteaching strategies that have worked and those that have not. Meeting with coteaching colleagues may encourage professional dialogue about practices which could potentially improve the instructional strategies of the teachers involved (Friend, 2014; Friend et al., 2010; Tillema & Van der Westhuizen, 2006).

Potential Barriers

This program was designed to meet the needs of the teachers involved in coteaching. One potential barrier is that some coteachers may not want to be coteaching. The results of the study revealed that the general education teachers currently coteaching did not volunteer for this assignment. They were assigned to a coteaching setting. This reluctance to be part of coteaching in general may mean that the teachers are reluctant to participate in a professional development discussing coteaching. Each teacher's presence

can be ensured by making the professional development mandatory. Under the

professional development protocol at the research high school, teachers are assigned

mandatory professional development sessions based on their teaching assignment.

Additionally, it is possible that even those teachers who did not want to be assigned to

cotaught inclusion classes will be willing and even excited to participate in a professional

development focusing on teaching the strategies of coteaching. Many participants said

they would be more likely to volunteer to coteach if they had training in coteaching. This

fact indicates that teachers involved in coteaching may positively accept the professional

development opportunity. Similarly experts in the field of coteaching indicate that

general education and special education teachers involved in coteaching feel they need

professional development focusing on the coteaching methodology (Kamens et al., 2003;

McCray & McHatton, 2011).

Time is another potential barrier to volunteering to coteach inclusion classes.

During the data collection period, one of the participants expressed the concern that her

special education coteacher said that she does not have time to help because she has to

write IEPs. Current research indicates that coteaching itself is time intensive, but that

research also shows that making time for professional development and common

planning is critical to the success of any coteaching program (Friend, 2014; Moin et al.,

2009; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). Releasing coteachers from some school duties or

excusing them from general school meetings will free time for professional development

and collaboration to occur. Some school districts offer additional staff development units

(SDUs), which are required for teacher recertification, to encourage coteachers to take time to improve their craft.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The high school under study has a leadership conference during the summer for the administration of the school. During this conference I will present the coteaching informational session to the administrators. The presentation will occur during the morning session of the first day of the conference. I will be available to answer additional questions as needed by the administrators. The purpose of this information session is to share the results of this study and to inform administrators what types of support they need to provide to create a successful coteaching program.

The professional development will occur during the first 3 days of preplanning; preplanning occurs the week before school starts. During preplanning, this school offers a choice of learning opportunities for all teachers. The coteaching professional development will be added to the already established offerings. Teachers involved in coteaching will be required to attend these sessions in lieu of attending other meetings.

At this school, coteachers do not find out who their coteacher is prior to co-planning. Coteachers will be introduced to their coteaching partners at a welcome breakfast on the first day of the professional development. The focus of the first module will be teachers introducing themselves and learning about their coteacher. During the second module, the facilitator will use a Power Point presentation to explain what coteaching is, the benefits of coteaching, and how to establish equality in their professional, coteaching relationship. Coteachers will have the opportunity to discuss

what their expectations are for their classroom. In the third module, the facilitator will

begin a Power Point presentation on the models of coteaching. The facilitator will give

this Power Point presentation, which includes information about all six models of

coteaching, beginning on the first day of the professional development (with module 3)

and finishing on the final day with module8. During each module, the facilitator will

introduce one of the six coteaching models: module 3- One Teach, One Observe model;

module 4- Station Teaching model; module 5- Parallel Teaching model; module 6-

Alternative Teaching model; module 7- Teaming model; and module 8- One Teach, One

Assist model. Teachers will also be given the opportunity to practice these models with

their coteaching colleagues during the professional development.

On the third day of professional development, the final coteaching model, One

Teach, One Assist (module 9) will be presented. Following the Power Point presentation

on coteaching models, teachers will be asked to complete hand-out #6, "Which

Coteaching Model suits you best?" This worksheet asks teachers to think about and

discuss which model they think they will want to use in the classroom with their

coteacher. In module 10, the facilitator will share how to set up a coteaching classroom

so the physical appearance of a classroom demonstrates that each teacher has

responsibility of the classroom. In module 11, the facilitator will assign the coteaching

pairs to their coteaching peer partners based on common planning periods. The facilitator

will teach Coteachers how to use an objective observational protocol to establish a non-

evaluative support system for all coteachers. Teachers will be instructed that observations

are to be kept confidential within the coteaching peer partnerships. As part of the final

module, teachers will evaluate the professional development using the professional

development survey established by the school (Appendix A-Module 12 Professional

Development Evaluation Survey). Open-ended questions pertaining specifically to this

professional development have been added to the school's evaluative instrument

(Appendix A-Module 12 Professional Development Evaluation Survey). The open-ended

questions are designed to evaluate the teachers' perceptions of the professional

development. This evaluation survey pertains specifically to the professional

development itself not the attainment of the goals of the professional development.

Separate surveys will be used to evaluate the attainment of the goals.

The goals of the professional development are to examine the effectiveness of the

coteaching partnerships and to evaluate the implementation of the six coteaching models

in the classroom. These goals are based on knowledge gleaned from experts in the field

of coteaching (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009).The attainment of these goals will be

measured using surveys which will be administered at the end of the semester (Appendix

A).

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My initial role in this project was to formulate the professional development for

coteachers. The actual facilitator for the coteaching professional development will be

chosen by the administrator of the high school. However, I will volunteer to be the

facilitator of the professional development sessions. The professional development will

begin during preplanning, which is the week before school starts, in July 2015.

The role of the administrator is crucial to the success of this implementation. During the leadership conference held in July, which is for administrators only, I will present the findings of this study and the administrative supports needed to establish and maintain a successful coteaching program. Each administrator will be provided with current literature expressing the needed supports for creating an effective coteaching program at the school. The role of administrators is to provide the specific supports as outlined in the informational session. During the summer information session with the administration, I will share the importance of scheduling common planning for coteachers and scheduling professional development for coteachers. Evaluating the attainment of this goal is immeasurable and not part of this project. The principal of the school is expected to attend the opening session of the professional development for teachers and address the importance of this learning opportunity.

Project Evaluation

During module 12 on the third day of this professional development, teachers will be invited to evaluate the professional development using the Professional Development Evaluation Survey (Appendix A-Module 12). This survey is based on the professional development evaluation tool used by the school, with additional questions added that address this specific professional development. The survey will consist of Likert-type statements regarding the effectiveness of the professional development at addressing the 9 guiding questions posed at the beginning of the sessions. In addition to the forced choice questions, there will open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. By answering the open-ended questions, teachers will have the opportunity to express their

opinions regarding the effectiveness of the professional development and add additional comments they would like to share regarding implementation of the newly acquired skills and future staff developments.

The goals of the professional development are to evaluate the implementation of the six coteaching models (Friend, 2014) in the classrooms and to examine the effectiveness of the coteaching partnerships of the teachers involved in the professional development. The attainment of these goals will be measured using evaluative surveys (Hand-out #11 and Hand-out #12) that assess teachers' use of the six coteaching models and of practices that foster equality in coteaching partnerships. These surveys will be administered at the end of the semester. Examining the frequency of the implementation of coteaching models at the end of the semester and examining the characteristics of the coteaching partnerships will yield documentation of the attainment of the goals of the professional development program.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Coteaching is an instructional delivery method for meeting the needs of students in a diverse inclusion class. "[Cotaught] inclusion education is not going away" (Murawski & Dieker, 2008. p. 40), which is why school leaders must prepare their teachers to be effective coteachers. The data collected during this study indicated several areas of concern in their coteaching program at their high school. This project was specifically designed to meet the needs of the teachers at this local high school.

Administrators scheduling co-planning for coteachers may rectify some of the needs exposed by the study. Other areas of concern expressed by the teachers, such as, a lack of knowledge regarding coteaching, require professional development. Professional development is needed to provide teachers with the skills to establish coteaching partnerships based on equality. The results of the study revealed that general education teachers felt that all aspects of the class were solely their responsibility. The coteaching teams were not working collaboratively which negatively impacted their effectiveness and therefore the learning environment. Successful coteaching requires an equal sharing of the roles and responsibilities (Friend, 2014). Professional development will teach coteachers the importance of establishing equity in their coteaching partnership and provide teachers with the communication skills they need to negotiate roles and responsibilities. When coteachers are engaged in collegial dialogue to establish a coteaching team based on parity, they will build effective partnerships that may improve the learning environment for students.

Far-Reaching

This project has implications for positive social change in other schools. Federal mandates such as IDEA (2004) require schools to provide education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment led by highly qualified instructors. Because a general education teacher and special education teacher share the instructional responsibilities for a class in a coteaching setting, students with disabilities are placed in the least restrictive environment and potentially receive instruction from highly qualified teachers. Many other school systems have adopted this approach to education as a way to

satisfy federal guidelines (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Florian, 2010), some believe that the impact made by coteaching, although positive, is below what was expected by experts in coteaching (Conderman et al., 2009). Experts feel that this inadequate impact may be due to schools implementing coteaching before providing adequate training for their coteaching teams (Florian, 2010; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Nichols et al., 2010). Research shows that coteaching without appropriate professional development has not been successful (Friend, 2014; Murawski & Dieker, 2008; Pratt, 2014). The ubiquity of coteaching being implemented in schools, but being implemented without proper training for teachers, shows that this project is relevant in many schools across the country. Teachers in every school need specific training in the strategies of coteaching to become proficient in this instructional delivery method.

Conclusion

Although this project was developed as a response to the needs of a local school, the project may be relevant to others schools. Public schools, like this high school under study, are mandated to provide education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment led by highly qualified instructors (IDEA, 2004). Schools across the country are implementing coteaching with increasing frequency to satisfy these federal mandates (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Conderman, 2011; Florian, 2010) without providing training (Florian, 2010; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Nichols et al., 2010). Training is required to provide teachers with the skills necessary to be effective coteachers. This professional development will give teachers entering into a coteaching relationship the tools they need to hone their coteaching craft. Collegial coteaching

relationships help teachers transition from teaching in isolation to teaching in a collaborative environment. The professional development that rose from the findings of this study may serve as the blue print for developing a coteaching learning environment at this school and at any other school attempting to implement coteaching. The following section will provide a review of all aspects of this project study and my reflections on the project's strengths and weaknesses as well as its future implications.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Recent federal mandates in the United States have significantly influenced the education for all students, especially those students with disabilities enrolled in public schools. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) directly influenced the education of students with disabilities by requiring that they be instructed by highly qualified teachers. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of2004 (IDEA) also significantly changed the education of students with disabilities by requiring schools to provide quality education in the least restrictive environment alongside their nondisabled peers. The requirements imposed by NCLB and IDEA have forced public school leaders to search for service delivery methods that ensure that students with disabilities are taught by highly qualified teachers in the least restrictive environment. Many school systems have turned to cotaught inclusion classes as a way to satisfy both requirements (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Gokdere, 2012; Murawski & Dieker, 2008).

This study focuses on cotaught inclusion classes, examining general education teachers' perceptions of and experiences with this instructional delivery method. An extensive review of literature exploring coteaching and literature about professional development revealed an ubiquitous need for a professional development focused on coteaching for teachers involved in coteaching (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008; Davis et al., 2012; Florian, 2010; Friend, 2014; Moin et al., 2009; Murawski, 2009; Pratt, 2014). This need was confirmed through the findings of this study conducted at the local research site, a public high school hereafter referred to as ABC High School.

The findings of this study were used to develop a culminating project providing a professional development aimed at providing appropriate training for faculty assigned to coteaching settings at ABC High School. The project also contains an informational session for administrators that presents the findings of this study and recommendations for new administrative supports for ABC High School. Currently, there are no professional development programs at this school providing training for general education and special education teachers who are assigned to coteaching classrooms. The professional development project created based on this study (see Appendix A) addresses this gap and is scheduled to be implemented at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. It is specifically designed to provide teachers with knowledge specific to coteaching, and to be generizable to any school implementing coteaching.

Project Strengths

A strength of this project is that the culminating professional development was developed for teachers based on current literature and the reported needs of the teachers involved in coteaching. The initial literature review revealed that professional development is a critical component to creating and sustaining a successful coteaching program (Davis et al., 2012; Florian, 2010; Friend, 2014; Murawski & Dieker, 2008).Teachers often feel that they need training in collaboration and coteaching (Murawski & Dieker, 2008). This study found similar results in an urban high school setting, with general education teachers expressing their need for training in coteaching. Thus, the program's curriculum is grounded in what teachers need, making teachers more likely to see the merits of participating in it.

The purpose of this professional development is to instruct teachers involved in coteaching inclusive classes about the methods of coteaching, which will allow them to successfully implement the coteaching service delivery method. The professional development will teach participants the strategies of successful coteaching, which include building professional coteaching relationships (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Pratt, 2014; Sileo, 2011), investigating the six models of coteaching, practicing them during professional development, implementing them in class (Friend, 2014), and establishing non-evaluative collegial coteaching peer partnerships (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Little, 2005; McDonald, 2001).

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Teaching is a time- and labor-intensive profession. Coteaching significantly increases the time demands on teachers because both coteachers must attend meetings required only for teachers of students with disabilities, such as IEPs, and both coteachers must collaborate with each other to provide differentiated instruction to accommodate all of their diverse students' needs (Cramer et al., 2010; Friend et al., 1993; Friend, 2013; Marshak et al., 2011). Collaboration between coteachers (Friend, 2014; Murawski, 2009) and between coteaching peer partnerships (Zeepda, 2011) are time consuming, but are essential components to the successful implementation of coteaching programs. This time limitation can be addressed with the help of a school's administrators. Administrators can help coteachers manage and offset the extra time demands by arranging class coverage using counselors, stellar substitutes, or even administrators themselves. Administrators can also release coteachers from extra duties such as weekly lunch duty. Staff members

with fewer time demands, such as support staff, can also be used to cover these duties.

Releasing coteachers from certain duties may not provide teachers a tremendous amount

of additional time but it will demonstrate the administrator's acknowledgment of the time

demands of coteaching (Marshak et al., 2011; Friend, 2013). Thus, these time

accommodations for coteachers of inclusion classes will not only give coteachers much

needed collaborative time, but also show them that the school leaders understand the

demands placed on coteachers.

<center>**Scholarship**</center>

Scholarship is an integral component of educational investigations in which

research is conducted. Research is a journey that requires hours and hours of

investigating scholarly databases. I found ERIC, Education Research Complete, and

SAGE particularly useful in locating peer-reviewed articles. ProQuest can also provide

the scholar with doctoral dissertations from a multitude of universities. As a scholar, I

understand that before data can be collected, I must first conduct a complete and

exhaustive review of the literature addressing the identified problem.

Being a scholar means abandoning a personal viewpoint. A scholar must

objectively search literature for any pertinent information about the chosen subject. My

first literature review provided me with the information to objectively view the local

problem and relate it to the educational system. The literature review afforded me

research on professional developments and the needs of coteaching programs. This

information guided the development of my project, a professional development for

coteachers. During this research investigation, I had the opportunity to learn through

literature and also enter into scholarly discourse with colleagues and professors. One of these opportunities let me speak with Marilyn Friend, one of the seminal authors of coteaching. I intend to continue my pursuit of scholarship through literature and through collegial conversations.

As I progressed through each stage of this doctoral journey, I gained knowledge about researching techniques and about coteaching. Taking this journey has increased my knowledge of current literature and has given me an understanding of scholarship. I now understand that scholarship requires asking questions, searching for the answers to those questions in literature and research, and then asking new questions based on what I have discovered through literature review and research. True scholarship requires diligence, determination, creativity, and the willingness to ask questions when searching for solutions. Scholarship is an ongoing process, pursuing a more profound understanding of the world that can be used to positively affect social change.

<div align="center">

Project Development and Evaluation

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During this doctoral journey, I learned that the policies of school systems and the programs implemented within schools should be based on data collected through research and on current literature (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Hayes & Robnolt, 2006; Hirsh, 2007; Holcomb, 2004; Killion & Roy, 2009). By using data-driven decision-making, school leaders emphasize a fact-based focus which allows them to "create a powerful paradigm to drive academic excellence" (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010, p. XXV). The development of this project was guided by data collected at the research site and through an exhaustive review of current literature.

Evaluating the impact of all educational programs and interventions is a valuable tool. This process taught me that assessing the effectiveness of the professional development is as important as the research leading up to the development of that professional development. The evaluative tool should be created prior to implementing a professional learning opportunity (Zepeda, 2012). Evaluations of professional developments exploring "teachers' experiences and beliefs while they are participating in the workshops" [professional developments] are needed to provide meaningful learning opportunities for teachers (Kazempour & Amirshokoohi, 2013). Participants in this professional development will be asked to evaluate the professional development on the last day of the program (Appendix A). The evaluative survey will ask teachers to share their perceptions of the professional development. Participants will also be asked to complete evaluative survey at the end of the semester assessing the attainment of the professional development goals (Appendix A).

The evaluative survey of the professional development will include Likert-type questions that measure the teachers' perspective on the effectiveness of the professional development. Teachers' perceived learning is a significant component of the evaluation of a professional development (Guskey, 2000; Kazempour & Amirshokoohi, 2013). Open-ended questions will also be used to measure teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the professional development. This doctoral journey reinforced the importance of using appropriate assessments to evaluate educational programs and then using that evaluative data to guide future decisions regarding professional development.

It is valuable to assess whether teachers are learning and then adjust professional developments to meet the needs of teachers (Guskey & Sparks, 2004). Evaluation tools must align with the goals of the project. The goals of this professional development are to evaluate the implementation of the six coteaching models in the classroom and to examine the effectiveness of the coteaching partnerships. In addition to evaluating the professional development, the teachers at this research site will complete evaluation surveys which are designed to assess whether the program met the goals of the professional development (Appendix A). The surveys will be administered at the end of the first semester. The data gathered from these surveys will reveal the frequency of implementation of coteaching models and the status of the coteaching teams.

Leadership and Change

This journey as a researcher has taken me down an unexpected path -- that of leader. Meeting with the principal to defend the importance of my study took leadership skills I did not know I had, such as the ability to represent my fellow teachers and articulate an observed problem in the school to my school leaders. Quality leadership is imperative when implementing a new program.

In the future, as a veteran coteacher and creator of the professional development, I will be the facilitator for the coteaching professional development developed as a result of the findings of study and the literature review. When introducing the professional development, I will explain that this professional development was developed based not only on research done by experts in the field of coo-teaching but also on the needs expressed by teachers participating in coteaching within the school. As a facilitator of this

new and unfamiliar professional development, it will be up to me to lead by example, since I too am be part of a coteaching team. My coteacher and I have cotaught for the past 8 years; my experience coteaching and my experience gained through this doctoral process will be beneficial when leading this professional development.

Implementing effective educational initiatives cannot be accomplished without the support of the teachers involved. During my review of professional developments, I learned that successful leaders strive to create a collegial community of teachers where teachers help each other reach a common goal. According to Killion and Roy (2009), "teacher leaders support collaborative learning" (p. 160). The teachers at this research site expressed interest in learning more about coteaching so I believe that the professional development attendees will accept the challenge of leading our school in implementing an effective coteaching program.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

At the beginning of this journey, I would not have identified myself as a scholar. I do not believe that I understood what it meant to be a scholar. I revered scholars as individuals who researched information beyond my scope. As I have continued down this path, I have discovered a scholar within me. As I conducted my literature review and spoke with my professors and colleagues, I began to develop as a scholar. My personal views regarding the importance of research began to change and evolve based on new knowledge I acquired. As I searched for literature related to my study, I found other articles pertinent to my own classroom. As I continue my teaching career, I will continue to explore peer reviewed articles in my field.

As I reflect back over this journey, I can see that this process has instilled scholarly skills within me such as the ability to conduct meaningful research and to search for and review pertinent literature. I also learned that there are rules and guidelines for conducting research. Scholarship requires dedication, determination, and focus toward a goal. When I began this journey, I did not identify myself as a scholar but by going through this process I now see myself as a scholar. I understand the scope of scholarship and through hard work and determination I hope to continue to build my skills as a scholar and use them to promote positive social change.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

I began teaching in 1981 and have never "practiced" another profession. Teaching was and is my calling. As a practitioner in education it is my responsibility to learn and provide the most effective educational practices in my classroom. Embarking on this doctoral journey allowed me to become a student and learn how to conduct research as well as learn current strategies in coteaching. This process has made me a better educator and reinforced my love of learning. It is important for practitioners to be life-long learners.

As a practitioner I identified a problem at my school. The identification of this problem lead me to review relevant literature and then conduct research which allowed me to create a professional development that may facilitate social change. This process has taught me that it is the responsibility of all educational practitioners to identify local problems and seek solutions to these problems. I look forward to continuing to build my

skills as an educator and working with my colleagues to positively impact the academic environment of our school.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

The impetus for this journey was my desire to improve the academic environment for my students. As I traveled farther on the journey, my goals expanded past the confines of my classroom to a desire to improve the academic opportunities for all students in cotaught inclusion classes at this high school. As a teacher involved in coteaching inclusion classes, I perceived a weakness in our program. To take the next step in this journey, I had to become a researcher and a project developer in addition to being a teacher. I investigated current literature then collected and analyzed data from the general education teachers involved in coteaching to determine perceived needs from the general education teachers.

Because they are the on-the-ground practitioners, teachers can offer valuable insight into educational practices. I was able to combine the insights of coteachers with current literature to create a meaningful and relevant professional development focused on coteaching. As I developed this project, I reflected about each component and the relevance in my own professional life. For example, the inclusion of current coteaching research to share with other coteachers through the project reminded me that I must continue, to read current research so that I can continue to improve my craft. And even though I have knowledge of the six models of coteaching, as I reflect, I realize that my coteacher and I have not varied our use of the coteaching models. As a coteacher, I am aware of the overwhelming demands placed on coteachers. Once the professional

development was complete, I attempted to view it as a participating teacher. Viewing the program as if I were participating in it allowed me to see aspects of the professional development, particularly areas that needed more improvement that I missed when viewing it from the perspective of a researcher.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

IDEA (2001) and NCLB (2004) have influenced the face of education for students with disabilities. These federal mandates required school leaders to rethink and redesign learning environments for students with disabilities. For this reason, many school districts have employed coteaching as an instructional delivery method so that students with disabilities receive quality instruction in a classroom alongside their nondisabled peers (Florian, 2010; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Solis et al., 2012). Coteaching occurs when a general education and special education teacher work collaboratively to meet the instructional needs of their diverse student population (Friend, 2008; Murawski, 2008). Since effective coteaching partnerships completely share all aspects of teaching in their classes, it is critical that both teachers are knowledgeable in this instructional delivery method. Even though there is limited research concerning the preparedness and perspectives of general education teachers, what research there is shows that many general education teachers lack knowledge of even the fundamentals of coteaching (McCray & McHatton, 2011), and in some cases general educators are not willing to relinquish any control of their classroom (Familia-Garcia, 2001).

Research shows that teachers involved in coteaching require specific training to develop the skills they need to be effective coteachers (Friend et al., 1993; Gokdere,

2012; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Pratt, 2012; Walsh, 2012; Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). General education teachers in this study confirmed that research. The general education teachers in this study expressed their need for support and training in developing effective coteaching skills.

The purpose of this project is to provide teachers involved in coteaching with the knowledge they need to establish effective coteaching partnerships, knowledge of the six models of coteaching (Friend, 2014), and the knowledge to implement the models of coteaching within their classrooms. Since the high school that was the subject of this study does not currently have a professional development program for coteachers, this project was created to fill that void. During the professional development, coteachers will learn the coteaching models and the requirements for establishing an effective coteaching team. The implementation of this professional development may improve the effectiveness of coteaching pairs.

The findings of the study guided the development of the coteaching professional development program. This project can foster educational change throughout this school by improving the effectiveness of the coteaching teams, which will likely improve the academic environment for students. By improving the strategies used by coteachers in the classroom, students are more likely to succeed academically (Conderman, 2011; Gurgur & Uzner, 2010). In addition to benefitting this school, this project has the potential to be used in other schools for the purpose of successfully implementing and maintaining effective coteaching programs. The collaborative efforts of the teachers and

administrators in schools can improve the academic outcomes of the students in cotaught inclusion classes.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of general education teachers regarding coteaching inclusion classes in this school. The findings of this study indicated that the teachers at this school feel they need administrative support and professional learning development to be successful in cotaught inclusion classes. The product of this study is a comprehensive professional development program focused on providing training regarding coteaching strategies and establishing coteaching peer partnerships which creates a collaborative coteaching community.

The effectiveness of the professional development will be assessed by the attendees at its conclusion. The data collected through the formative assessment, at the end of the professional development, may provide information to change and improve the professional development. The combination of Likert questions and open-ended questions will provide information that may be used to improve the coteaching professional developments at the research site and may provide information that leads to future professional developments.

A second survey will also be given to the participants of the professional development. This survey will be given at the end of the semester to allow me to assess whether the goals of the professional development were attained. The goals of the professional development are to examine the effectiveness of coteaching teams and

evaluate the implementation of the six coteaching models in the classrooms. The data

gathered from these surveys will guide the development of future professional learning

opportunities for coteachers. Even though the coteaching professional learning program

that resulted from this study was developed based on the needs of the teachers in this

local high school, this program can be easily adapted for other schools using cotaught

inclusion classes to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Conclusion

Coteaching was implemented in many school systems as a means for school

systems to address the requirements of federal mandates (Florian, 2010). It became

apparent that this innovative instructional delivery method should not just be used to

simply meet federal guidelines but could be a viable pedagogy for teaching students with

disabilities (Friend, 2014; Hepner & Newman, 2010; Magiera et al., 2005). This project

study began as a personal desire to improve the learning environment for the students in

my classes and my school. The literature review and the results of section 2 were used as

the framework for the development of this project. Section 3 discussed the specifics of

the resulting professional development focused on coteaching. Personal reflections about

this doctoral journey and the conclusions of the study were explained in section 4.

I became an educator to commit my life to teaching and improving the life of each

student who comes into my classroom, no matter what the student's educational history

or relationship to learning has been. I have kept that goal in mind when approaching the

challenge of coteaching inclusion classes. Each time I have used a differentiated

instruction or a coteaching method to reach a struggling student in my class and allow

that student to academically succeed, maybe for the first time, my dedication to practicing effective coteaching practices is reaffirmed.

This project study has become a way for me to reach out beyond my classroom and potentially impact students in other classrooms. Through this project, I may provide coteachers with the knowledge they need to understand coteaching and embrace the astounding possibilities of coteaching. In completing this project study, I have followed a learning process and had opportunities to expand my knowledge of coteaching and of research. Since completing this odyssey, I have felt my passion for learning about the profession that I dedicated myself to many years ago reignited.

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Appendix A: Project

This project is intended to be a practical, easy to use professional development for teachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes.

The professional development is based on current research in the area of coteaching as well as the findings of a study done at a large urban high school. Results of this study indicated a need for professional development in coteaching.

This professional development will provide strategies for effective coteaching based on the recommendations of experts in the field of coteaching.

In addition to the professional development for teachers, a short but content rich informational session for administrators is included.

The professional development for coteachers is divided into 12 content modules to be used over three days. The informational session for administrators can be completed in approximately two-three hours depending on the time needed for answering questions.

Informational Session for Administrators:

Findings and Needed Supports for Administrators

Administrative support is necessary for implementation of coteaching program therefore it is important that administrators understand what supports are needed to create and sustain a successful coteaching program.

Activities:
Power Point presentation (covering the findings of the study and current research on recommended administrative support)
Question and answer opportunity
Administrators will be given a suggested reading list

This informational session will be presented during Summer Leadership for Administrators.

Suggested reading list:

Cook, L., & Friend, M. (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for creating effective

practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, *28*(3), 1-16.

Dieker, L. A., & Murawski, W. W. (2003). Co-teaching at the secondary level:

Unique issues, current trends, and suggestions for success. *The High School

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Friend, M. (2008). Co-teaching: A simple solution that isn't simple after all. *Journal

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the co-teaching marriage work!*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin.

PowerPoint presentation for administrators:

Two Teachers *Teaching in one classroom*

Teachers share accountability

Teachers equally share instructional responsibilities

….. And administrators hold both teachers accountable for students success

Findings of the study conducted at this research site:

- ▶ Participants felt that they needed:
  - ▶ Professional development focusing on coteaching
  - ▶ Common planning with their coteacher
  - ▶ Administrative support

Data from the study revealed a lack of coteaching models being used in the classrooms

▶ Can be addressed through professional development

What kind of supports coteachers indicated they want:

▶ Assign special education teachers to the same content area throughout the day
▶ When making assignments- special education administrator and general administrator work together to determine the best teaching partnerships

What can you do to create and maintain a successful coteaching program?

► Acknowledge the increased time demands of teaching SWD (attending IEPs, reevaluations, attending to individual student accommodations, etc) → release teachers from some additional duties

► Schedule common planning for coteaching partnerships

► Provide profession development focused on strategies for effective coteaching

► Hold both teachers accountable for fidelity of implementation of coteaching strategies

"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing"

- THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Agenda for Teachers' Professional Development

Day 1
Module 1: 8:00am- 9:30am Welcome
The facilitator will explain that this professional development was developed for teachers involved in coteaching inclusion classes. It will provide them with the strategies they need to enter into a coteaching partnership and become effective coteachers.

The professional development is based on current research in the area of coteaching as well as the findings of a study done at a large urban high school. Results of this study indicated a need for professional development in coteaching.

Prior to the beginning of the first session (module 1), the facilitator will place name cards on the tables making sure that the coteaching pairs are next to each other. The cards will be color coded according to the subject they will be teaching. For example the coteaching pair teaching collaborative biology will have their names on blue index cards, next to each other at the table.
The facilitator will also place enough of the first hand-out on each table so that each teacher has one.

Introduction of coteaching partnerships based on administrative assignment
Since teachers do not find out who their coteaching partners are prior to preplanning, their partnerships will be revealed by the facilitator during the first day of this professional development (which is the first day of preplanning).
The partnerships will be revealed through "place cards" at our introduction breakfast.

After teachers have found their tables (and coteaching partners) they will be given time to have breakfast and to become acquainted with their new coteaching partner (allow 55 minutes). During this time the facilitator will instruct the teachers to review hand-out #1. This hand-out lists the questions that will be addressed during the professional development.

The facilitator will give teachers the opportunity to read the questions. Then the facilitator will ask if there are any topics that teachers want addressed that are not on the list for this professional development. The facilitator will add information, if possible, as needed for their school.

BREAK 9:30am- 9:45am

Module 2: 9:45am- 11:15am Tools for building professional relationships
In module 2, coteachers will learn how coteaching can benefit students with disabilities. Teachers will also learn how coteaching is defined and what is necessary for coteaching

to be effectively implemented in the classroom. In this module teachers will also have communication activities with their coteacher.

Power Point Presentation (attached at the end of this project)
        Each teacher will be given a copy of the Power Point, so they may take notes during the presentation.
        The facilitator presents the Power Point- notes are added at the bottom of each slide as a guide. The facilitator can add to these notes as they deem necessary.

The facilitator will present the Power Point. Stopping for activities as noted: Professional Development for Coteaching Partnerships
        Slide 2: Benefits of Coteaching
After slide #2 the facilitator will ask the participants to write down phrases or keys words that they think represents what coteaching looks like. The facilitator will ask the teachers to keep this list for use later in the module.
        Slide 3, 4, 5: What is coteaching?
After slide # 5, the facilitator will ask the teachers to look at the list their initial descriptions of what coteaching looks like. The facilitator will ask teachers how their views of coteaching have changed. Teachers will be given time to compare their views with their coteaching partners.
        Slide 6: What is parity?
        Slide 7: Get to Know activity
After slide #7, facilitator asks each teacher to individually complete hand-out #2: "Let's Get to Know Each Other".

The facilitator will ask the coteaching partnerships to share their results with each other. As they discuss their answers, they should focus on how to merge their talents in the classroom. Allow 5-10 minutes for this activity.

LUNCH 11:15am- 12:00pm

12:00pm- 1:30pm After lunch, the facilitator will then continue the Power Point at slide #8 – What do I bring to the coteaching table?

The facilitator will then stop the Power Point and ask each teacher to complete hand-out #3 ("What Do I Bring to the Coteaching Table?"). Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for teachers to complete, then the facilitator will ask partnerships to share results with each other. By sharing what they feel they bring to the partnership, teachers can better combine their talents to become an effective coteaching partnership.

The facilitator will then continue with the Power Point.

The facilitator will ask the coteachers to individually complete hand-out # 4 "Classroom Expectations". When completing hand-out #4, teachers are asked to think about what is important to them when establishing their classroom protocol. Teachers will individually fill out the worksheet then share their answers with their coteacher. The facilitator will encourage the coteachers to discuss their "must-haves" and where they can compromise.

BREAK 1:30pm- 1:45pm

Second Power Point- Coteaching Models (modules 3-9)
After returning from break, the facilitator will then begin the second Power Point, which will teach the teachers the six specific coteaching models (as outlined by Friend, 2014). Presenter notes are included as a guide- notes can be added as the facilitators deems necessary.

Since the data revealed, and literature supports that teachers do not know the coteaching models. The second Power Point used in modules 3- 9 will teach the coteaching pairs the six coteaching models. The facilitator will hand out a coteaching packet (the Power Point) for note taking during the presentation. The facilitator will present the power point.

After each model is presented, teachers will be given 45 minutes to develop a lesson using that coteaching model. Coteaching teams wishing to demonstrate in front of the group will invited to share.

Module 3 (slide 4): One Teach, One Observe model   1:45pm – 3:15pm
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

Day 2
On Day 2 the facilitator will continue the second Power Point:

Module 4 (slide 5): Station Teaching model   8:00am- 9:30am
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

BREAK 9:30am- 9:45am

Module 5 (slide 6): Parallel Teaching   9:45am – 11:15am
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

LUNCH 11:15am- 12:00pm

Module 6 (slide 7): Alternative Teaching   12:00pm- 1:30pm
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

BREAK 1:30pm – 1:45pm

Module 7 (slide 8): Teaming   1:45pm- 3:15pm
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

Day 3

Module 8 (slide 9): One Teach One Assist   8:00am- 9:30am
Teachers will learn what this model is and how to implement it in their class.
Coteachers will be given time to develop a lesson plan using this model.
Volunteering teams may demonstrate the model in front of the group.

BREAK 9:30am- 9:45am

Module 9: Coteaching Models/ Shared planning 9:45am- 11:15am
The facilitator will instruct every teacher to complete hand-out #6 "Which coteaching
Model suits you best?" This worksheet asks teachers to think about which model they
think they will want to use in the classroom.

The facilitator will then ask the teachers to share their responses with their partner.

Continue Module 9   According to the findings of this study and literature, most of
the general education teachers have been responsible for planning, teaching, and
evaluating lessons and students performance; therefore, may not be familiar with
collaboratively planning with another teacher. For that reason, it is important for the
facilitator to discuss techniques for co-planning. Parity should be established during
planning as well as in the classroom. The facilitator will review the steps in the
Coteaching Planning Protocol (hand-out # 7). Teachers will use the remaining time in
module 9 to plan one lesson using the Coteaching Planning Protocol.

LUNCH 11:15am- 12:00pm

Module 10: How can we implement what we learned? 12:00pm – 1:30pm
The facilitator will lead a discussion on the importance of establishing parity (equality).
The facilitator will review the "United We Stand" hand-out (#8) which is a parity
checklist. This list will help teachers establish the physical appearance of a classroom
based on equity (parity).

BREAK 1:30pm – 1:45pm

Module 11: Coteaching Peer Partnerships and Program Evaluation 1:45pm – 3:15pm
For an effective coteaching program to be implemented and sustained, teachers need a
support system. Since coteaching teams may not be aware of the other teachers involved
in coteaching (especially in large schools), the facilitator will introduce and develop
coteaching peer partnerships. The coteaching peer partnerships will be instructed to
observe each other once a month and then to schedule a meeting within two weeks
following the observation to provide formative feedback and support.
The facilitator will review the Observational Protocol (hand-out #9) to give the
coteaching peer partnerships a template for observing their coteaching peer partnerships.
The facilitator will explain to the professional development attendees that all comments
and observations, following the professional development, are to be shared only with
their coteaching peer partners.

Coteaching partnerships will be encouraged to meet more frequently than once a month
to discuss issues such as coteaching-models implemented in class that worked and those
that did not.

The facilitator will instruct coteaching partnerships to arrange their first classroom
observation with their coteaching peer partnerships. The first observation should be
conducted during the month of August.

Module 12: Program Evaluation

The program evaluation is based on the Program Evaluation survey currently used by the
school. This evaluative survey has additional questions added that address this
professional development. The program evaluation is hand-out #10.

At the final monthly meeting at the end of the semester
Coteaching teams will be asked to complete "So how often did you use each
coteaching?" (Hand-out #11) and "Coteaching Partnerships" (Hand-out #12). Data
collected from these surveys will be used to evaluate the attainment of the project's goals:
teachers' implementation of the coteaching models in the classroom and practices that
foster equality in coteaching partnerships.

Module 1   Handout #1

Questions addressed during this Professional Development

Questions addressed at this professional development for teachers:
-Why coteach?
-What is coteaching?
-What is parity/ why is it important in coteaching?
-What is my contribution to our partnership?
-How can we build a strong partnership?
-What are the six coteaching models?
-Practices coteaching models
-How do we co-plan?
-How do we implement these models?

Module 2   Handout #2

Let's Get to Know Each Other

Everyone has acquired beliefs, attitudes, and personal qualities that are a part

of us. What, in your life, has influenced the teacher you have become?

Your responses	Your coteacher's responses

What do I Bring to the Coteaching Table?

Everyone has talents and weaknesses. Complete the chart below based on your personal beliefs.
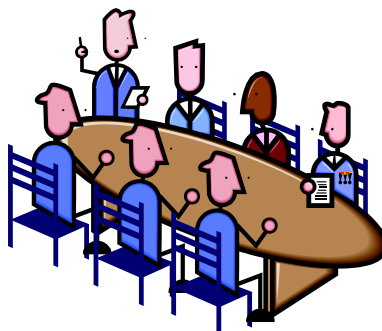
My Strengths	My Weaknesses

How can we merge our talents into one strong coteaching power house?

_____

_____

Classroom Expectations

Fill this out. Do not talk with your coteaching partner at this time. This should be completed based on **your** expectations. Then switch papers with your coteaching partner. Do you agree, disagree, or compromise?

Expectations in the classroom regarding:	My thoughts	My partner's thoughts Agree, compromise, or agree to disagree
discipline		
classwork		
homework		
planning		
grading		
modifications for students with disabilities		
noise level		

Return the paper to your coteacher. Look at your areas of agreement and disagreement. Where can you compromise? Discuss how you will set up your classroom/classroom rules together. These are important aspects of the classroom where both of you are teachers.

Module 3-8   Packet for Coteaching Power Point

CoTeaching Models

Each of the coteaching models can be applied in different disciplines. The approach used varies depending on your lesson. Each coteaching model is not specific to a type of lesson. The coteaching partnership will determine which model is appropriate for the lesson they are teaching. The advantages and disadvantages are outlined which will assist teachers in this decision making process.

One Teach, One observe

Definition: One teacher leads instruction while other teacher gathers data

> Advantages:
>
> -Permits gathering data which can be used to guide future instruction
>
> -Once teachers are confident in each other's abilities, this model can be used to observe each other's teaching behaviors
>
> Disadvantages:
>
> -There is a risk that the special education teacher is always the one collecting data. By having only the special education teacher collect data, students may believe that the special education teacher is not really a "teacher." Students will see the special education teacher as more of an aid or secretary.
>
> -if data are not used for instructional purposes, this model should never be used.

Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Station Teaching

Definition: The class and the content to be taught is divided between the 2 teachers. Each teacher teaches the content to one group and then they switch groups. Each teacher teaches the same material to each group of students.

Advantages:

-smaller pupil to teacher ratio during instruction

-both teachers are actively leading instruction

-variety of grouping scenarios for students: interests, heterogeneous grouping, needs…..

-teachers will interact with entire class during the class period

Disadvantages:

-each segment of instruction has to take about the same time

-instructional content cannot be sequential

Notes: Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Parallel Teaching

Definition: class divided into two smaller groups, both teachers teach the same lesson; teachers only interact with part of the students.

Advantages:

-smaller pupil to teacher ratio during instruction

-both teachers are actively leading instruction

-provides opportunity for differentiation

Disadvantages:

-care must be taken to avoid repeatedly creating "high" and "low" groups

-both teachers must be knowledgeable in the content being taught

-teachers interact with only half of the class

Notes: Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Alternative Teaching

Definition: one teacher leads instruction for the majority of the class while the other teacher works with a smaller group.

Advantages:

-both partners contribute to student learning

-allows for differentiation

-small group can provide remediation, instructional makeup time, extension, ….

Disadvantages:

-risk using the small group primarily for remediation (stigma may result)

-should vary which teacher leads small group; often times special   education teacher falls into that role

Notes: Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Teaming

Definition: both teachers lead large group instruction; assume equivalent roles.

Advantages:

-often results in higher energy level when both teachers actively engaged

-models collaboration for students

-clearly indicates to students that there are two teachers

Disadvantages:

-instructional intensity can be lost

-only recommended for experienced teachers; potential for miscommunication if teachers are not familiar with their partners style. Teachers can talk over each other which can lead to confusion.

-risk of teachers interacting with each other and not the students

Notes: Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

One Teach, One Assist

Definition: one teacher leads large group instruction while the other teacher moves around the room monitoring students

Advantages:

-can function as informal observation when students are learning a new concept

-students feel less self-conscious if one of the teachers can quietly assist them while class instruction continues

Disadvantages:

-least effective coteaching model

-a teacher assisting a student during instruction can be disruptive

-can give the impression that one teacher is the assistant

Notes: Do you see this model working for you? What do you need to implement this model?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reference:

Friend, M. (2014). *Co-teach! Building and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools.* Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

Which coteaching model?

Rank the coteaching models according to your perceived competence level (1 being the least competent and 6 the most competent). Once you have completed the worksheet, ask your coteaching partner to complete the coteaching partner's preference column.

Coteaching model	My preference	My coteaching partner's preference

Discussion Points:

What did you learn about each other regarding your perceived competence of coteaching models? What can you do to increase your competence level in the other models?

Module 9   Hand-out #7

Coteaching Planning Protocol

Approximate time	Task
15 minutes	General education teacher share curriculum requirements for the first unit. Using the text book and required content, collaboratively develop lesson plans.
10 minutes	Looking at student data: IEPs and testing history are used to address individual student needs/accommodations
20 minutes	Look to the six coteaching models/ which models best fit the upcoming lessons and the needs of the students
10 minutes	Collaborative planning will be successful only if both coteachers are open and honest. If there are any concerns about students or the lesson now is the time to discuss it with your coteaching partner.

Module 10

United We Stand! Hand-out #8

By addressing the comments on the check list, coteachers can present a united front to students entering their class for the first. Similarly, parents who visit the classroom will see visual reminders that both teachers equally responsible for the education of their child.

Parity Check list
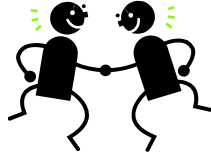
Check for:
1. both teachers' names on the board.
2. both teachers' names on/above door
3. if possible, put both teachers' names on gradebook
4. both teachers have equal space for personal belongings
5. both teachers have desks in the classroom
6. both teachers' names should be on any parent correspondence

Module 11   Hand-out #9

Observational Protocol for Coteaching Partnerships
Observations made are to be kept between the coteaching partnerships.
This observational protocol is to be used as a guide, for the observer(s), when observing
other coteaching teams. It is only a template, add comments and observations as needed.
Arrange for a time to observe a coteaching team within the first month following this
professional development.
Observations will be scheduled by the coteaching peer partnerships.

Evidence
1=little evidence   2= adequate   3=extraordinary

Classroom Environment	Evidence	Comments
Teachers' names are written so that anyone entering the classroom can see both teachers' names		
Both teachers are actively engaged in lesson		

Which coteaching model was observed being used in the classroom?:	Evidence	Comments
Both teachers engaged in instruction		
The model encourages student participation		

If more than one model is observed:

Which coteaching model was observed being used in the classroom?:	Evidence	Comments
Both teachers are engaged in instruction		
The model encourages student participation		

Comments: _____
_____
_____
_____

Module 12   Hand-out #10

Professional Development Evaluation Survey

Directions: Circle the line that best illustrates your opinion regarding the professional development.

My readiness level for coteaching inclusion classes prior to this PD opportunity could best be described as:
Awareness (I was aware)
Enhanced (I have a deep understanding)
Management (I plan how to use coteaching models in my classroom)
Refinement (I frequently use coteaching models in my classroom)
Collaboration (I am eager to share coteaching strategies with others)

The topics explored were relevant to my coteaching responsibilities.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

The materials used enhanced my learning of coteaching strategies.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

I had access to all necessary materials and resources.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Adequate time was provided to explore coteaching models.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

The instruction techniques used helped to facilitate my learning.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Activities were carefully planned and well organized.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Collaborative skills necessary to build a professional relationship with my coteacher was thoroughly explained.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Coteaching models were thoroughly explained.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Collaboration among colleagues was encouraged.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

The experience included a variety of learning activities.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

A supportive professional community was created.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

The opportunity to seek meaning and construct new knowledge was provided.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

The reasons for implementing this teaching strategy were clearly explained.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

An appropriate balance between presentation and interaction was achieved.
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
N/A

Questions:

1. What knowledge about establishing an equitable professional relationship with your coteacher did you gain from this professional development? How do you anticipate using this knowledge in the future? Please explain.

2. What knowledge about coteaching models did you gain from this professional development? How do you anticipate using this knowledge in the future? Please explain.

3. What did you gain as a result of participation in the coteaching activities in the professional development?

4. What do you feel were the weaknesses in this program? What do you feel were the strengths of this program?

5. What suggestions do you have for improving this professional development in the future?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

This is to be completed at the last coteaching peer partnership meeting of the semester:

So how often did you use each coteaching model?

Complete the table below. Assess how often you and your coteacher use the coteaching models:

Coteaching model	Often	Intermittently	Infrequently	Not at all
One Teach, One Observe				
Station Teaching				
Parallel Teaching				
Alternative Teaching				
Teaming				
One Teach, One Assist				

These tables are to be completed at the last coteaching peer partnership meeting of the semester:

Coteaching Partnerships
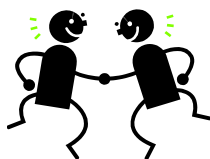
Complete the table below:

	Often	Intermittently	Infrequently	Not at all
My coteacher's strengths are utilized in the classroom				
My strengths are utilized in the classroom				
My coteacher and I plan together				
My coteacher and I communicate openly and honestly				

Complete the table below:

	Yes	No
Both my name and my coteacher's name is visible in the classroom		
Both my name and my coteacher's name is on/above our classroom door		
We both have our own desks in the classroom		
Both my name and my coteacher's name is on parent correspondence		

Answer the following questions regarding your perceptions of the coteaching experience-

	Yes	No
I feel I benefited from coteaching		
The students with disabilities in my class benefited from the coteaching arrangement		
All of the students benefited from the coteaching arrangement		
I will volunteer for coteaching next year only if I can keep my current partner		
I will volunteer for coteaching next year even if I have a different coteaching partner		

Add anything you would like regarding your coteaching partnership experience: _____
_____

Power Point for Teachers
Day 1 Modules 1-2

Coteaching Definitions:

What Coteaching is…

- ▶ A special education teacher and a general education teacher equally sharing instructional responsibility
- ▶ Two educational professionals blending their expertise
- ▶ Designed to provide differentiated instruction
- ▶ Based on **parity (equality)** between coteachers

What coteaching is not…

- ▶ One teacher teaching while the other walks around the room
- ▶ An opportunity for teachers to attend to non-teaching duties while the other teacher teaches
- ▶ Lead teacher with an assistant

Coteaching is not collaboration

► Collaboration is working with another person or persons to achieve a common goal

► Even though collaboration is part of coteaching **it is not the same thing**

Parity (equality)

► Both teachers "own" all of the students in the class

► Each teacher's contribution is valued

► Each teacher has equal power when making decisions

► Teachers equally share instructional responsibilities

References:

▶ Friend, M. (2014). *Co-teach! Building and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools.* Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

▶ Murawski, W. W., (2009). *Collaborative Teaching in Secondary Schools: Making the Co- teaching Marriage Work!.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin.

Power Point for Teachers
Day 2-3 Modules 3-9

Six Models of coteaching

One Teach, One Observe
Station Teaching
Parallel Teaching
Alternative Teaching
Teaming
One Teach, One Assist

(Friend & Cook, 2013)

One Teach, One Observe

▶ One teacher leads instruction

▶ The other teacher gathers student data
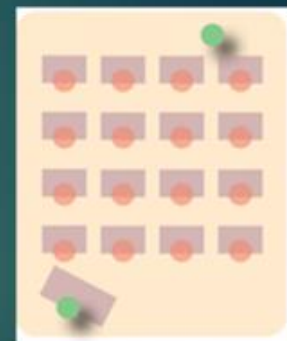
Station Teaching
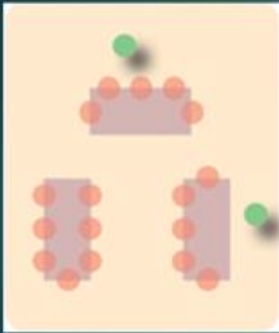
▶ Class divided into 2 equal groups
▶ Each teacher takes one group
▶ Teacher teaches the content to one group then switches with the other teacher and repeats the lesson with the 2nd group (groups rotate)

Parallel Teaching

▶ Teachers divide class into two equal groups
▶ Each teacher teaches the same material
▶ Groups do not rotate

Alternative Teaching
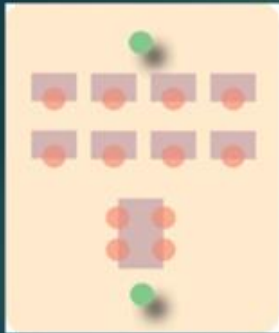
▶ Small group of students are pulled from the large class

▶ Small group received more individualized instruction

Teaming

▶ Both teachers fully engaged in the delivery of the content

   ▶ Examples:

      ▶ Both teachers lead instruction together

      ▶ One teacher instruct while the other models note taking

      ▶ One teacher instructs proper procedures while other teacher demonstrates
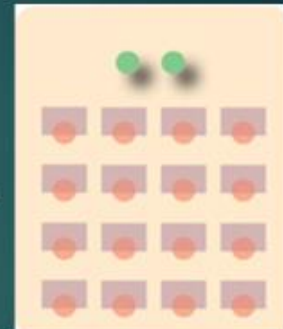
One Teach One Assist

▶ One teacher assumes the lead role

▶ Other teacher functions as an assistant

▶ Teacher assuming role of assistant may ask questions of the lead teacher to clarify a concept that students seem to be struggling with
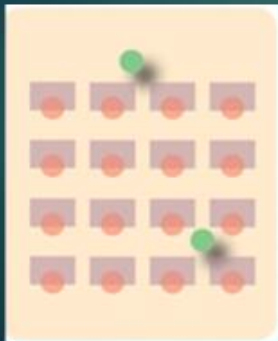
Which approach should you use???

▶ There is no one "right" approach to use

▶ Use a variety of approaches throughout a class and throughout the year

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References:

- Friend, M. (2014). *Co-teach! Building and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools.* Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

- Murawski, W. W., (2009). *Collaborative Teaching in Secondary Schools: Making the Co- teaching Marriage Work!.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

General Questions

    1. How long have you worked as a member of a coteaching team?

    2. In your opinion, what is your role as a member of a coteaching team?

    3. Please indicate whether your current coteaching assignment is assigned or voluntary.

Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your most recent experience teaching in a cotaught classroom.

2. In what ways would you describe your experience as positive?

3. In what ways would you describe your experience as negative?

4. What could be done to improve the inclusive practices in a cotaught classroom?

5. What kinds of supports do you think you might need to succeed teaching in a cotaught class?

6. Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix C: Observational Protocol

Observational field notes will be taken every 10 minutes throughout the class period. A
check will be made if the coteaching model is observed during each 10-minute interval.
Participant: _____Setting: _____Time: _____ Date: _____

Coteaching Model	10 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	40 minutes	50 minutes	60 minutes	70 minutes	80 minutes	90 minutes
One teach, One observe									
Station Teaching									
Parallel Teaching									
Alternative Teaching									
Teaming									
One Teach, One assist									
No coteaching model evident									

Additional observations: