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Examining School Capacity for Inclusion Using a Multi-Dimensional Framework: A Case Study

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Examining School Capacity for Inclusion Using a Multi-Dimensional Framework:

A Case Study

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), the inclusion of students with disabilities (SWDs) in general education classrooms has become more prevalent within our public schools (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Mcleskey et al., 2010). Current research on inclusion focuses on student outcomes and procedural changes and not the contexts and capabilities of education leaders who are implementing it. Empirical research that examines how schools have built the capacity for sustaining these models, especially through the perspectives of those who implement it, is limited to date.

The purpose of the current study was to examine in depth one school's capacity development during their own inclusive education reform. Specifically, this study (1) explored how school leaders perceived their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusion reform; (2) explored how leaders perceived the school's capacity to implement inclusion and (3) explored how their capacity to implement inclusion aligned with the school capacity literature.

Case study methodology was used to make meaning of the participants' individual perspectives and weave them into an integral whole. This case study sought to uncover the perspectives that school leaders (teacher leaders and administrative leaders) placed on their capacities to initiate and sustain an effective inclusive education model.

Chapter One

Introduction

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), the inclusion of students with disabilities (SWDs) in general education classrooms has become more prevalent within our public schools (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Mcleskey et al., 2010). Collectively these laws have been the impetus toward inclusive school reform that has not only increased the number of SWDs receiving special education supports in general education classrooms, but also significantly shifted the capacities demanded of both special education and general education teachers and leaders.

The literature on school reform is replete with research results indicating a history of failed school reforms if instructional capacity does not substantially change. Elmore's (1992) mixed method work in the 1990's and Fullan's (2011) more recent international mixed methods work on school reform found that if reform efforts do not build the capacity of teachers and systems to change instruction in the classroom, the positive qualitative (socialization and parent satisfaction) and quantitative (test scores, behavior referrals and graduation rates) outcomes of reform, if any exist at all, will fail to sustain past a few years.

Evans (1996) writes about school change, or educational reform, explaining that the key factor in educational reform is it's meaning to those who must implement it: teachers and administrators. Further, historical research found teachers' expertise,

knowledge and their individual capacity to translate reform policies into practice as critical to the sustainability and effectiveness of school change (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Thus, it is critical to understand school change, or reform, from the inside out through the perspectives of the teachers and administrators themselves. Surprisingly, research that examines a school's capacity for initiating and sustaining inclusive education through the understanding of the actors themselves is limited to date. Therefore, research that examines how school leaders, defined as teacher leaders and the administrative leaders who are involved in initiating an inclusive education reform, perceive their own and the school's capacity to include all SWDs in age-appropriate general education classrooms and curriculum is needed.

Accordingly, systems change for inclusive education, as one type of school reform, and the school capacity knowledge base together comprise the foundation for this study. Capacity is understood as the potential of material, a product, person or group to fulfill a function if it is used in a particular way (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000). Thus, explain Newman, King and Youngs, school capacity is the collective potential of the group, the school's full staff, to fulfill its function. Viewed this way, school capacity is best understood as a multi-dimensional organizational framework for examining how a school collectively utilizes their resources to effectively initiate and sustain systemic educational innovations. When applied to systemic inclusive education reform, it is a frame to guide the understanding of a school's process and ability to initiate and sustain quality inclusive education.

Current research on inclusive education tells us of the increased rates at which SWDs are educated in general education environments, as well as the positive outcomes

associated with such placement. Mcleskey et. al.'s (2004, 2010) research results, as well as the *Annual Report To Congress on Implementation of IDEA* (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), both show quantitative increases in the number of SWDs who spend most (80% or more) of their school day with peers who do not have disability labels. Further, researchers have documented the positive results of inclusive education since the early 1980's. Qualitatively, positive literacy (Ryndak, Morrison, & Sommerstein, 1999) and social gains associated with inclusive education such as increased language skills (Broderick & Kasa-Hendrickson, 2001), feelings of membership in the greater school community (Kocklar, West, & Taymans, 2000; Fisher & Meyer, 2002) and an expanded peer group (Kennedy & Itkonen, 1994) abound in the literature. And more recently the National Longitudinal Study of post school outcomes found graduation rates, independent living, and the percentage of SWDs who are gainfully employed post high school to be positively related to inclusive versus segregated education placements (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006).

Study Purpose and Rationale

As mentioned above, current research on inclusion focuses on student outcomes and procedural changes rather than on the contexts, capacities, and capabilities of the schools and education leaders who are implementing it. Thus, empirical research that examines how schools have moved toward inclusion and built the capacity for sustaining these models is limited to date. Limited, also, are the perspectives of those who are implementing inclusion as a reform. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine one school's capacity development during their own inclusive education reform. Specifically, this study sought to (1) explore how school leaders perceive their own

capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform; (2) explore how leaders perceive the school's capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms; and (3) explore how their capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice is aligned with the school capacity literature.

Research Design Overview

The qualitative research tradition to answer how and why questions, and the epistemological perspective of constructivism, assuming that knowledge is situated in a particular context or locale, and is constructed and shared through the interactions and interpretations people have with themselves and one another, underpin this research (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Case study methodology as described by Yin (2009) will be used to make meaning of the perspectives represented in the study and weave them into an integral whole. The unit of analysis for this study will be the school with school leaders as the sub-units. School leaders are defined as (1) teacher leaders, those being the first to implement inclusive education in their classrooms, and (2) the school's administrative team. Yin (2009) tells us that case study research is an in-depth examination of one particular case within one particular locale, or specific context, to deeply understand a social phenomenon. This case study was used to examine the perspectives and meanings that school leaders placed on their capacities to initiate and sustain an effective inclusive education model.

One goal of a case study is to test a pre-developed theory or framework. Thus, propositions derived from the literature are the driving force behind the design (Yin, 2009; Hocutt & Fowler, 2009). The literature that served as a guide to the research propositions in this study included the inclusive education and school capacity literature

detailed in the paragraphs to follow and in Chapter 2. The critical case rationale, based upon the criterion detailed in the literature review, was used to guide purposive sampling to select (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009) one school and six or more leaders within that school. Six participants were determined as the minimum appropriate sample size based on Yin's (2009) recommendation for six participants to drive theory testing. The following sources of evidence for theory testing were used: a) a researcher reflexive journal to address bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005); b) a study data base to build internal reliability (Yin, 2009); c) two forty-five minute semi-structured interviews per participant following a protocol and a modification of Seidman's (2006) three step interview guidelines; d) one informal participant observation with accompanying field notes occurring on the same day as each interview (Carspecken, 1996); e) two years of preexisting case study data including eighteen leader interviews (nine leaders each interviewed twice) and ten informal participant observation field notes (seven classroom observations and three inclusion planning meetings); and (f) a case study protocol consisting of a research design overview, guiding questions, data collection procedures and an outline for reporting results (Hocutt & Fowler, 2009; Yin, 2009).

All data points were analyzed using both deductive and inductive analysis following pattern-matching logic (Anfara et al., 2002; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Initially, raw codes were assigned to segments of texts, which were then categorized by major themes based upon repeated patterns. The search for negative cases that refute the school capacity and inclusive education frameworks was employed during the final stage of analysis (Yin, 2009; Anfara et al., 2002). The triangulation of data points for research questions one and two occurred by converging themes that emerged across and within all

data around major findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005). Following this analysis, the triangulated findings from research question one and two (case findings) were used for the final analysis to address research question three, a comparison of the case findings to the literature. This analysis consisted of taking the findings from research questions one and two and cataloging them around each of the seven dimensions (principal leadership; district support; human/staff, organizational, structural material/technical capacity; and coherence) of school capacity. Finally, these findings, now re-organized by school capacity constructs, were examined in their entirety as to how they compared to the extant school capacity literature.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study and were addressed in the analysis phase:

1. How do school leaders perceive their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform?
2. How do school leaders perceive the school's capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms?
3. How do the school leaders' perceptions of their own and the school's capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice align with the school capacity literature?

While federal laws and past research have pushed for inclusive education reform, they have failed to address a school's capacity to engage and sustain such a reform. Thus, this study provides school leaders with a more comprehensive understanding of capacity building for systemic inclusive education reform. The findings from this case

study informs educational leaders, both teacher leaders and administrators, with detailed information about the types of human and material resources, as well as the organizational and structural conditions that promote sustainable inclusive education. And finally, educational leaders can draw upon the results to be more strategic and purposeful when implementing inclusive education reform initiatives.

Chapter 2 offers a summary of both the inclusive education and school capacity literature to date. Next, Chapter 3 details the research methodology used. Chapter Four presents the findings for research question one (RQ1) and two (RQ2). Chapter 5 then offers the findings and discussion of research question three (RQ3). And finally, Chapter 6 details the major conclusions and implications of the work.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Chapter two provides an overview of the existing systemic inclusive education reform and school capacity literature. The chapter begins with literature on systemic inclusive education; outlining current research on rising national inclusive education rates and literature that defines the concept of systemic inclusive education in the United States. Research-based criteria for what constitutes systemic inclusive education will follow. The chapter continues with an overview of the concept of school capacity and ends with a proposed framework for understanding the multiple dimensions of capacity building at the school level.

Systemic Inclusive Education

With NCLB and IDEA national policies aimed at increasing rates of educating SWDs in the general education classroom, along with the requirements to assess all but one to two percent of students with the most significant disabilities on general education standards (NCLB, 2001), school reform aimed at inclusive education is common. MsLeskey at al., (2004, 2010) conducted a quantitative analysis of federal education placement rates for SWDs. Results indicate an upward trend; SWDs are receiving most, if not all, of their special education services and overall education with peers that do not have disabilities. These researchers concluded that inclusion is on the rise nationwide. In addition, the *Annual Report to Congress on Implementation of IDEA* (USED, 2008)

indicated that SWDs are experiencing increased percentages of time with non-disabled peers and that this trend is continuing.

However, while the percentages of SWDs being placed in general education is increasing nationwide, little if any research exists that examines the process by which teachers and schools develop the capability and capacities necessary to effectively implement and sustain inclusive education. Lyons (2009) found in her extensive literature review on capacity building for inclusive education that research examining how teachers learn to instruct students with diverse needs and disabilities in the general education classroom is virtually non-existent. Further, Copeland and Coseby (2008-2009) found that most current research on inclusive education focused on the sequential process of how schools initiated the organizational change to make the shift from segregated to inclusive education possible, but little exists that examines how schools and staff develop and implement instructional practices to teach core academic content to students with more significant and unique learning needs. Thus, knowledge around a school's capacity building for inclusive education is sparse.

Defining inclusive education. Huber, Rosenfeld, and Fiorello (2001) focus on the building of teachers' capacities to teach SWDs inclusively within general education. In their work, inclusive practices are defined as "training and curricular support in general education" (p. 497). In addition, Capper and Frattura (2009) contend that leaders who build integrated educational systems must "learn how curriculum and instruction, leadership practices, and school structures might need to change to meet the needs of students of all abilities" (p.xiv). They further propose that in integrated and inclusive educational systems "all educators take ownership of all students" (p.xix) and that every

single student has the opportunity to “receive small-group or individual help at some point in the day to maximize their learning potential” (p. xix). Similarly, Burrello, Sailor, and Kleinhamer-Tramill (2013) offer a definition of systemic inclusive practices. In their work systemic inclusive practices are “a temporally bounded instructional support system for any student in the public schools who might need support to achieve his or her full capabilities” (p.1). It was their intent to describe and propose an instructionally oriented discourse and accompanying educational system that is centered on the learner and the ecology of learning that includes the home, the community, and the school itself (Burrello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2001; Sailor, 2008-2009).

In addition, the Salamanca statement provided for by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1994) defines inclusive education as a coherent, whole school system that accommodates the wide array of student diversity by developing teaching strategies, partnerships, and organizational structures within the school, as well as strategic resource alignment and a collaborative culture. In 2005, UNESCO stated that inclusion is “a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning.” (p.10); and “the move towards inclusion is a gradual one that should be based on clearly articulated principles, which address system-wide development. (UNESCO, p. 16, 2005).

Finally, Sailor and Blair (2005) offer six principles as a frame to guide the implementation of an inclusive practice. They are: all students are driven by the general education curriculum; all resources are used to support all students; a school-based problem-solving team is in place to support the identified need and resources to serve

each student; parents and families are an integral part of the school-based team; social behavior training and support is part of the curriculum of the school; and a district support team is in place to support school level implementation. This and other research is summarized below.

Why inclusive education. Educators have documented concerns with segregated education and the benefits of inclusive education for the last forty years (Dunn, 1968; Brown, 1974). Additionally, as mentioned above, federal laws from the 1970's through today have favored general class placement with typical peers of the same age for SWDs (EHA, 1975; IDEA, 2000; NCLB 2001)

Thus, we have known for decades the shortcomings of segregated programming for SWDs and benefits of inclusive education. The lack of ability for SWDs taught in segregated environment to transfer their gained knowledge and skills into natural settings has been documented since the 1970's (Brown & York, 1974). Because of the documented shortcomings to segregated education for SWDs, activists in the 1950's through 1970's demanded the inclusion of SWDs in general education schools and classrooms be a part of federal law. This advocacy led to the legal presumption of general class placement in the original federal law PL 94-142 (now referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (Turnbull, 1981). Alternatively, the academic and social benefits associated with inclusive education continue to abound in the literature. In addition to the benefits listed above, it was found that the time SWDs spend in general education is positively correlated to higher academic and behavioral performance (Blackorby et. al. 2004). Additionally, SWDs with an intellectual disability label who receive their education in general education were found to have more skills in the area of

independence and social relationship as compared to those who receive their education in segregated settings (Fisher & Meyer, 2002). Thus, the benefit of inclusive versus segregated education for SWDs is not a new idea. It has been a well-documented need for over forty decades.

Pairing the legal presumption for general class placement with the research indicating the deficiencies of segregated education and the benefits of inclusive education the need for inclusive education service delivery for SWDs is apparent. As Capper and Frattura (2009) state in their work:

To avoid the problems of separate programs and to capitalize on these federal initiatives, schools must move from a program-based model to a service delivery model; that is, educators must provide services across children and environments in contrast with programs that are often set up specifically for a subgroup of children in a specific location. (p.11)

Based upon this work, many researchers have reported findings related to how schools and systems that traditionally were steeped in segregated programming are working to implement systemic inclusive education reform. The following section summarizes this work.

Inclusive education systems change. The notion that all staff and all students should be included in the school's policies and practices abounds in the literature, as does the importance of being a meaningful partner in inclusion. Ryndak, Jackson, and Billingsly's (1999-2000) conducted a questionnaire study of 47 special education experts across the nation to examine how inclusion is defined. A major finding of this study was the focus on all students. This led the authors to conclude that a major component of

inclusion is “all students with and without disabilities receive instruction and learn together during the same academic and nonacademic general education activities within general education classes throughout the school community” (p. 108). In addition, Kozleski’s (2002) and Sailor’s (2008-2009) systems change work both conclude that inclusive education is about all students and all staff with all parents being authentic members of the school community. Capper & Frattura (2009) also argue that it is essential for “all educators to take ownership of all students” (p. xix). Finally, Ainscow (2005) conducted a three-year case study on inclusive education and found in this work that inclusion is a process that is concerned with the removal of barriers for all students to achieve, be present and participate in the greater school community.

An additional theme that appears across the inclusive education literature is age appropriate placement of students in natural and typical settings. Ryndak et. al (1999-2000) found that, nationally, experts agree students are placed “(a) in age-appropriate general education settings, (b) in natural proportions, (c) in schools they would attend if they did not have a disability, (d) for most or all of the school day, (e) on an ongoing daily basis...” (p.108). In addition, appropriate general education class placement for all SWDs is to be led primarily by general education (Capper and Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009) and follows the natural proportions guideline (Ryndak, Jackson, Billingsley, 1999/2000). This means that class enrollments mirror national demographics for disability prevalence rates. For instance, if the national prevalence rate for autism is 2%, then only 2% of students in any class should receive special education services for autism. This same principle applies to all disability labels identified in IDEA, as well as

for the overall percentage of SWDs. The overall prevalence rate for students with disability labels, school wide, should hover around 12%-14%.

Ainscow (2005) and others (Ryndak, Reardon, Benner & Ward, 2007; Sailor, 2008-2009) write about the importance of a collaborative culture at the school. According to Ainscow (2005), when developing inclusive schools, the working nature of the school must evolve to consist of a collaborative culture among all staff members who work toward shared goals (Ainscow, 2005). In a seven-year study of one school's inclusive education reform process, Ryndak et al. (2007) found that it was essential for staff to share a common vision and common understanding of the change process that occurs when schools move from educating SWDs in segregated classrooms to providing supports in general education. Further, Sailor (2008-2009) contends that schools must let go of the medical model of diagnosing and treating labels and instead embrace a collaborative team-based education where staff work in teams to plan needed professional development and instruction based upon student needs. Another critical element of inclusive education reform is a system/school wide focus (Kozleski, 2002; Ryndak et al., 1999-2000; Sailor, 2008-2009).

In terms of instructional practices and school structures, substantial changes must be evident. Ainscow, (2005); Burrello, Lashley and Beatty, (2001); Capper and Frattura, (2009); and Copland and Coseby, (1999-2000) all write about evident change in the schools and systems that have transformed to include all learners. In inclusive schools teachers and leaders consistently reported and were observed teaching differently when students with varying abilities are in the general education classroom. Specifically, teachers reported using more collaborative groupings, where teams of students work on

project based assignments, and more hands on materials are present. Further, leaders report being more instructionally based and in the classrooms supporting teaching and learning, as opposed to strictly managing resources. In addition, data driven instructional improvement structures are in place such as problem solving teams to help teachers meet the needs of all students (Gravois et al., 2002) and the teachers' goal is to teach effectively from the start without relying on interventions (Ainscow, 2005; Capper & Frattura, 2009).

Finally, strategic hiring and how leaders allocate and use the school's resources change. Fiscal and human resources are merged and focused around the needs of all students in the school. Capper and Frattura (2009) write about the importance of using all a school's resources and staff to support the integrated education vision and mission, not fragmenting them to different categorically driven pull out programs for specific sub-sets of the student body.

A synthesis of the research in this area coalesces into consistent themes of what defines systemic inclusive education. The following list, which represents the main themes that appear across research conclusions, will be used as criterion in this study for what is considered inclusive education:

1. All staff and all students are included in the school's policies and practices (Ryndak, Jackson, & Billingsly, 1999, 2000; Kozleski, 2002; Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009).
2. Age appropriate general education class placement occurs for all students and is led primarily by general education (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009) and follows the natural proportions guideline (Ryndak et al. 1999-2000).

3. The working nature of the school consists of a collaborative culture among all staff members (Ainscow, 2005).
4. There is a system/school wide focus (Kozleski, 2002; Ryndak et al., 1999-2000; Sailor, 2008-2009).
5. Substantial change in structures and instructional practices are evident. (Ainscow, 2005; Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Copeland and Coseby, 2008-2009)
6. Data driven instructional improvement structures are in place to help teachers meet the needs of all students (Gravios et al., 2002) with the goal being to teach it right the first time (Ainscow, 2005; Capper & Frattura, 2009).
7. Strategic hiring and allocation/use of resources is used to support the education vision and mission (Capper & Frattura, 2009).

And, while schools are increasingly engaging in inclusive practices there is a need to understand how to build a school's capacity for this work. Turning to the extant school reform literature on capacity, this work can serve as a foundation to begin thinking about inclusive education capacity building. Accordingly, the following sections will overview school capacity literature to date, and will end with a proposed school capacity framework that can be applied to inclusive education. This proposed framework was used as a lens that guided this case study examination of one school's inclusive education initiative.

School Capacity

O'Day, Goertz, and Floden (1995) write "within the context of systemic reform, capacity is the ability of the education system to help all students meet more challenging standards" (p.1). In the case of inclusive education systemic reform, SWDs are now an

integral part of the system. Thus, schools must build their capacity to effectively educate SWDs alongside students without disabilities. So what is capacity?

Newman, King and Youngs (2000) define capacity as the potential of material, a product, person or group to fulfill a function if it is used in a particular way. They explain school capacity as the collective potential of the group, the school's full staff, to fulfill its function of improving student achievement school wide, for all students. Viewed this way, school capacity is best understood as a multi-dimensional organizational framework for examining a school's capacity to initiate and sustain systemic educational innovations. In the case of systemic inclusive education the school staff's collective function is to educate students with diverse learning needs, including diagnosed disabilities, in their age appropriate general education classrooms and curriculum, alongside their same age peers. Therefore, when applied to systemic inclusive education, school capacity as a multi-dimensional framework can be used to understand a school's capacity for initiating and sustaining quality education for all students, including those traditionally placed in separate special education classrooms. Within such a framework, students learn alongside one another in age appropriate classrooms. This work, along with that of others in the past (Century's, 1999; Spillane & Thompson, 1997, Rorrer, Skrla & Scheurich, 2008; Byrk, 2010) provides a foundation for a capacity building framework to understand a school's capacity development to effectively shift from segregated to inclusive education.

In 1999, Little, as quoted in Mattos (2011), found that the "progress of reform appears to rest on the capacity of teachers, both individually and collectively." (p. 7). Further, O'Day, Goertz and Floden (1995) realized that capacity is broader than teacher

skills alone, and more factors, such as material resources, school structures and process, as well as the staff's collective capacity, must be considered. Mattos (2011) summarized their work on capacity, explaining that capacity, as a concept, should "include factors such as relationships between individual, or teacher, capacity and the abilities of schools, and districts." And, "if the capacity of the education system-or any system- is insufficient for accomplishing a desired goal, capacity may be increased by improving performance of workers (i.e. individual teachers); by adding such resources as personnel, materials, or technology; by structuring how work is organized; and/or by restructuring how services are delivered" (p.1).

Similarly, Century's (1999) work, which built upon Spillane and Thompson's (1997) work, provides a capacity building framework to examine a school's capacity grounded in school reform literature. Century explains that school capacity development consists of four dimensions: human capacity, structural capacity, organizational capacity and material capacity. She, and others who have worked on capacity since then (Byrk, 2010; Newman et. al., 2000), have found that school capacity is multi-dimensional, and that each of the dimensions are inter-related and must be coherently woven together. It has also been found that districts play a critical role in supporting coherence (Bryk, 2010; Honig & Copland, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008).

In their two-year case study of seven urban elementary schools, Newman, King and Youngs (2000) found five elements of school capacity for sustaining innovation and reform at the building level. First is human capacity, defined as the knowledge, skills and dispositions of individual staff members. This, however, was not found to be sufficient to understand a school's capacity to successfully instruct to all children. Therefore they

outlined four more dimensions: an organized and collective professional community; a coordinated and sustained focus on clear learning goals that integrates curriculum standards with instruction and assessment leading to what they call instructional program coherence; enhancements of high quality human and technical resources delivered to the school as needed; and strong principal leadership that socializes the staff to the purpose, values, and guiding vision of the school, making transparent how all capacity building initiatives are tied to student outcomes.

In addition, Newman, King and Youngs (2000) found that student learning is more likely to increase if school capacity building initiatives address more than a teacher's skills. According to their work, capacity building must not only address human capacity, the teachers' skills, but it must also address multiple dimensions of the educational system, each of which impact a teacher's ability to teach: professional community, program coherence, technical resources, and the role that principal leadership plays. Rorrer et al. (2008) and Byrk (2010) add to this conceptualization by placing a premium on the role that districts play in supporting systemic program coherence for student learning.

When thinking about capacity conceptually it is important to consider what dimensions, or combination of factors, lead to coherent quality instruction across a system for all children. Based collectively upon the past capacity work, there are at least six dimensions of school capacity: human, organizational, material, structural, principal leadership, and district support. Notice that human capacity, the knowledge, skills and dispositions of school staff, is but one of the dimensions of school capacity.

What follows is an explanation, based on the literature, of each dimension of school capacity: individual staff's human capacity, a school's structural capacity, a school's organizational capacity, material/technical capacity of the school, principal leadership, and district support. Following the detailed literature reviews, Table 1.1 summarizes each of the dimensions' literature to date. Importantly, while the table breaks each dimension into a separate component of school capacity, they are actually meant to be interactive and inter-related (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000; Mattos, 2011).

Individual staff's human capacity. Human capacity is central to a reform's success and is defined as a teacher's knowledge, skills, dispositions and views of self (O'Day, Goertz and Floden, 1995). Included is the will to commit to the proposed the reform. Teachers' knowledge can be seen in how they develop their professional knowledge around the reform (i.e. if it's a literacy reform, are efforts being made to increase reading instruction skills and attend professional develop courses in literacy for the target population). Skills are to be directly related to knowledge. Teachers' skill development is evidenced by their ability to transform knowledge into new classroom practices that lead to increased student and personal teaching gains. Disposition and will toward the reform or innovation are similarly related and speak to a teacher's willingness to be optimistic and committed to the reform without too much resistance. Case study research carried out across more than twelve schools found that without substantial increases in a teacher's human capacity to carry out the reform initiatives, progress will stagnate (O'day, Goertz, and Floden, 1995). Thus, the ability for reform efforts to affect

teachers' and leadership's personal human capacity, their own knowledge, skills and dispositions, is a critical component to school capacity efforts.

Instructional and structural capacity. Structural capacity refers to any non-human developments that must occur. These developments have been found to occur along two dimensions: content and process. Content refers to things such as supplementary curriculum and new policy documents. Process refers to things such as a school-wide problem solving process or student and staff assignments and schedules. This dimension of capacity building can be considered to address any elements of the educational system that are independent of people. Formal procedures, professional development programs and curriculum frameworks have all been found to be critical components of structural capacity to address and align with the innovation (Century, 1999; Florian, Hange, & Copland, 2000).

Century (1999) was among the first to offer a definition of structural capacity in the literature. Mattos (2011) explained her definition of structural capacity to be “the formal and established elements of a system, which exist independent of the individuals who may use or change these elements in order to function in the system” (p. 132). Century (1999), as explicated by Mattos (2011) in his dissertation work on educational capacity, explained that a school's structural capacity includes the educational policies, procedures and curriculum frameworks adopted; state and local teacher certification, hiring practices and job descriptions that defines who does what work; the school and district schedules; and finally, the decision-making procedures and processes, which guide how the work will be done.

Florian, Hange and Copland (2000) add to this understanding of structural capacity by offering in their work that structural capacity is critical to address. In their work structural capacity was understood to be the evolution of professional development programs and curriculum frameworks that match the needs of the reform. For instance, professional development plans that systematically align teachers own learning goals with the needs of the students must be in place. This was also found to be important in Mattos' (2011) work, where teachers found learning programs that directly address reform needs to be most beneficial to their own developing skills (their human capacity to carry out the reform efforts effectively). Further, the curriculum framework utilized by the school system needs to complement the reform efforts. Thus, if teachers are working to build high order literacy skills such as engaging with text, synthesizing information and making connections, curriculum frameworks that address higher order literacy skills must be developed. These structures and processes are examples of the development of structural capacity that is shown to be a critical factor in school capacity building for reform.

Professional community and organizational capacity. Organizational capacity refers directly to those things that help develop a collaborative professional culture both within and outside of the school itself. Strong school leaders are critical to the development of this capacity along with their capacity to socialize staff into a professional cultural of high expectations for all, and a collaborative work environment. Century (1999) explains organizational capacity as the relationships among individuals both within the district and with individuals outside the district. Therefore, organizational capacity speaks to the culture in the school that lends itself to working

collaboratively among peers at the school site, across the district and with outside agencies and organizations around a shared vision for learning.

Newman, King and Youngs (2000) also speak to the importance of organizational culture in a school's capacity to sustainably and effectively implement reform initiatives. In their work it was found that individual teacher competence must be collective, not competitive in nature. They also found that to be more effective, the teachers' collective and collaborative competence needs to be organized around (1) shared goals for learning, (2) an inquiry process to address challenges and (3) opportunities for all staff to influence school activities and policies.

Professional learning communities, grade level teams and home-school partnerships are examples of a school's organizational capacity building through leadership and socialization of others. This is also called social-capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu explains that social capital is the collection of peoples' resources, which exist because of their group membership. In a school these people are the staff members implementing reform. This membership and related group resources provides individual members meaningful knowledge and skills (capital) that are owned by the group and offered to each individual member automatically because of their membership with that of the larger group. Thus, the collaboration of each individual member in a school lends itself to an organizational culture that is defined, at least partially, by collaborative social capital. This is organizational culture capacity.

Technical, material, and human resource capacity. Material capacities are synonymous with fiscal, concrete and tangible resources. Material capacity can be developed via increased staffing, newly purchased curriculum, or other material or

technological resources. Newman, King and Youngs (2000) include access to ideas as part of this capacity building process and in this work they articulate the importance of developing human and technical resources. These resources must be offered and delivered to the local school sites, as they work to implement reform initiatives. Century (1999) also explained material resources to be among the four critical elements of capacity development at the school level. In her work material capacity, or the development of aligned curriculum and technological resources, is critical to building sustainable capacity for reform. These researchers often refer to this capacity as anything that costs money. Thus, material capacity is the purposeful and strategic development and enhancements of the system's human, technological, material, curricular, and facility materials to ensure alignment with the reform.

For instance, Dimmock (2011) found in his work on leadership that a key role of the principal leader is to optimize and align resources in order to build capacity for achieving goals. To that effect, schools need to increase the high quality human resources and re-align their roles, as well as develop and evolve material and technological resources to match the needs of the new school based interventions (Gravois, 2013). Mattos (2011) also showed in his recent dissertation case study, the importance of providing teachers with aligned intervention materials for literacy, which was the focus of the school's reform efforts. As such, if a school is implementing inclusive education, but all the currently available curricular resources for SWDs are for self-contained classroom teaching that do not align with general education standards and benchmarks, the development of new curricular resources will need to be a part of the capacity building plan. Additionally, the enhancement of technologies available such as

computers, both assistive technology specifically for students with accommodation needs and advancements that are available for all students, must be considered. Overall, researchers have been clear to include material resource development as one of the four central components to sustainable and quality reform efforts.

Coherence and principal leadership. School capacity requires effective principal leadership (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000). Taking Dimmock's (2011) definition, leadership is viewed as an influential social process. This is a moral process, shared Dimmock, which uses resources strategically to build capacity for achieving a pre-determined shared goal. Synthesizing the thinking of Leithwood and Riehl (2005), Copland (2003), DuFour, (2004), Elmore (2000), Fullan (2003, 2005, 2006, 2011), and Gold et al. (2003), Dimmock (2011) offers a conceptualization of leadership that emphasizes capacity (Dimmock, 2011). Specifically, Leithwood and Day (2007) offer four categories of leader work: vision building and direction setting, developing human resources, designing the organization, and managing learning. The first, building a school vision and establishing direction and goals around this vision, was found to have the largest effect on student learning (Leithwood and O'Day, 2007). Thus, a critical role of a leader in capacity development is to identify a vision and create system-wide buy in. Further, leaders must work to align the individual staffs' and organization's goals collectively around this vision. Motivation and sustainability, as well as distributed leadership are key concepts here. Using their strategic role as vision setter and legal authority, the principal sits in a unique position to motivate staff and distribute authority, thus creating a climate that will sustain past their tenure. It is unlikely that reform initiatives will sustain without this distribution and staff motivation.

As mentioned above, managing and aligning resources is an additional critical role for principals. Gravois (2013) recognizes the importance of resource management stating “there needs to be recognition that district and school leaders are constantly challenged to allocate and manage very limited resources with many more identified needs than resources available” (p.18). While material capacity speaks of building the material resources, it is the role of the principal to align these resources with the vision of change brought on by reform. If resources are not aligned with the change vision, deep-rooted uses of resources will continue to drive practice, stagnating reform efforts. If a school is working to inclusively educate all children in age appropriate classrooms and extra monies are available for an additional staff member, the principal will need to hire someone with skills in inclusive education, not segregated education. Further, if monies are available for special education curriculum materials, a decision to buy materials that facilitate differentiation within general education as opposed to packaged alternative curriculums that are designed to be used in a segregated environment in replace of the general education curriculum is necessary. These decisions require leadership oversight and guidance. Further, as Newman and colleagues (2000) point out, while there are many leaders in the school, the principal alone holds legal authority over the school granting her extensive power in aligning a school’s material development around a common vision.

Coherence and district support. Florian, Hange and Copland (2000) conducted an examination of the district’s role in school level reform in fifteen districts across thirteen states. It was found that districts supported school capacity by fostering an alignment of curricula to state standards, aiding in building the instructional capacity of

school staff via professional development aimed at the reform, playing an evaluative role by evaluating the effectiveness of school reform efforts, fostering relationships with external organizations and internal (district level) resources and aligning funding to school goals. Further, Newman, Smith, Allensworth and Byrk (2001) explain that instructional program coherence is critical to a reform's success. They define the concept of instructional program coherence as "a set of interrelated programs for students and staff that are guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate and are pursued over a sustained period." (p.299). Their case study work found that if schools adopt and implement school improvement projects, programs and partnerships that are not interrelated and aligned, short term success will give way to staff fatigue and frustration, and any student gains will begin to diminish over time. Thus, according to these authors, instructional program coherence is an essential goal for districts to support and pursue.

It is important to realize that each of the four dimensions of capacity outlined above is not to be taken in isolation. In fact, more recent studies examining capacity have found that in order for reforms to successfully achieve what they set out to achieve in education all four capacities must be interwoven coherently (Fullan, 2011; Newman, Youngs & King, 2000) In addition, while not talked about directly in Century's work, scholars have recently been examining the oft-neglected district's role in school system capacity building and trust (Byrk, 2010; Rorrer et al., 2008). These researchers have found that districts can and should play a critical role in local school reform; and that when they do, the likelihood of sustained success increases.

However, while much of the past research has claimed districts as inconsequential in reform, maintaining that schools or states are the key units of analysis in bottom up and top down school reform (Finn, 1991), current studies show districts to be critical in effective school reform efforts. Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) emphasized the important, but often neglected role of local school districts. Building off Meyer and Rowan's (1977) new-institutional theory, Rorrer et. al. (2008) theorized a non-linear systemic reform theory that places districts as "institutional actors in improving achievement and advancing equity" (p.335). The framework proposes districts as institutional actors engaging in the following "essential roles: (a) providing instructional leadership, (b) reorienting the organization, (c) establishing policy coherence, and (d) maintaining an equity focus" (p.335). Rorrer et. al.'s (2008) work places the district as the unit of analysis for systemic reform to advance equitable education; capturing the complexity of organizational change at the district level coupled with the school level.

As a point of reference, Table 2.1 summarizes the above literature, which is to be considered together as a completely integrated school capacity construct.

Proposed School Capacity Framework

When considering the importance of each of the six dimensions detailed above it is important to understand how they interact with one another. Therefore, a framework for considering the interconnectedness is critical for a complete understanding of school capacity. *Figure 2.1* represents one possible school capacity framework based upon the literature above. This framework incorporates each for the four dimensions of capacity: human, organizational, structural, and material; and is bound by the importance of alignment, principal leadership and district support.

Table 2.1

School Capacity Research Synthesis

Dimension	Literature Base
District Support	<p>Align curriculum to state standards, help build staff instructional capacity and collaboration with one another, foster relationships between schools and internal (district) and external resources, and align funding streams to school goals (Florian, Hange & Copland, 2000).</p> <p>Districts play a critical role in supporting local education agencies to carry out reform efforts (Rorrer et al., 2008).</p>
Principal Leadership	<p>Promote instructional coherence by sharing and distributing leadership responsibilities and providing formative and summative evaluation, shaping consensus around instructional coherence to promote ownership while reducing divisions among staff (Kedro, 2004).</p> <p>There is a strong associating found between principal leadership, program coherence and capacity building of staff (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000).</p> <p>Leadership has the placement in the organization as well as the legal authority to make decisions that align resources and create buy-in around a common vision (Dimmock, 2011).</p>
Fiscal Resources: Material, Technical, and Human	<p>Fiscal and material resources available to the system (Century, 1999).</p> <p>Enhancements to material and human resources occur that align with the reform efforts (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000).</p> <p>Leadership must align and allocate resources needed for the reform (Dimmock, 2011; Gravois, 2013).</p>
Organizational/Professional Community	<p>Refers to relationships among individuals both within the district and with individuals outside the district (Century, 1999).</p> <p>Individual teacher competence must be collective and organized around shared goals for learning, inquiry process to address challenges and opportunities for all staff to influence school activities and policies (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000).</p>
Coherent School Structures & Instructional Programs	<p>Refers to the elements of the system that are independent of people such as formal procedures and policies, professional development programs, and curriculum frameworks (Century, 1999; Florian, Hange, & Copland, 2000).</p>
Individual Staff Member's Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions	<p>Knowledge, skills, dispositions, and self-perceptions of people within the school system (Century, 1999; Florian, Hange, & Copland, 2000).</p> <p>Staff that are “professionally competent in instruction and assessment centered on curriculum appropriate for their particular students” and that “hold high expectations for students’ learning” (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000).</p>

School Capacity: Principal leadership (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000) and district support (Bryk, 2010; Honig & Copland, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008) are driving forces behind systemic program coherence, a critical factor for school capacity building.

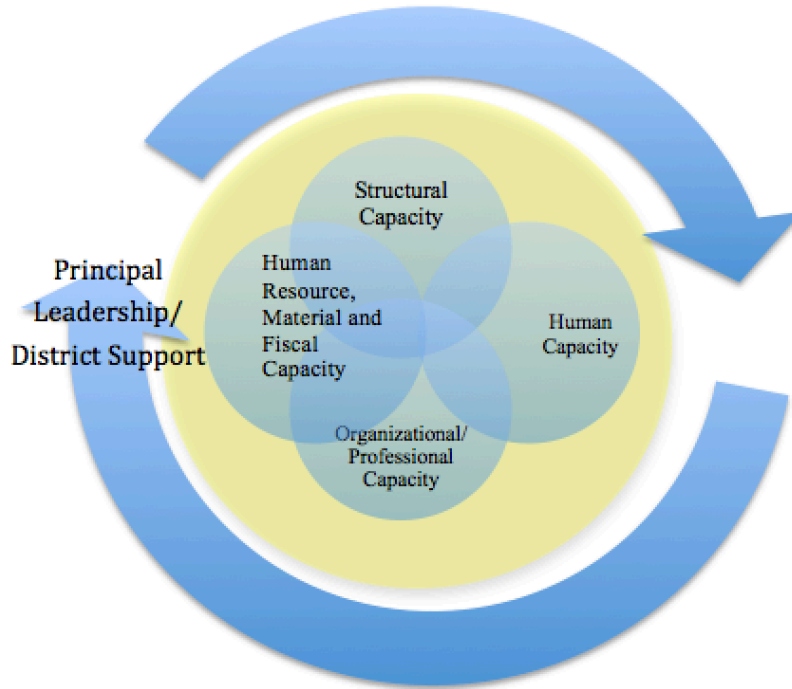


Figure 2.1. A proposed framework for understanding the interrelated dimensions of school capacity (on the basis of Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Century, 1999; Newman, King & Youngs, 2000; Rorrer et al., 2008; and Mattos, 2011).

A central focus of this framework is a coherent and aligned reform targeted around student and staff academic and social learning.

Past research helps us to see that school capacity is not uni-dimensional. Instead it should be viewed as a set of coherent dimensions that are interactive (Century, 1999 and Newman, King & Youngs, 2000). These past theories of school capacity contend that the greater the alignment and coherence of all dimensions of school capacity (i.e. material/technical, structural, organizational and individual) the more overlap with each dimension would exist, as visually depicted in Figure 2.1. Alignment of the capacities is

shown in the diagram as overlapping circles. In theory, as alignment increases the overlapping Venn covers up more and more of the yellow background circle. Thus, as a principal and district work to align their programs and capacities around common goals for student learning, the tighter the four circles representing each capacity become, depicting alignment and coherence.

Figure 2.1 above depicts a school that is theoretically in the early stages of alignment, but still not fully aligned. Conversely, a 100% aligned school would show no yellow and one large circle would appear, depicting that all four dimensions of capacity are interacting at all times with one another, aligned with one common purpose for student learning. Conversely, a school whose principal and/or district has not worked to align the capacities, such as can be the case when multiple school improvement initiatives occur simultaneously that address different goals, would potentially have 0% alignment. This school's diagram would show no overlapping circles, but instead each circle would occupy its own space outside of the yellow circle, and even quite possibly appear outside of the arrows all together in a sporadic manner. Thus, this framework graphically depicts that the greater the alignment and interaction of all four dimensions of school capacity around a common goal, the greater the instruction for all students and staff (Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Century, 1999; Newman, King and Youngs, 2000).

Based upon this framework, the purpose of this study was to examine school leaders' perceptions of theirs and the school's capacity to inclusively educate all students within their age appropriate general education environments. Specifically, I examined one school's inclusive education capacity development. This school had spent the last three years shifting their service delivery model for special education. They went from

educating all SWDs in isolated disability specific special education classrooms in trailers behind the school building to educating them all, including those with significant disabilities (i.e. autism, Down's syndrome, multiple disabilities), in age-appropriate general education classrooms along side their same age peers with and without disabilities. Thus, they shifted from being a school with segregated special education to an inclusive school. I examined the following dimensions:

1. Human/Staff Capacity- What shift in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and will of the staff occur in a school that moves from segregated to inclusive education?
2. Organizational Capacity- How is the school community organized both within it's own building (professional community) and in terms of it's connection to the district and greater community (external supports)?
3. Structural Capacity- What school structures exists that foster/support inclusive education?
4. Material, Technical and External Human Resources Capacity- What material, external human (i.e. outside trainers, university consultants) and financial resources are utilized within the inclusive education classrooms and school?

Applying the Framework to Craft Elementary School

During the 2009/10 through 2011/12 school years I had been a part of larger longitudinal case study research at a local elementary school (Craft) whose main service delivery approach for SWDs changed from segregated to inclusive education. That is, the predominate number of SWDs at Craft were educated in multi-age self-contained classroom based on their disability label, but are now educated within their age/grade level appropriate general education classroom alongside same age peers both with and

without disabilities. For the purpose of this study, being educated in grade appropriate general education classroom alongside peers with and without disabilities is called inclusive education or inclusion (used interchangeably).

When I first met the staff and students at Craft elementary I learned of their recent past with segregated special education dominated by the placement of SWDs educated in self-contained classrooms alongside peers with the same disability label of varying ages/grade levels and needs. I also learned of their transformation, driven by both a leadership vision for inclusion and low academic performance data for special education students. Their recent move from traditional self-contained special education to their current inclusive approach began in the 2008/2009 school year. I was able to be a participant-observer in this school while the reform was being initiated. I have been able to track the moves of the school leadership and teacher leaders of this reform through its fourth year of transformation from a traditional self-contained special education delivery model into a school that operates under an inclusive model.

Conclusion

As discussed in detail above, national policies are aimed at increasing the amount of SWDs being educated in the general education classroom, implementation of inclusive education is increasing in the United States. McLeskey et al.'s 2010 study examined inclusion and least restrictive environment trends in US public schools. The results indicated an increasing national trend of educating SWDs in general education classrooms. However, as Lyons (2009) found in her extensive literature on inclusive education capacity building, while inclusion as a practice is increasing across the nation, little if any research exists that examines the process by which teachers and schools

develop the capacities necessary to effectively instruct students with diverse needs and disabilities inclusively in the general education classroom. Copland and Coseby's (2008-2009) earlier findings were similar in that they found most current research on inclusive education to focus on the how to process of shifting from segregated to inclusive education, but that little exists in terms of how to develop and implement instructional practices to teach core academic content to students with more significant disabilities. Therefore, there is a need for case based research, among other types of research approaches, to address the limitations of existing research. Hence, the current study of Craft Elementary School is an examination of one school's inclusive education capacity development during their transformation phase through the lens of a multi-dimensional school capacity framework.

I began this section with an overview of the literature in systemic inclusive education and school capacity, and ended by providing a literature-based framework for the current study. Based upon the findings of Lyon (2009) and Copland and Cosbey (2008-2009)'s most current research on inclusive education reform's failure to focus on the shifting instructional practices more research is needed that examines inclusive education capacity development through the lens of a multi-dimensional capacity building framework. This work can help the field better understand what capacities are needed when schools and districts implement inclusive education reform. Many studies, as shown in the above literature review, have taken a mixed-methods approach to capacity development; however, these studies have failed to look in depth at one school's story and are potentially missing some critical intricacies involved in school reform that could help the field. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to qualitatively examine in

depth the perception of teachers' and administrative leaders' capacity development during their own inclusive education reform.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

Chapter 3 begins with the research questions and related operational definitions, followed by an explanation of the research methods used for data collection and analysis. It concludes with ethical considerations and sampling procedures.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study and have been addressed in the analysis phase:

1. How do school leaders perceive their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform?
2. How do school leaders perceive the school's capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms?
3. How do the school leaders' perceptions of their own and the school's capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice align with the school capacity literature?

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative research grew out of growing consensus by some members of the research community that quantitative measure alone could not sufficiently answer complex social phenomenon questions of why and how some social processes occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, the purpose of qualitative research is to produce

detailed knowledge that describes the how or why phenomenon occurs (Shavelson & Towne, 2002).

Consistent with the tenants of qualitative research the epistemological perspective of constructivism underpinned this research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) A constructivist worldview believes that knowledge is situated in a particular context or locale, is multiple voiced and is constructed and shared through the interactions and interpretations people have with themselves and one another (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Thus, according to constructivist theory there is not one truth, but multiple; getting at people's own construction and meaning making of their world is critical to this view (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005). Thus, this study was designed to examine the perspectives that school leaders, both teacher leaders and administrative leadership, placed on their own and that of the school's capacity to transform special education service delivery from segregated to inclusionary.

Research Design

Case study method. Growing out of the qualitative research tradition to answer how and why questions, a Yin (2009) case study was used as the research design. Case studies are best suited to answer how and why questions of a contemporary, versus historical, phenomenon that is bound by a particular case (i.e. time frame, context, group of people, organization, etc...) when the variables of interest are too complex or too many in number to control for (Yin, 2009). Yin offers various designs within the case study family: single case holistic, single case embedded, and a multiple site case study. The selection of the design is to be determined by the units of analysis, which are driven by the research questions. The unit of analysis for this study was the school and the sub-units

were the teachers and administrative leaders. Therefore, this study used the Yin (2009) single case embedded design.

Theoretical propositions. Single case designs are meant to test extant theory for the purpose of refining and, or, generalizing theory, as opposed to subjects in a population (Yin, 2009). Therefore, theoretical propositions are the driving force of the Yin design (Hocutt & Fowler, 2009). The extant literature base for school capacity and inclusive education served as the framework, which guided the development of research propositions. Main propositions and sub-propositions that are assumed to be idealized versions of the extant knowledge base representing fundamentals of the theories were developed to guide data collection and analysis (Hocutt & Alberg, 1995). The following set of propositions, based upon school capacity and inclusive education concepts found in the literature from chapter two, were used to guide this study:

- School capacity is multi-dimensional- each of the following dimension must be coherently interwoven and developed around a common purpose.
- Human capacity must be developed:
 - All staff and all students are included in the inclusive education school policies and practices (Ryndak, Jackson, and Billingsly, 1999-2000; Kozleski, 2002; Sailor, 2008-2009; Capper & Frattura, 2009).
 - Substantial changes in instructional practices are evident. (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005; Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Copland and Coseby, 1999-2000).

- Structural capacity must be developed:
 - Data driven instructional improvement structures are in place to help teachers meet the needs of all students (Gravois et al., 2002) with the teachers' goal being to teach it right the first time, without relying on interventions (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005).
 - Substantial changes in school structures are evident. (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005; Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Copland and Coseby, 1999/2000)
- Technical, material, and human resource Capacity must be developed:
 - Strategic hiring and allocation/use of resources is used to support the vision and mission (Capper & Frattura, 2009).
 - Instructional technology and appropriate materials and instructional resources need to be in place daily.
- Organizational Capacity must be developed:
 - Age appropriate general education class placement for all SWDs is led primarily by general education (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009) with natural proportions (Ryndak et al. 1999-2000).
 - The working nature of the school consists of a collaborative culture among all staff members (Ainscow, 2005).
- Principal leadership and district support are key driving forces for school capacity coherence.
 - There is a system/school wide focus (Sailor, 2008-2009; Kozleski, 2002; Ryndak et al., 1999-2000).

Prior to data collection I presented the propositions to two experts in the field of inclusive education who reviewed them, determining that they did represent one view of the extant literature on school capacity and inclusive education reform. Finally, in Chapter 5 propositions were analyzed against RQ1's and RQ2's findings and discussed accordingly. Based upon these final findings, a final re-fined school capacity framework was developed and is included in Chapter 6.

Sampling/participants. Yin (2009) discusses various rationales for selecting the target case to study. The critical case is used when there is a set of well-formulated propositions based upon extant theory. The targeted critical case is selected because it is believed to meet all of the conditions, or propositions. The extreme or unique case rationale is when the case represents a rare situation or case that propositions are believed to not be met and the reason or uniqueness of the case of the target of examination. Finally, the representative or typical case rationale attempts to capture the conditions of an everyday common occurrence.

This study employed the critical case rational (Yin, 2009). Selection of the critical case is to be based upon purposive sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005; Merriam, 2009) and requires the researcher to locate a site/case that is representative of the theory to be tested. Criteria for inclusion in this study was based upon the assumed true theoretical propositions listed above. One school, Craft Elementary, who was in the midst of an inclusive education reform, was selected as the critical case. Thirteen staff members within the school were recruited as participants: two school leaders and eleven individual teachers. Following, Yin's (2009) recommendation for a minimum of six units of analysis to drive theory testing, the goal was to enroll a minimum of six participants. Response

from the recruitment e-mail was positive. Twelve granted their consent to participate. One teacher declined participation for undisclosed reasons. This left a total of twelve participants enrolled for the duration of the study. This was well over the recommended six participants to drive theory testing, so case study research continued as planned.

Ethics. University Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures were followed and approval was granted. Appendix E contains a copy of the IRB approval letter. Procedures included the practice of obtaining informed consent for each participant and communicating in writing, and again verbally prior to each interview, that participation was completely voluntary and they could exit at any time. A detailed description of the used consent process is included below. Member checking was also included to ensure the perspectives of the participants, and not the researcher, were used.

Sampling procedure. The critical case participants were purposefully selected based upon their participation as inclusion teachers and school leaders at Craft, the critical case school. The teacher and administrative leaders who participated represent both the past and present leadership team at Craft: the current principal and assistant principal. The past principal who began the inclusion initiative was not a research participant. However, her perspectives were included in pre-existing data interviews. The eleven targeted teachers were comprised of six general education teachers, one per grade level for kindergarten through fifth grade, that have been a part of the inclusive education initiative at Craft since its onset in 2009 and Craft's entire special education teaching force of five special teachers. Together, these eleven teachers make up and were considered the inclusive education initiative's teacher leaders at Craft. These twelve critical case staff members were sent an e-mail introducing them to the study and

requesting their participation. A follow up e-mail to field questions and maintain consistency with my relationship and communication style developed with the staff over the past two years also occurred.

Per the University of South Florida's institutional review board approved protocol, prior to beginning the first interview with each participant I provided a written and verbal discussion of the purpose of the study, the potential benefits to the school and individual participants, the nature of participation, and the voluntary nature of the study. Participants were informed that they could leave and rejoin the study at any time or, if they did not wish to consent now, they had the option of joining the study later. Participants were also asked for permission to audiotape their interviews. None declined being audio-taped. Participants were informed that their responses were confidential and that only general roles (i.e. teacher, administrator, etc.) would be used for identification. Participants were also told that they would have the opportunity to review their response summaries in the form of a written report in order to allow them the opportunity to make corrections, expansions, or deletions as they saw necessary to clarify content. Finally, participants were invited to sign the consent form to indicate whether they wished to participate or not.

Those participants who elected to sign the informed consent statement indicating their decision to participate were interviewed two times each for approximately 45 minutes each time. The script of the interview is included in Appendix B. They were also invited to participate in member checking during the final interview and an electronic review of the findings.

Instrumentation. The following tools were developed and used to guide data collection: a case study protocol, a study database, an interview protocol, and an observation/field note protocol.

Case study protocol. A critical part of the case study design is the protocol (Yin, 2009; Hocutt & Fowler, 2009). It is used to increase the study's reliability and trustworthiness by establishing consistency of focus on research based propositions. The full protocol can be found in Appendix A, which consists of:

- (1) The research questions and propositions;
- (2) Procedures for data collection and data analysis; and
- (3) An outline of what to include in the final study report/dissertation.

Study database. To build trustworthiness of data, or what Yin (2006) refers to as internal reliability, an audit trail of all data and documents related to the study was maintained using a protected study database. The use of a database is recommended as a way to organize case study data (Yin, 2009). The data base was kept on a secured personal computer and consisted of the following documents:

- Observation field notes;
- Reflexive journal entries;
- Notes from expert co-major professor debriefing meetings;
- Audio recordings of observations and interview transcriptions;
- The case study protocol; and
- Complete data analysis files.

Pre-existing interviews and observations. During the 2009/2010, 2010/2011, and 2011/2012 school years a team of researchers from the University of South Florida, of

which I was a part of, collected case study data while partnering with Craft in their efforts to transform their special education service delivery model from segregated special education classrooms to inclusive education. During these years I spent one or two full school days at Craft, attending meetings, observing and helping out in classrooms and talking with staff and students informally throughout the day. I took detailed field notes, which will be used as pre-existing data for this study. In addition, nine school staff were interviewed two times each by my research partners: a sample of three special and three general education teachers, the school principal, the school vice principal, and the exceptional students education specialist. Transcriptions and notes from these interviews were also used.

Semi-structured interview protocols. Following recommendations of Seidman (1991, 2006) and Rubin and Rubin (2005) semi-structured interview protocols were designed. A modified Seidman (2006) three-stage interview process was used. While Seidman recommends three interviews each, with the initial interview consisting of grand tour, open-ended questions, allowing the researcher to develop rapport with participants, because of my developed relationship with the school and participants over the past two years only two interviews per participant were conducted. The past work offered me the opportunity to collect grand tour data during prior informal interviews and observations. Therefore, I used transcripts from pre-existing interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 and interviewed each participant two times. These two interviews incorporated more detailed and focused questions around the study propositions. The final interview also consisted of any clarifying questions and member checking of preliminary data analysis, all the while searching out for disconfirming evidence that could refute the driving

theoretical assumptions behind each proposition (Yin, 2009). Complete copies of interview protocols can be found in Appendix B.

Informal observation field note protocol. An informal participant observation was conducted at the school before each scheduled interview. A protocol consisting of the propositions was created to focus observations on school capacity and inclusive education. Appendix C contains the complete protocol.

Data collection. Because the unit of analysis was the school level as an organization, ethnographic data collection methods were used to drive this study. Ethnographic methods allow the researcher to examine the consistent behaviors and patterns that make up a group or community through the lens of the actors in the community themselves (Le Compte & Schensul, 2005). Since the purpose of this study was to get at the leaders' perspectives of the school's inclusive education capacity building, ethnographic data collection was a logical choice. Fetterman (2010) recommends using some of the following ethnographic methods: interviewing, participant observations, reflexive journals and life histories when appropriate. In addition, quality indicators of a solid qualitative research design calls for multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009; Anfara et. al, 2002). Accordingly, this study gathered data from four sources: pre-existing interview transcripts and participant observation field notes collected in 2010 and 2011 as detailed above, school leader and teacher leader interviews, school wide informal participant observations, and reflexive researcher journaling.

Interviews. Following the recommendations of Spradley (1980) that were later refined by Carspecken (1996) interviews were conducted using non-leading language and open-ended informal probes. However, questions and topics to explore with participants

were focused by the research propositions (Yin, 2009). As mentioned above, a modification to the Seidman (2006) three step interviewing process was utilized. This process calls for three, one hour, interviews with each participant. Interview one, consisting of grand-tour (Carspecken, 1996) probes that allow the participant to openly share a wide view of their perspectives around inclusive education at their school, was omitted from this study because of my long standing work in the school. Therefore, the first interview conducted with participants consisted of more direct questions, still semi-structured and informal, that were meant to get at the details around teachers' and leaders' perceptions of inclusive education capacity building, as well as clarification of the pre-existing data. Finally, interview two consisted of questions that engaged the participants in reflecting on the past interview data, the meaning of their experience with inclusive education capacity building and to probe for disconfirming evidence. I interviewed twelve school staff members; two times each, for approximately forty-five minutes each.

Informal observations and field notes. As an outsider coming into the school to observe patterns of behavior I maintained a position of passive observer (Spradley, 1980). In doing so I followed Rubin and Rubin's (2005) recommendations to use low-inference vocabulary, be as unobtrusive on the environment by acting natural and only jotting notes to expand upon later (Emerson, Frenzt & Shaw, 1995) and respecting the local actors, teachers and leaders in this case, by following their lead. I used the Emerson, Frenzt & Shaw (1995) guide to structure my field notes. First, I only jotted notes and verbatim quotes while in the field, using low-inference/non-biased language and attaching a time stamp to each jot for perspective. Last, immediately after each observation I went to a

private park about a mile from the school site to type up formal field notes from my jottings. I used as thick and rich descriptions as possible.

In total I conducted two informal observations before each scheduled interview session. These observations consisted of me walking the halls and informally stopping in the leadership offices and the inclusion classrooms. The purpose of these observations was two-fold. First, I was working to maintain my relationships with the entire school staff and students that I had developed over the past three years. And second, I was obtaining additional data on the school's culture and community. These data added to the evidence base by providing yet another perspective and window into the various capacities at work at Craft. I also was able to use the information collected during these observations to provide a context for the interviews as well as to guide any necessary probing topics that need clarification during the second interviews. I chose to conduct informal, versus formal, observations because of my relationship with the school. To conduct formal observations after being informally involved in the school for three years would have been unnatural and could have led to biased or pre-meditated behaviors by staff, skewing any trustworthiness of the evidence collected.

Reflexive researcher journal. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) speak about the importance of attending specifically to your subjectivity as a researcher. To do this I kept a weekly reflexive journal. In this journal I wrote about any assumptions I had prior to going into and after data collection, any pre-conceived ideas I had about what results may be found and other notes and biases I came across as well as how I was working through them (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). I began by writing a researcher reflection of who I am as a researcher and past inclusive education practitioner, detailing out my philosophy

and assumptions of what I thought I might find. I then wrote a similar entry before and after each event at Craft and used these to guide the main talking points during my expert debriefing sessions.

Time table. This study was designed to occur over the course of one academic semester. Data collection was divided into two phases to align with Seidman (2006) and Carpecken's (1994) recommendations for repeated observations and interviews. Each phase occurred over four to five weeks, with time built in between phases to allow for unforeseen scheduling conflicts, member checking, expert debriefing with my co-major professors and concurrent data analysis. Each phase consisted of one full day of site visits complete with an informal observation and interviews with all participants. In addition, weekly reflexive journal entries were kept throughout each phase. Finally, detailed field notes were written up immediately following each site visit while the data was fresh in my mind. Additionally, the site visit day consisted of twelve participant interviews, scheduled at a time convenient for the participants. All interviews took place away from the teachers' classrooms in an un-used private classroom.

Each interview was audio-taped and lasted approximately forty-five minutes. Transcriptions for each interview were typed into HyperTranscribe, a qualitative research software, for analysis within two weeks of the interview date. All field notes, transcriptions and interview audio files were uploaded with a date attached; to the study database for audit trail purposes.

Table 3.1 details the study timeline.

Table 3.1

Study Design Timeline

Week	Phase	Procedure	Outcome
1	One	Site visit Interview day 1 observation day 1 Reflexive journal	Reflexive journal 12 interview audio files 1 field note
2, 3, & 4		Transcribe interviews Concurrent data analysis 2 reflexive journals Co-major debrief	3 reflexive journals 1 transcription Debrief notes
5	Two	Site Visit Interview day 2 Observation day 2 Member check embedded in interview Reflexive journal	3 reflexive journals Audio interview audio file with member check notes 1 field note
6 - 9		Transcribe interviews Concurrent data analysis 3 Co-major debriefs Reflexive journal	4 Reflexive journals 11 transcriptions Draft analysis report 3 Debrief notes
10-12	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
13-15	Three	E-mail member check Co-major debrief	Debrief & member check notes 1 reflexive journal Draft final report

Data analysis. Pattern matching logic (Yin, 2009) was used to drive constant-comparative data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Constant comparative method refers to data collection and data analysis that occurs concurrently, meaning that data was analyzed as soon as it was collected, informing the focus and probes of the next phase of data collection. This was done repeatedly in a recursive pattern throughout the study.

Pattern matching is based both on the earlier work of Miles and Huberman (1994), and Merriam's (2009) more recent work. In pattern matching textual qualitative data is read and individual segments of texts are analyzed for their inferred meaning and

assigned a word or code that represents the defined meaning. In this study all pre-existing interview and field note data, 23 interview transcripts, 10 reflexive journals with expert co-major professor meeting feedback and two observation field notes were analyzed to address RQ1 and RQ2, perception of leaders' own and that of the school's capacity for inclusion. Once initial codes were assigned to segments, or units, of texts I looked for repeated patterns in the codes. These repeated patterns become categories or themes. This is referred to as axial coding, or the organizing and sorting individual units and segments of text into categories, which were used during the second phase of data analysis for RQ3 to compare findings to the extant literature (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 2009).

Both deductive and inductive analyses were used during all levels of analysis (Anfara et. al, 2002). Deductive analysis is where the researcher examines units of texts based upon theoretically deduced codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Inductive analysis is the process of the researcher developing the meaning and title of the code themselves. In both cases textual data is chunked into segments and assigned a code, either from the extant theory (deductive) or from the words of the participant (inductive). The research propositions as well as open coding was used to guide what text was examined and what type of codes were formulated, and therefore the data analysis was influenced by the pre-developed theory that guided the case study (Yin, 2006). The search for disconfirming evidence, or codes and categories that refuted the assumed extant theory, was employed during analysis (Yin, 2009; Anfara et. al, 2002).

The analysis for RQ1 and RQ2 took place in three phases for all data. Phase one consisted of assigning raw codes onto segments of texts. A phase one report, based on

initial analysis of the pre-existing data, participant observation field notes and all interview transcriptions was compiled and pre-existing data and one interview transcript was shared with my co-major professors for reliability checking. Reliability was found with all data and codes. Phase two consisted of axial coding, or organizing the codes from phase one into categories. Four interview transcripts were shared with my two co-major professor experts for reliability checking on the themes. Both my co-major professors and myself were in agreement with the themes found. Additionally, a summary of the phase two themes was shared with individual participants for member checking during their second interview. Participants expanded upon and refined the preliminary thematic findings. Phase three consisted of analyzing all participants and subgroups and final cross case conclusions were drawn from this stage of analysis, allowing for the triangulation of findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005) by converging all interview data, observation data and reflexive journal data around across case themes according to pattern matching logic (Patton, 2002). A phase three report for all data combined to address RQ1 and RQ2 was compiled. Last, member checking occurred via e-mailing a summary of main conclusions to allow participants time to read and respond. Feedback was worked into the phase three report, which was shared with my co-major professors during de-briefing meetings. Edit and revisions were made and final findings for RQ1 and RQ2 were developed.

Last, the final findings from RQ1 and RQ2 were used to analyze how the findings compared to the extant research on school capacity (RQ3), using RQ3 and the research propositions as a guiding framework. Each finding from phase three analyses was sorted

into the appropriate school capacity constructs and compared to the extant literature presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 outlines this process in great detail.

I used code-mapping logic to organize the multiple levels of data analysis (Anfara et al., 2002). Table 3.2 is a generic example of a code mapping process that helped me to conceptualize and organize data analysis.

Table 3.2

Code Map of Data Analysis Plan (adapted from Anfara et al., 2002)

Final Analysis	Principal leadership	District support	Organizational Culture	Instructional/ structural	Professional community/ organizational	Human: individual staff
Cross Case themes to theoretical propositions						
Cross case Analysis	Negative case analysis		Negative case analysis		Negative case analysis	
	Analytic conclusions across all data		Analytic conclusions across all data		Analytic conclusions across all data	
	Superordinate theme		Superordinate theme		Superordinate theme	
Axial Coding Analysis	Pattern matching-category development	Pattern matching-category development	Pattern matching-category development	Pattern matching-category development	Pattern matching-category development	Pattern matching-category development
	Axial code	Axial code	Axial code	Axial code	Axial code	Axial code
Raw Coding	Codes assigned to segments of texts					

As represented in above in Table 3.2, qualitative data analysis followed a systematic approach whereby chunks of texts were classified by codes, or typologies. Hatch (2002) defines typologies as a classification system where parts of the world are organized into categories that are generated from theory, common sense (i.e. repeated patterns) or research objective. In this study I used typologies, or codes, derived from (1) repeated patterns in the data itself and (2) from the capacity building theory literature,

which served as the final constructs from which I viewed the data through. The constructs were: principal leadership, role of the district, human capacity, structural capacity, organizational capacity, and material/fiscal capacity. Based upon pattern matching logic, free codes that surfaced as repeated patterns across sources of evidence were included in the typology during the first three phases of data analysis (Patton, 2002). I began by sorting and categorizing the data, ending with superordinate themes that addressed RQ1 and RQ2. I then analyzed these findings through the proposed school capacity framework for RQ3 using the theoretical propositions from which patterns of findings from RQ1 and RQ2 were categorized by. *Figure 3.1* depicts this analysis process.

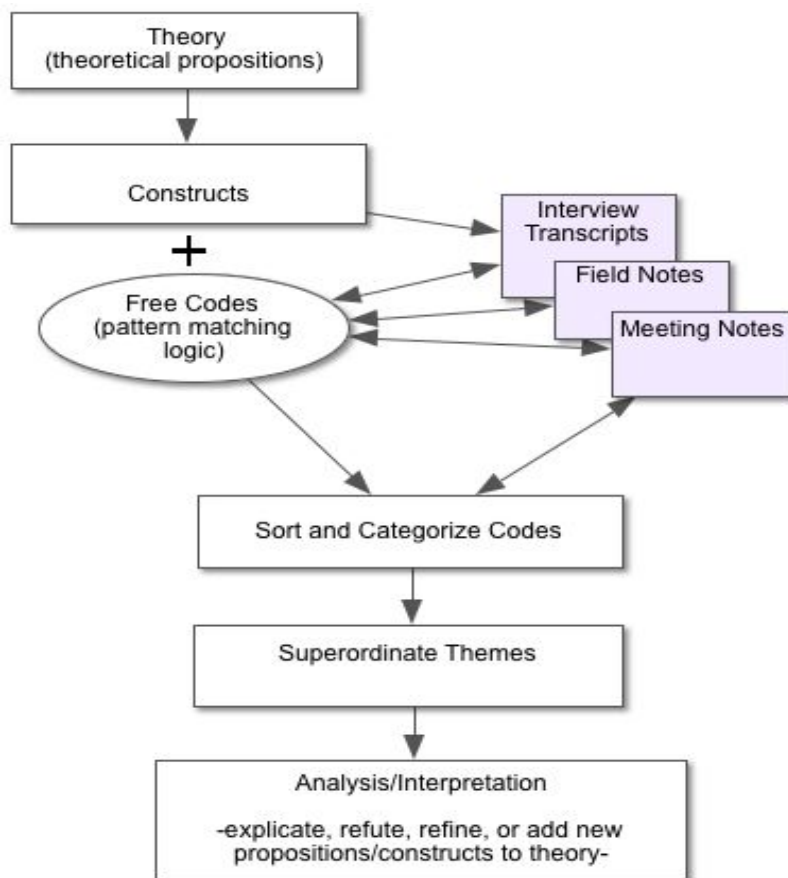


Figure 3.1. Process of text analysis used for qualitative content analysis (adapted from Caruana, 2011)

By following the direction of both Miles and Huberman (1994) and Hatch (2002), the first step of analysis is to read through each data source placing a descriptive term, or code, on to chunks of text. The code is meant to summarize the essence of the text's meaning. This process created a total of 152 raw codes of which were then scanned for duplicates and sorted into categories that spoke of similar concepts. For instance, there were three codes that spoke about the district: district context, district PD, and district support. These three codes were grouped together into one category. I titled this category district. These became my categorical themes, which were then filtered under RQ1 or RQ2, depending on whether they spoke to teacher concepts or school concepts, accordingly. Some raw codes stood alone, such as researcher thoughts, descriptors and teaching assignments, because they served the specific purposes of summarizing participant demographics, the historical context of Craft, and capturing my own analytical thoughts during the interviews.

In summary then, to answer RQ1 and RQ2 all themes focusing (1) staffs' own capacity and (2) that of the school's capacity were analyzed and are presented in Chapter 4, providing the perspectives of special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrative leaders separately. Following the individual sub group analysis, each category of axial codes were analyzed across all participant sub-groups in a cross-case analysis, and organized into three main superordinate themes for both RQ1 and RQ2 combined. Finally, to answer RQ3, the superordinate themes for RQ1 and RQ2 were compared to the literature using the school capacity framework and theoretical propositions presented in Chapter 2, the literature review. Next, the credibility and reliability of the data will be discussed.

Credibility and trustworthiness. In their work in the mid 2000's, Bratlinger et al. (2005) offered a list of credibility indicators for qualitative research: the use of prolonged field engagement, peer debriefing, explaining the particularity of studies context, the triangulation of data, researcher reflexivity, audit trail, negative case analysis, expert consultation, collaboration, and thick description. Further, Creswell and Miller (2002) recommended using a minimum of two methods to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. As shown in Table 3.3, this design employs eight methods. Further, Yin (2009) and Anfara et al. (2002) recommend building in design components that address the studies construct, internal and external validity and its reliability, or trustworthiness. Table 3.3 below is a discussion of where each of these indicators is addressed in this study.

Table 3.3

Bratlinger et al's (2005) Credibility Indicators

Strategy	Study Employs	Location in Design
Prolonged field engagement	NO	-
Peer debriefing	YES	Data analysis; inter-rater reliability; debriefing meetings
Particularity of study	YES	Final report
Triangulation of data	YES	Data collection; data analysis
Reflexivity	YES	Data collection: reflexive journal & debriefing
Audit Trail	YES	Instrumentation: study database
Negative case analysis	YES	Data analysis- level 3
Expert consultation	YES	Throughout: debriefings with major professors
Collaboration	NO	-
Thick description	YES	Data collection: field notes; final report

While highly recommended for ethnographic field work, prolonged field engagement consists of the researcher being in the field for a minimum of nine months to over three years (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) this study did not employ that credibility strategy. The data collection and final analysis phase of this study was designed to occur over the course of one academic semester (approximately three to four months), meaning that all data collection was completed in less than nine months. Member checking, reflexive journaling and expert debriefing with my co-major professors to attend to researcher bias, and repeated interviews with the same participant were added to the design to compensate for the limited time in the field. Additionally, my past three years of partnership and case study data collection extends the total time in the field well past the recommended nine months.

To ensure reliability, or the ability for other researchers to trace and replicate this study, an audit trail connecting conclusions to specific data sources and thick descriptions, as well as detailed accounts of verbatim interview transcripts were provided for throughout the presentation of findings. These measures allow future researchers and auditors to trace each conclusion through the study to confidently judge if the study's design and reported results are reliable.

Internal reliability was built in during the data collection phase in the form of triangulation of data, expert consultation, and with the use of inter-rater reliability between researcher and expert co-major professors who've been in the field of inclusive education for over twenty years each. After data analysis both co-major professors read and analyzed four transcripts to code and categorize segments of data. The researcher's and experts' analysis results were 100% in agreement with codes and themes that

emerged, which is better than the 80% agreement recommendation from Merriam (2009). In addition, research participants engaged in member checking after the second and third analysis levels. This consisted of participants responding to member checking interview prompts during the second interviews and reviewing and providing feedback, expansion and clarification on the report of final findings. Research collaboration was not used in this study. In addition to inter-rater reliability, the convergence of multiple sources of data around each conclusion was used. Bogdan & Biklen (2005) refer to this as data triangulation. Each major research conclusion came from multiple sources of data to triangulate data sources around findings and results: interview transcripts, observation field notes and reflexive journal.

Per the recommendations of Yin (2009), external reliability (the ability to generalize the findings of a study) of a single case design is addressed by using theory to guide data collection and analysis. Thus, one goal of Yin case study research is to generalize to theory (Hocutt & Fowler, 2009). By refining the propositions during the final phase of data analysis for RQ3, coming to consensus using inter-rater reliability, and searching for the rival or negative case during level three analysis (Yin, 2009) I was able to confidently come to trustworthy conclusions about how the case supports, refutes or modifies the pre-existing school capacity theory. Additionally, with my own bias for inclusive education constantly out in the open with my reflexive journal and debriefing meetings, I was able to keep my own bias compartmentalized and transparent throughout the research process, limiting the influence on findings.

Role of the Researcher

For the past fifteen years I have been philosophically committed to inclusive education, both in practice and in theory. I began my journey into education as an undergraduate in a special education teacher-training program whose focus was inclusive education for students with significant disabilities. Under the mentorship of Lou Brown, a founder of the inclusive education movement, I developed inclusive education skills from the onset of my career, rooting deeply in me the non-negotiable commitment to inclusive education. After my time as an undergraduate I continued my development as an inclusive education teacher, teaching in inclusive special education environments for students with a wide array of learning needs and continued my education obtaining a Master's of Science in systems change for inclusive education. Through these experiences and the literature I was exposed to during the past fifteen years I have developed my own perspective on what constitutes inclusive education, and the critical importance of this model of education for all students. This includes my informed belief that all children, when teachers and leaders have the capability to do so effectively, can be educated alongside their peers without disability labels; And further, that inclusive education is a moral imperative of schools which results in meaningful and sustained qualitative and quantitative gains for all involved.

With my past work and commitment to inclusive education, there was a strong chance for my own bias and subjectivity to seep into this study. To minimize this I designed the use of data triangulation, a reflexive journal, expert debriefing with my major professors and three levels of analysis driven by literature based theoretical propositions. Further, I worked purposefully throughout the study to maintain my role as

a passive observer in this study, seeking to understand the school's inclusive education model through the perspectives of the participants, not my own. In doing this case study work, my goal was to describe what I actually saw and heard from the participants, and then I checked that against the propositions derived from the literature, as opposed to comparing Craft's experience with inclusion against my own beliefs. However, it is impossible to completely separate oneself from the study in qualitative work, especially when the topic of study is as important to one as inclusion is to me. Thus, my own individual bias of what inclusion should and could be was the main focus of the debriefing meetings with my major professors.

Finally, my own role in this case study began more than three years ago in the fall of 2009 when I first learned of Craft's move from segregated to inclusive education for SWDs. Coming to doctoral studies to continue learning about how school's work to organize their services for SWDs inclusively, I immediately partnered with Craft and a university research team in a longitudinal case study documenting and examining their move to inclusive education. A more detailed description of my work with Craft is available in Appendix D. However, to summarize this work, under the direction of my major professors I spent one to two full days with Craft and their staff as both a researcher in training, completing participant observations, attending planning meetings with school administrations; and as an inclusive education coach, teaching staff about inclusive practices. Additionally, my major professors and I met with the district special education administration staff once a quarter. These meetings focused on what we were learning at Craft and what needs they continued to have. These meetings evolved into us serving as informal liaisons between Craft and the district, acting often as advocates for

both (1) Craft's growing need for inclusive education support and (2) a district move to scale up inclusion as an initiative beyond Craft, who were reportedly stressed with the increasingly high percentage of SWDs being choiced into and enrolled at Craft, especially students with high support needs. Serving as an advocate, coach and emerging qualitative researcher allowed me the opportunity to build rapport and respect, and then trust, with the staff at Craft, but also placed me in an important position when moving into this current case study as an independent researcher. Coming into Craft solely to collect data, no longer there specifically to advocate and coach, shifted our relationship and this had to be addressed. Therefore, I worked to continue my reciprocal relationship with staff by continuing the information observations and conversations before and after all interviews. During these times I communicated with staff about their own personal success stories and moments of frustration. Important to note, I was transparent with the staff throughout my three plus years at Craft, sharing regularly with them that my time would come to an end upon the finishing of my doctoral degree, and that the last semester I spent there a role shift from my serving mostly as an inclusive education coach to being focused on collecting interview and observation data for my dissertation would occur. Therefore, when I began formal interviews, staff was expecting the focused interaction with me, which made the transition more natural.

Chapter Four

Presentation of Findings for RQ1 and RQ2

The purpose of this study was to examine one school's capacity development during their own inclusive education reform. To do so, I examined leaders' perceptions of their own, and that of the schools, developing capacity through a constructivist lens using case study methodology (Yin, 2009). Evidence was collected from 23 in depth interviews (11 participants interviewed twice; 1 participant interviewed once) with teacher and administrative leaders, two school based field notes (one collected on interview day one; one collected on interview day 2) and two years worth of pre-existing case study data (nine participants interviewed twice; seven classroom observation field notes; and three field notes from inclusion planning meetings) from one school implementing inclusive education reform. All sources of evidence were qualitatively analyzed in order to triangulate research findings around the following questions:

1. How do school leaders perceive their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform?
2. How do school leaders perceive the school's capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms?
3. How do the school leaders' perceptions of their own and that of the school's capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice align with the school capacity literature?

One school's (Craft elementary) teachers' and administrative leaders' perceptions of their own developing capacity for implementing inclusive education was the focus of this study. Case study research allowed for an in-depth examination of one particular case within one particular locale, or specific context (Yin, 2009), Craft. Therefore, a thick description of Craft and its leaders, prior to and during the research period of 2009 through 2012, is offered first. This thick description locates the study within a particular locale: Craft Elementary School. Following this description, qualitative findings are presented for the first two research questions: first the leaders' perception of their own capacity development is presented (RQ1); then, their perceptions of the school's capacity development is offered (RQ2). As explained in detail in Chapter 4, the findings for RQ1 and RQ2 serve as the data points of analysis for RQ3, which asks the comparison of the school's inclusive education capacity development to the literature (RQ3). The results and findings for RQ3 is presented and analyzed separately along with an in-depth discussion of the major findings as they related to the literature, in Chapter 5.

The sections to follow provide the historical context of Craft, perceptions of leaders' own capacity development and leaders' perceptions of the school's capacity development. First, a thick description of Craft and the study participants are presented. Next, the leaders own capacity development is presented. In the final section, perceptions that refer to the school's capacity development for inclusive education are shared.

Description of Craft Elementary

Craft is an elementary school on the outskirts of a large urban metropolis with changing demographics. With rates of students receiving free and reduced lunch (26% in

2002/2003; 41% in 2010/2011) and those listed as minority students (40% in 2002/2003; 47% in 2010/2011) increasing steadily over the past five school years, data shows that this school was shifting from a middle-working class to a more traditional urban demographic school. Further, Craft was the district designated cluster site for students with more significant special education support needs. This means that all students within the school's regional boundaries that have a disability label of cognitive disabilities (autism, Down's syndrome, etc...) were bussed to Craft for their education, regardless if that is where the student would go to school if they did not receive special education services. Accordingly, this school had a full array of student diversity: socio-economic, ethnic and ability. Also, Craft educates more SWDs (15% of students have disability labels) than would be naturally occurring in society nationwide (10-12%; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This disproportionate representation of SWDs means that in essence Craft must function as a cluster school- a role that contradicts the goal of being an inclusive school.

Prior to their move to inclusive education in fall of 2009, Craft had trailers behind the parking lot where the special education self-contained classrooms were located. This is where the majority of the special education staff and teachers remained all day, isolated from the rest of the school. A small group of students, who were educated both in the general education classroom and a resource room for parts of the day, and one teacher/teacher's aide team, were housed on the main school campus. The general education and special education teaching staff operated in parallel systems, working with and collaborating with others that were also special educators.

In 2005 a newly hired assistant principal brought a vision for inclusion at Craft. She became the principal of the school in 2007 and brought on a new assistant principal that year. Both leaders shared an inclusive education vision for Craft; had past experience teaching and leading in an inclusive school; and a philosophical commitment to inclusion as a core value. Molly (pseudonym), the principal, grew up in the same district as her twin brothers who were hard of hearing. She watched her parents fight for inclusive education for her brothers and the benefits they were afforded because of inclusion. This, coupled with her past leadership experience in a northern state where inclusion was the way of work, developed in her a passion and commitment for inclusive education. Ellen (pseudonym), the assistant principal, also came from a district in a state where inclusive education was a primary way of work. She too reported seeing first hand the benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities and the entire school community, and came to Craft committed to an inclusive philosophy.

During the 2007 academic year the trailers which housed the self-contained special education classrooms became outdated and needed replacement. Instead of replacing them, the leaders made the decision to move the special education team to the main campus building in fall of 2007.

Conversations around student data began in April of 2008. For the first time either leader could remember, staff analyzed achievement data for sub groups, including SWDs in grade-based professional learning communities, where special education teachers were part of the collaborative grade level discussions rather than meeting separately as in years past. Results of this analysis showed academic achievement gaps between SWDs and the rest of the student body. While Craft was a high performing “A”

school, data indicated that SWDs were not performing nearly as well as their peers without disabilities. Craft staff was a successful veteran staff, proud of their “A” rating history (the state rates schools on an A-F scale based on many indicators, academic achievement being one). Being an A school in this district was reported by many to be a big deal. As faculty conversations during team meetings evolved it became evident to them that special education students were not meeting adequate yearly progress gains and they were concerned and motivated to make changes. It was at this point that staff members were introduced to inclusive education.

The entire teaching staff spent one full academic year (2008-2009) in conversations and vision building around how to begin the transformation from segregated to inclusive education for students receiving special education services. In the fall of 2009, teaching teams were re-aligned from special education teachers assigned to groups of students with similar disability labels across grades to one special education teacher assigned per grade level. In addition, grade level professional learning communities with special education staff included at each grade level became the new way of work for staff at Craft. The following year SWDs were reassigned to their age appropriate grade level classroom; self-contained classrooms were closed; staff schedules were realigned again; and inclusive education began.

Since coming to Craft, I observed that the hallways of this school were filled with positive behavior support slogans; the school’s mission included all students; and a typical observation showed staff being proud, welcoming and smiling. Staff frequently and proudly shared what skill little Jose (a SWD) was doing now that he never did before, or the new seating arrangement that works better than the last. It was a school

that could be described as one with a positive and hopeful climate. Staff seemed excited, at least those who were part of the school's inclusive education reform.

However, not all staff members were involved in the reform and not all were excited for the shift from segregated to inclusive education. The school leaders solicited volunteers from general education classrooms resulting in one or two general education classroom teachers per grade level, out of an average of four or five, participated in the reform from segregated to inclusive education. This sub-group of staff became known and referred to as the "inclusion family" at Craft. In the middle of the 2011-2012 school year a new principal was assigned to Craft. In addition, the school's exceptional student education (ESE) specialist changed twice from 2009-2012. The original ESE specialist transferred to another school when inclusion began. Lori, the replacement ESE specialist was hired and began in the fall of 2009. Lori began inclusion with Craft as a half-time special education teacher and half time ESE specialist. However, she missed being with the students fulltime so chose to leave her specialist role after serving for three years, but remained at Craft as a special education teacher. In the middle of the fall 2012 semester Craft was allocated an additional half teaching unit from the district. This allowed them to keep Lori as a full time teacher and to hire a full time ESE specialist. It was then that Craft brought on another new ESE specialist from a neighboring school who began her appointment after data collection occurred.

The district of which Craft is a part of is one of the largest in the country and the state. Steeped in an old model of segregated education for students with disabilities this district continued to operate two center schools for students with significant disabilities and clustered SWDs into schools that are outside of their residential boundaries based

upon disability labels. At individual school sites, the pre-dominant service delivery model for SWDs was disability specific placement in special education classrooms that serve students from across grade levels. There was some evidence of co-teaching for students with mild support needs in the areas of SLD and EBD, but most special education services were reported to take place in self-contained or resource classrooms. Students with autism attend autism unit classes in designated schools across the county and students with significant intellectual delays and support needs predominately attended one of the two district center schools. Thus, SWDs were not included in their same age classrooms at their local neighborhood school, as is the case at Craft, making Craft a unique school within the district, often causing political tension and pressure, that was evident in my interactions with local school staff, as well as district office staff.

Description of Study Participants

School leaders are the subunit of analysis in this study. There were a total of 13 participants recruited and 12 consented to participate and remained study participants through the duration of the study. One general education teacher opted to not participate for undisclosed reasons. Participants included: five general education teacher leaders, five special education teacher leaders, and two administrative team leaders. As mentioned in Chapter 3, each participant was recruited because of their continued involvement as teacher leaders with inclusion at Craft from the beginning. They are the staff that is considered Craft's inclusion family. The participants are broken into three subgroups based upon their teaching assignment: special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrative leaders. Given the small size of Craft Elementary and the in-depth and personal nature of the case study design, I decided to do sub group versus

individual participant analysis in order to increase the level of confidentiality promised to the participants.

Special education teachers. A total of five special education teacher leaders participated in the study. Each was interviewed twice and three of the five had an interview transcript in the pre-existing data from the 2010-2011 school year that was also used. All special education teachers were females. There was one special education teacher from each grade level, and one was new to Craft at the start of the inclusion initiative. The rest had been there between 15 and 25 years. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 15 to 25 years. In terms of their experience with inclusion, one of the special education teachers had participated in a program at a different school where she provided in-class support, but she reported feeling more like an aide than a teacher. This same teacher also co-taught in a different district in an early childhood classroom that had 50% SWDs and 50% students without. One teacher taught mostly in a resource classroom, providing some consultative support for students with SLD and EBD needs. The other three special education teachers had no experience with inclusion or teaching within a general education classroom for any part of the day. Two were self contained teachers in cross age classrooms designated specifically for students with the outdated nomenclature used in the state, educationally mentally retarded (EMR) and trainable mentally retarded (TMR), labels at Craft elementary. These classes were housed in trailers behind the school with little or no interaction with the greater school community. One of the two would try what she called reverse inclusion, where students from general education classrooms without disability labels would come into their room to provide assistance.

Table 4.1 summarizes the special education teacher leaders who participated in this study. I have left out grades and any other identifiable information.

Table 4.1

Special Education Teacher Participant Summary

	Teaching Certification	Experience with Inclusion
Yvonne	EMR & TMR *	None
Monica	Specific Learning Disability (SLD) *	Co-Teach In Class Support
Pam	EMR & TMR *	None
Paula	SLD *	None
Lori	Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD) & Physical Education	None as ESE teacher; Had students with SLD and EBD included in PE

* All special education teachers took courses and certification tests to obtain their kindergarten through 6th grade elementary education license. It was unclear if this was district policy or unique to Craft.

General education teachers. A total of five general education teacher leaders participated in the study. Each was interviewed twice and three of the five had an interview transcript in the pre-existing data from the 2010-2011 school year that was also used. All general education participants were females. There was one general education teacher per grade for kindergarten through fourth grade. Fifth grade was not represented. However, in the pre-existing data there were two interview transcripts, one from the 2010-2011 school year and one from the 2011-2012, from Stacey, a fifth grade teacher. These were also used in the analysis. None of the general education teacher leaders were

new to Craft at the start of the inclusion initiative. All were a part of the inclusion initiative as a general education teacher in the one homeroom per grade level where SWDs were enrolled. Their years of teaching experience ranged from five to 26 years. In terms of their experience with inclusion, two of the general education teachers had past years where students with specific learning disability (SLD) and emotional behavior disability (EBD) labels were in their homeroom, but were pulled for all their special education support. One of these two teachers also had some experience co-teaching with another grade level general education teacher. No other general education teacher participant had experience sharing her teaching with a peer.

Table 4.2 summarizes the general education teacher leaders who participated in this study. I have left out grades and specific grade level certification to maintain the confidentiality of each participant.

Table 4.2

General Education Teacher Participant Summary

	Teaching Certification	Experience with Inclusion Noted
Kris	Elementary Education	None
Gina	Elementary Education	None
Vicky	Elementary Education	SLD & EBD in class- pulled for services
Dana	Elementary Education	None
Sally	Elementary Education	None

Administrative leaders. A total of two administrative leaders participated in the study. One was interviewed once, as compared to two times each for all other participants, due to scheduling constraints. Additionally, one of the two had an interview transcript in the pre-existing data from the 2010-2011 school year that was also used. There was one female and one male administrator who participated. In addition, two pre-existing interview transcripts from Molly, the former principal who started inclusion at Craft, were included in the analysis. One administrator was newly hired in the spring of 2012, after serving as an assistant principal at a neighboring school for three years. In terms of their experience with inclusion, the more experienced one had been a teacher at an inclusive school in a different state. The newly hired one had spent his entire career in the current district and reported that he had little experience with inclusive education. Table 4.3 summarizes the administrative leaders who participated in this study.

Table 4.3

Administrative Leader Participant Summary

	Years at CRAFT prior to inclusion	Years in Administration	Experience with Inclusion Noted
Ellen	2	5	Taught in inclusive schools in different state
Jared	0	1	Very Little: some SLD in-class support observed in past schools

Perception of Leaders own Capacity Development

RQ1: How do school leaders perceive their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform?

To answer RQ1, all themes focusing on staff learning and barriers to that learning were analyzed and are presented in the following sections that provide the perspectives of special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrative leaders.

Findings from a cross case analysis is also provided for RQ1.

Based upon the analysis explained in Chapter 3, categories of codes were organized into three main superordinate themes. Staff growth included any categories that spoke to an increase in teachers' skills, knowledge or dispositions. The superordinate theme, learning process, included categories that explicate how the leaders perceive to have gained these new skills, knowledge and a shift in dispositions towards inclusion and SWDs. Finally, the theme, continued needs, includes all categories that speak to leaders' perceptions of areas for growth needed. The following sections outline the process used to consolidate the categories of codes into three main superordinate themes: staff growth, learning process and continued needs.

Staff Growth. Sorting and categorizing together 22 raw codes related to leader growth comprised this theme. Each of these codes spoke of an increase in the leaders' knowledge, skills and dispositions towards and ability to teach SWDs inclusively.

Table 4.4 gives an example of the type of quotes that were coded into this theme.

Table 4.4

Code Map for Superordinate theme, Staff Growth

Staff Growth	
Teaching skills Co-teaching Planning Change lessons IEP driven planning Student diversity Teaching methods Shared responsibility Student centered Priority setting Differentiation	<p>Gina: But I really feel like it is a lot more student led and a lot less teacher led.</p> <p>Dana: So good planning is not just me doing my lesson plans and her coming- it's us doing them together, because that is how we started ... So we really had to make it a point, we do not plan for the next week until we are both sitting down together.</p> <p>Dana: [on what she's learned] A lot more visual aides we've made. I do know that. A lot more visual aides. Things on desks.</p> <p>Pam: General education skills have broadened, definitely...they're teaching methods are very- I always tell them- ESE friendly. I tell them they're ESE minded without even realizing it. The way that they do things. They've evolved more into that and thinking in those terms.</p>
Increased knowledge	<p>Paula: I've learned the curriculum better because I am in there.</p> <p>Dana: You know I always thought that [the ESE] teacher had the same ideas. And when you co-teach I would be doing this and she would just be pulling small groups and that is what we thought it was. So seeing those videos- that kind of opened up our eyes to [different ways to co-teach].</p>
Dispositions SWDs Expectations Beliefs Less fear of SWD Care Commitment Personal beliefs Assumptions of abilities Self-reflection	<p>Ellen: Everyone that is involved, all the regular education teachers involved, 100% believe it is what's best for the kids. Most of the ESE teachers believe that now.</p> <p>Gina: Well um the first thing that comes to mind, it seems basic, but it is so important, is that my comfort level with children with exceptionalities is so much more now. At first I had so much anxieties about them, before my approach was, "oh what could be wrong with them." And now I am like "OK".</p> <p>Dana: I think that they [SWDs] were a little scary to me at first. It was a little intimidating. You know I don't know how I am supposed to act or what to say. I know that might sound silly but it is real. Now if I see a child with Down's syndrome I know I can just go and speak to them freely.</p>

Learning Process. The theme learning process is comprised of 9 raw codes, all of which have to do with different types of learning that the teachers perceive as being a part of their own growth.

Table 4.5 outlines the raw codes and provides example narratives from the data.

Table 4.5

Code Map for Superordinate Theme, Learning Process

Learning Process	
Figure it out Learn as you go Trial & Error	<p>Yvonne: We are all figuring it out on our own. Everything is PLC's [professional learning communities] make it up and figure it out.</p> <p>Pam: A lot of things just happen as you go. You figure out over the years. It was done one way for so many years.</p> <p>Monica: It is all trial and error. It's all let's see if this works and if not [try something else]...So, it is a lot of get in there and try it and see if it works.</p>
Learning from colleagues	<p>Pam: Basically just my own peers that I think would help. Informal.</p> <p>Lori: Even if I walk into someone's room for five minutes to get something and I hear them say something, I think "oh I like that". And I feel like I am really good at remembering that, applying that and knowing the difference.</p>
Learning from kids	<p>Pam: It's just like teaching any group of kids; you have to adjust to them.</p>
Outside support	<p>Paula: Well I've had to tap into resources because based on some of the IND students [students with intellectual disabilities] that I have, like with M, I became at a loss. The resources at Calt [pseudonym] they came. That was real helpful. I thought.</p>
Formal trainings	<p>Lori: I mean teaching kids with IND [intellectual disabilities] was new to me when I came to Craft. So I had to get myself to as many trainings as possible. In terms of curriculum. I've taken a lot of the ESE strategy trainings from the district. Curriculum trainings like the new math curriculum...I feel like when I go to a training it doesn't just stay in the folder in the cabinet. If I get something from it I use it. It's rare that I go to a training where I leave thinking, "oh there was nothing helpful in there".</p>
Work in progress Flexibility	<p>Pam: It's a work in progress; you find out as you do things what works. That's what teachers do anyway; you're continuously making changes. What works one year is not going to work next year with a different group. You have to have an open mind and flexibility.</p>

Continued Need. This theme, continued needs, refers to the skills and knowledge that teachers expressed they still need. Table 4.6 gives an example of text coded under continued needs.

Table 4.6

Code Map for Superordinate Theme, Continued Need

Continued Need	
Continued Challenges Challenges Continued Need Challenges to skills Low functioning Un-natural proportions Functional skills	<p>Lori: Right, because even the co-teach training, the videos they show you, everything they show you you're never going to see a kid like my J sitting in the class on the videos. You're not going to see an M. You know you're not going to see a B and H. It's like SLD kids. I know it does, but I haven't seen it. I am not saying, "prove it". Just please show me. That is something I have been asking for, for a really long time and like I said, when they came in they said work systems. And I was like, OK helpful, but you're still not showing me instruction.</p> <p>Pam: Sometimes I felt like am I really meeting their needs? The lower functioning is the hardest challenge.</p> <p>Yvonne: I have one observation that I feel very strongly about: when are our kids going to learn to put on their own coats and blow their own nose. When I am sitting there trying to teach R to be age appropriate and telling them to blow for the umpteenth time I feel like I am talking down. I feel like toilet training is gone... Life functional skills are zipped or rushed.</p>
Wanting Rule Book	<p>Pam: A lot of it is trying to know what administration wants and the technical abiding by the IEP. I am following county and state rules and regulations and the administration rules and regulations and what the teachers I work with want. You know along with feeling like I'm doing what I feel is best for the kids. That probably is the hardest part...It's like I'll do whatever, but I need to have the rulebook. I'll play by the rules, but I need to have the rulebook.</p>

The remainder of this section will present the results for RQ1 for each leader subgroup. First, perceived growth, learning process and continued needs will be presented for special education teacher leaders. Next, general education teachers' perceptions of growth, the teacher-learning processes and their continued needs will be shared. Last, findings based on the administrative leaders' perceptions will be shared. Finally, a cross-case analysis, merging results from all three leader subgroups (special education teachers,

general education teachers and administrative leaders) will be presented to represent the overall perceptions of individual leader capacity development.

Special education teachers. This section presents the findings in the area of the leaders' own capacity development for special education teacher leaders. Findings are presented by the following three superordinate themes derived from the data: staff growth, the teacher learning process and continued needs.

Staff growth. Special education teachers spoke of increased growth in many areas. Their growth was also discussed and perceived by the administrative leaders and their general education peers. The following areas of growth were consistent across participants: learning and working with the general education curriculum, knowing the students as individuals and basing educational decisions on students not programs; utilizing a broader array of teaching methods and strategies; and co-teaching for some.

Prior to inclusion at Craft, special education teachers taught in isolated classrooms, most of which were housed in trailers behind the school. Two of them did have classrooms in the main school building, but spent their day in this room with groups of students coming and going. In this model teachers made decisions based mostly upon available programs for different disability labels, or developed things as they went to work on IEP goals, which were largely similar from student to student and seemed more like group goals, than individual goals, and rarely were they aligned with the general education curriculum. As inclusion began, individualized education plans (IEPs) for SWDs were re-written and teachers began the process of getting to know the students' individual needs. The new IEPs had goals that were student specific and largely related to the grade level curriculum and students' unique needs. This was a huge area of

growth; representing both the teachers increased knowledge in grade level curriculum and in strategies around getting to know students as individuals. Each teacher did this differently, but all discussed the new knowledge of general education curriculum and student centered decision-making.

Scheduling was another process impacted by both the teachers' new student centered thinking and their increased knowledge of the general education curricula. In the past, these teachers would schedule their day in isolation, not taking into account what was happening in general education, because it reportedly did not impact their day or decisions. Now, they schedule their own time based upon what time of day the students need support and instruction the most within the general education curriculum and schedule.

Pam: I think it's really related to what and how your kids are, the ESE kids that you are including. That's pretty much it. Just like our schedules and what we do are dictated by needs of our students. We can't have a nice sketched out plan. You have to plan from them.

And:

Pam: My teaching changed without realizing it, I've gotten better and the general education teachers are better at finding the pieces and making the general education curriculum work. Cause that is like our ultimate goal- here is the regular agenda and using the general education teaching...

Related to knowing the students' individual needs and the general education curriculum better is an increased array of teachings strategies, methods and materials. This goes hand in hand with growing in basing decisions on student need versus program

offerings. Breaking lessons and directions into smaller chunks was discussed by three of the five teachers, whether it was for behavior plans, math objectives or shared reading. Overall, special education teachers quickly realized that to be successful, many students need small chunks of information presented to them at a time. This helped teachers develop meaningful instruction, based upon general education curriculum and individual needs and objectives.

Paula: I had to look at the student and break down the skill level even more than I thought. With some students it became a realization that they don't, that academics was not where I needed to be. I needed to build some attention to do an activity that was not necessarily an academic and to be able to sit into a chair. So I think, pulling into my resources. Looking at their skills and then breaking them down even more...

Additionally, teachers realized the benefits to all students when using more visuals in the classroom. The use of if/then charts, student choice boards and schedules, when paired with pictures versus just words, was shown to help all students. Soon, teachers were not using this skill for just students with limited communication, but were integrating pictures and visual cues into all lessons, which helped all students.

Paula: So then I pulled in things like a lot of visuals. Ways of communicating. I also learned a lot about, I don't know what you would call it, but like the if/then charts and giving them choices that had to be put with a visual. Writing out schedules that were very visual and having them look and see that. Where I think that was a little more of an assumption that they could follow those schedules... would do chapter books and what we would do is we would do a story board of

the chapter books so that the student who was EMH our focus was who are the characters and where is the setting and the big main idea... not only did that type of story board help him, it kind of helped the whole class because we used that story board as a review for tests. So that was like helping the SLD kids, it was a good review for the regular kids, so it was across the board.

Some special education teachers spoke about increasing their co-teaching skills, but most feel that this is still an area of need for them. This will be discussed in more detail later, however, it is important to note that Monica and Paula feel over the past three and a half years their comfort level and ability to take over and lead in general education has improved. Monica and Paula are also the teachers who had some experience supporting students with SLD in the classroom via a pull-out model. Yvonne and Pam, the two teachers who spent there past teaching career in self-contained classrooms housed in trailers function in a support role within general education, relying on small group and one-on-one instructional arrangements. Lori, while she perceived herself to be able to lead the class, feeling torn between if it is the right thing to do and that her past teaching experience taught her the skills she needed to lead a class, therefore she didn't perceive this to be an area of growth for her.

Special education teachers were perceived by themselves and their peers to have grown in the areas of learning and working with the general education curricula; knowing the students as individuals allowing them to base educational decision on students not programs; utilizing a broader array of teaching methods and strategies; and co-teaching for some. Next, results will be presented that summarize how special education teachers perceive to have gained this knowledge and broader skill set.

Learning process. The area of teacher learning that had the highest frequency of codes associated with it was the notion of learning as you go. The idea that teachers learned via trial and error and figured it out as they went, along with their colleagues, is very telling of these teachers. Yvonne shared this focus on learning from peers when explaining,

I have two fantastic teachers that we work with. We've done it through planning. We've done it through sharing. We share ideas... Trying to share, collaborate, bring something to the table. Trying to find ideas. Trying to brainstorm. Trying to solve a problem for a kid like licking. You write a social story and it doesn't work, but you still try and fix it...

Special education teachers at Craft are veteran teachers and are proud of their teaching skills and those of their peers. Every single special education teacher, when asked how they acquired new knowledge and skills, responded that their teaching peers, their co-teaching partners and the other specialist staff in the building are their greatest source for learning. They are not afraid to go to each other, watch each other, and to problem solve together around specific students. Adding to this is the idea that often times specific kids were the push for these teachers to learn new strategies and teaching methods. As students came into their classrooms with learning challenges, either in the beginning of the year or in the middle, the teachers were pushed to figure it out. The learning process for special education teachers became one of watching, asking and applying new ideas, sometimes daily. In other words, problem solving occurred on an ad-hoc bases as student specific needs arose.

A few of the special education teachers sought guidance from district trainings. The others did the best they could with the resources they had. Important to note is that all three of the special education teachers who spoke about utilizing the district's professional development academy offerings to support their learning all explained that these trainings did not address inclusion. While the trainings were more specific to district curricula or general disability characteristics, most teachers reported finding ways to apply something from each training on their own. What many spoke about was the desire for the district to include training offerings that address inclusive education strategies for students with intellectual disabilities. The exception to this lack of inclusive strategy training from the district was two co-teaching trainings conducted by the district inclusion facilitators prior to and during the first year of implementation, which was attended by all the general and special education inclusion teachers. Monica explained,

The training helped a lot. It is important for everyone to be trained so they know what the right way of doing it is and they're not doing it the wrong way. So the trainings helped a lot, but after everyone is trained and doing it correctly, I think its practice.

The district's new educator evaluation process (EET) was also talked about as part of their learning.

I think that skills and strategies have improved, but that is just also everybody's have since a lot of new strategies are out there and workshops we take and the process of teacher evaluation [EET]. So that is part of it too. Not really and separate from inclusion.

Pam summarized the teachers' learning processes best, "I learn from and with my peers. From in-service trainings and just the process of doing it."

Continued need. As mentioned above, special education teachers shared their continuous struggle with how to create inclusive lessons for all the students..

Lori was particularly frustrated about this gap in her training for inclusion, sharing specific examples of how, while training along the way helped in other aspects of the day, no training was offered to date that actually helped the staff develop inclusive lessons for all children. She said:

How do you create a lesson where they are all included, where it is beneficial for all of them and it is not constantly everyday stations? I mean how does that work? Huh. I don't know. Uh um. I kind of feel like what has always been missing in terms of support I feel like in the beginning everyone was always here, everyone was always watching everybody was always this and that, with the DVD's and the co-teach trainings. But what I have ever yet to see to this day, was someone show me how, when they are all in the room together- and not just the SLD kids and your lower need kids and the general ed. kids- I mean like you know our friend N and M and my J [students with more profound autism], how you create a lesson where they are all included? Where it is beneficial for all of them and it is not constantly everyday stations. I mean how does that work?

Lori was not the only special education teacher who shared the need for more skills and knowledge in inclusive education strategies for students with intellectual disabilities. Most all of the special education teachers felt like support was concentrated prior to and during the first year of inclusion, but now, four years later, they are on their

own to figure it out. And, while working with their colleagues helps for some things, the skills and strategies needed to design instruction that meets the needs of all the learners in the classroom is missing from their own teaching skill set.

Students with cognitive and other developmental disabilities are reportedly the most challenging for staff. The current overall feeling for all of the teachers but Yvonne is that when students with lower functioning intellectual disabilities are in the general education classroom they mostly sit and work on social and behavioral skills, as opposed to meaningful academics. While Yvonne feels they've done a good job with the academic skills, emphasis on teaching functional skills is missing and needed. In addition, two of the other special education teachers also shared that teaching functional skills to kids who are on alternative curriculum tracks is missing from the inclusion classrooms. All three feel that this is a problem and that they need to learn how to teach functional skills in an inclusive setting, or pull the students out for these skills. Overall, special education teachers perceive themselves to be unable to teach this group of students within general education all the time for all skills. And, if they were to do so effectively, these teachers feel it would require more side-by-side training. However, this is not available, even after many requests. As Lori stated:

And I tried, believe me I tried to keep them in the room and make a lesson where everybody is getting something. I have yet to have someone show me what it looks like. And every time I ask no one really ever showed me, but everyone is insistent that you do it. But no one can ever show me.

It is unclear if this frustration with their own perceived skill gap is an issue with defining appropriate learning objectives or if it stems from teachers needing to evolve in

their ability to differentiate. However, what is clear is that the special education teachers are becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of training and support for their own skill development in the area of designing general education academic instruction for all students inclusively, and many want more help to be successful. Moreover, all are questioning whether going back to separate education for some students, some of the time, is needed. In spite of this frustration, all shared that they want to see inclusion work, but that it's just not for everyone right now. Lori again shared:

Because I would love to see this work the way it is supposed to work. And I know that there are ESE teachers here who have been completely shut off to it, no. No she can't be in that room, she can't learn it that way. Well, she can. You can, but we haven't gotten enough [training], and I know anyone would tell you yes we have. Those specific, those really, really tough kids, how do you make it [meaningful for] them [to] sit there for an hour of math when we are doing distributive property? How does M sit there and get something out of this besides asking her very couple of minutes what number is this? And then she goes back into her wherever she is.

This group of special educators has been doing inclusion for three and a half years now. And each year they have expressed a desire and need for more side-by-side training in the form of modeling inclusive education practices. Meeting minutes and interview transcripts from 2010, the first year of implementation, show evidence of the same request, "show me how to do it" and "we want side by side modeling".

More than one special education teacher shared that they do not have the knowledge or available trainings to help them get it, to develop class lessons that

included all children, especially the children with more significant support needs, the children on alternative curricula. For example, one teacher said:

I know, like you said, that there is probably a way to do it in the room, I just don't have that knowledge. I know there is a way. I just don't know what it is. I just don't understand it.

And another stated:

I just feel like we are missing that knowledge and we think adding more people to sit next to kids is going to solve the problem and I don't think that's a solution either. Do I think we more support, yeah. Does that need to be a full time person? Yeah. But we don't need someone sitting next to that person. We need the knowledge to make it work and I think that is what we are missing. Like I said, I am sure people would say that we've had that. But that high need, not for the really high needs kids.

Specifically, it was shared that as teachers they struggle with how to make inclusion effective for students with cognitive disability labels. One teacher shared:

We struggle with how to make it [inclusion] effective for the kids with cognitive impairments. I think that is where we struggle on how to make it effective for them...I don't think we've got the strategies to make effective lessons that include those kids so that they're not just sitting there not paying attention for an hour.

As mentioned above, two strategy trainings for co-teaching skills were offered throughout the past four years. However, most special education teachers specifically shared that these were not helpful to their own learning (three out of five special education teachers), or when probed for what was helpful, did not mention them (one out

of the five). Monica did share that the early trainings on co-teaching were a nice overview to get all teachers on the same page in terms of what co-teaching was and should look like, but that how to actually do it in the classroom could only be learned through practice, and that she still did not have the answer as to how to actually co-teach.

Monica shared:

And that is still an adjustment for me to do that whole co-teach model and just being comfortable doing that. I've had a lot more training and everything is different with common core. It's like a continuous learning process. You definitely have to be paired with compatible [co-teach partners]. The people I work with are great. The situation is laid out well. It's just the process of how it works [that's hard].

Nor do teachers feel they know how to offer meaningful academic instruction to students with more significant intellectual disabilities within one general education lesson.

Lori: I mean, like I said this before too, I feel like we've been given some strategies, and I find them ineffective. I mean identify the period or what number is that. What good does that do them? It is scattered. It has nothing to do with what the group is doing.

The special education teachers, as a group, report to be struggling with how to teach meaningful academics and functional skills to students on access points within general education. The focus is still on having one lesson that teaches all children the same thing, and that they do not have the knowledge or skills, as teachers, to accomplish this, which is leading to frustration and questioning of inclusion as an effective service delivery model of all children.

Last, most all of the special education teachers commented on the notion of wanting the rulebook. Pam shared, “It’s like I’ll do whatever, but I need to have the rule book. I’ll play by the rules, but I need to have the rule book.” This direct request of wanting the rules came out in every special education teacher interview, and illustrated below, it also came from most of the general education teachers. Teachers are sensing that what is expected of them differs depending on who they talk to and that it is shifting, and in the context of teacher evaluation and accountability, it seems important for them to know exactly what is expected of them. Some wonder if it’s because the district has a different sense of what inclusion is than is what is experienced Craft, or if it is because of the recent principal change, but what is clear to them is that the guidelines they are to follow for inclusion are not the same from year to year and from person to person. When they first started inclusion teachers felt that the guidelines were that all children should in the classroom at all times working on the general education curriculum. Now, teachers are hearing from some administrators that some children are to be pulled out for certain academics to work on alternative special education curricula and that some are to be scheduled for daily separate specialized instruction in a special education classroom. This message is in sharp contrast to what teachers were told over the past few years. Therefore, teachers are confused about what inclusion is and if they are even doing it anymore, because the definition that they were taught from the on-set of inclusion was that all children would receive instruction in the classroom at all times. Some reported liking this new flexibility to pull out when needed and others are angry because they’ve worked hard the past three years to learn the skills necessary to co-teach and have felt and

seen the reward of full membership for all kids at Craft. Now many fear the work was for nothing and that the school will go right back to decreased access for some children.

The special education teaching team no longer feels confident in knowing what is expected of them. Are they supposed to keep all the students in general education all the time, or are they supposed to pull out groups of kids? Are they supposed to teach the core curriculum to all students and modify as needed, or teach separate special education curriculum to some? Are they supposed to co-teach all day, or spend some of their time doing resource and pull out teaching? It seems, to this group of teachers, that the rules are changing from the beginning of inclusion to now, and they no longer know the rules. Some even wonder if anyone knows the rules, or if everyone, as mentioned earlier, is making it up as they go. The notion of defining it as you go seems to run through this staff.

The three of the five teachers who came from self contained and resource and who previously did little to no in-class support of students report feeling ineffective at meeting the needs of SWDs, especially students with more significant needs who are on the alternative curriculum track. They were accustomed to being with their students all day, delivering one-to-one and small group instruction. At the time of this study these teachers scheduled as much small group and one-on-one teaching time with as many students with IEPs as they could, but the more the students on their caseload were spread between different general education classes, the more ineffective and “spread too thin” they reported feeling. All of the three special education teachers whose past teaching was in self contained classrooms reported believing in the importance of membership and belonging in the general education classroom and are glad to not be in the self contained

world, however, they each are struggling with how to meet students' individual needs within general education. They seem to continue to define general education as large group instruction and their special education services as small group and one-on-one.

Pam shared:

Because of how many kids I have and their different levels my day is a continuous 15 minute increment of small groups and then my aide is assisting as the other one is not in my small group to remaining in the classroom.

Each has found their own unique means to work towards meeting the needs of the children, but all focus on small group and/or one-on-one instruction.

One teacher who serves children in multiple classrooms has a schedule that pulls her from class to class to class, sometimes switching hourly, in order to get "face time" with each child and to pull small groups to the back of the room to work on individual skills. Another has decided to pull small groups to centralized learning pods to teach certain skills to some kids. Yet another has set up a separate classroom in what was an office, in order to have a place to pull SWDs from across the classrooms she supports for small group and/or one-on-one instruction. Most of these teachers also periodically pull general education students for ability leveled math and reading groups, but focus most of their day and time on small group or one-on-one instruction with the SWDs in order to feel like they are meeting their unique learning needs. Reports of being spread too thin, not meeting the needs of all the students on their case loads, and generally a perception that inclusion in the classroom as part of the larger group only targets social gains dominate. For these teachers, small group and one-on-one instruction also dominate their perception of special education teacher effectiveness and their perceptions of where their

capacities to teach SWDs lie. For them, it's a matter of how and when to fit in all the small groups when spread across different classrooms and juggling different schedules. It seems that the variety of options presented above had more to do with individual teacher preferences for what they perceived to be effective based on their traditional practices in the past model, as opposed to being based upon identified student needs and learning styles. Interestingly, there was no discussion offered from the teachers about the role of typical peers and assistive technology. It is hard to know if this omission is because it is truly missing from their work, or if it was considered and tried.

Summary of special education teachers' perceptions. Special education teachers shared perceptions around their own growth in teaching skills, how they perceived to have acquired new skills and their perceived challenges and barriers to their own feelings of effectiveness as an inclusion teacher. Additionally, the difficulty of maintaining their own identity as special educators, while at the same time changing their roles, was evident. The next section will focus on the general education teacher leader group. This section also will focus on the teachers' perceived growth, learning process and continued challenges.

General education teachers. The following paragraphs present the findings from general education teachers around perceptions on growth, the learning process and continued needs of staff at Craft Elementary.

Staff growth. General education teachers reported evolving in their dispositions towards SWDs, in their own use of hands on activities and cooperative groups, and in their ability to collaborate and work with other teachers via co-teaching. The new district

teacher evaluation process (referred to as EET), was discussed as playing a major supportive role in teachers' growth.

When talking about their own capacity, general education teachers seemed cognizant of their increased skills. Their co-teaching evolved from "I lead you support", to "let's co-lead when you are comfortable". Also, their ability to bring in more hands-on activities and student-led lessons was noted as evolving from a past reliance on more traditional, teacher led activities and lessons in front of the room. They viewed these changes as evolving from learning from their peers as well as through the district's new evaluation program that puts an emphasis on student led classroom lessons and cooperative groupings.

Co-teaching was not new to all the general education teachers. Three out of four of them had co-taught with other grade level general education staff. Thus, to be able to move into a role of co-teaching with a special education teacher was a smooth transition for them at first. They had an image or schema in mind for how it should look and had already experienced sharing students, materials and space. However, because they already had an idea in their mind they found it frustrating when co-teaching didn't function as expected. When sharing her frustration with co-teaching looking different with special education than her past experiences with co-teaching in general education, Vicky shared:

It's [speaking of the teaching effort] not always 50-50, but when you are always 80 and they are always 20 and that is frustrating. But [back] then I had a new partner who introduced me to co-teaching and we were in second grade at the time and we taught most of our lessons together. We taught math and reading and

science together: one group on the carpet, one group at the desks, and we fed off each other. She is a fabulous teacher and I learned so much from her. So I already had that and I had the notion of how it should work and when it didn't work that way with my first [inclusion] co-teacher I was [angry] and it was much more of an "I am going to sit here with this group of kids while you teach the lesson"...very honestly I asked for a grade level change...

Two significant factors that all five general education teachers shared was the importance of having a co-teaching partner with similar teaching philosophies and compatible personalities and planning structures. Dana shared this importance when reflecting, "I think it all honestly has to do based upon personalities and organization and really really really good planning with that other person that you are working with."

This could mean someone with similar personality traits, or someone whose differences complemented their own strengths, making the partnership more effective than the individual teacher alone. Vicky shared:

Those who have a good relationship with co-teaching feel supported and those who are still working on it feel like support isn't there. That is a fair assessment because I have worked on a team where it wasn't it- the level of support wasn't there [from the co-teaching partner].

At Craft, the administrative team assigns teaching partners with little or no perceived input by the teacher leaders. In the beginning, there were many partnerships that did not work and re-organizing partnerships in subsequent years occurred, making a huge difference on their satisfaction and ability to effectively co-teach and co-plan.

In addition to sharing their evolved teaching practices, general education teachers reported consistently that they are more comfortable, in general, talking to and teaching SWDs. Many referred to being less scared and surer of how to interact with students with more significant disabilities. Gina shared, “So, anyways, I guess I am just less afraid to make a mistake and I am more comfortable with just getting in there and teaching them.”

This dissipation of fear has led the general education teacher leaders to interact more with SWDs and to take the lead in teaching SWDs in their class more often. General education leaders reported that, prior to inclusion, they would say a quick hello and then look to a special educator to take over. However, the general education teachers all reported how “silly it seems” now because all the students are just kids and they have no problem being the sole teacher with a room full of students with and without disabilities, including students with autism, Down’s syndrome or other significant behavior challenges so long as everyone is safe.

In addition to an increased comfort with teaching SWDs, general education teachers reported utilizing more student led activities. Teaching skills that allow them to become more of a facilitator were reportedly developed. By learning teaching methods that allow students to lead their own learning, general education teachers are better able to individualize lessons, decreasing the need for modifications to one core lesson. Gina shared:

I feel like, first of all, using my students as teachers is a big strength now because they are the best now and that is the strength of inclusion. It is not so much that they are with me, but that they are with typical peers who can model with them.

So I play up on that more than I used to. I feel like my class is a lot more student run. Not just because of inclusion, also because of all of the new you know EET and the differentiation initiatives like you were saying, but it has to be. I guess you could say that I've drunk the Kool-aide. Now I am a believer in it. At first I was a little less eager [to let students lead the class] because I thought, I don't know if they can do this. But I really feel like it is a lot more student led and a lot less teacher led.

One of the many ways teachers incorporate student led learning is through readers and writers workshops. The teacher introduces a small lesson on a topic that formative assessments indicated as a need for the class, then sets the students free to work on their own writing journals or reading logs. During the independent time, teachers pull small groups and individuals for conferencing or partner students to conduct peer editing together. This makes the classroom flow more naturally between the two teachers, allowing each student to get their own, individualized lessons as needed. Unlike the special education teachers, general education teachers shared the perceptions that peers are an important strategy for student learning.

Another way general education teachers have grown is their flexible use of creative teaching structures. One such example of this is what two of the teachers call departmentalizing. Departmentalizing is the process of grade level teachers partnering up to each teach specific subject across both homerooms. At Craft, two sets of teachers decided to pair up and for them one teaches reading and writing and one teaches science and math to both sets of homerooms. It is more similar to what one might see in an intermediate school, where teachers are broken apart by subject areas. At Craft, teachers

have realized that this form of teaching allows them to meet the needs of the diverse student body inclusion has brought to them.

I departmentalize- I love it- and I'll tell you that has been an added benefit of inclusion because it allows me to really focus on the subject areas and to plan for less. I can say, I am teaching two groups this story. Also we can ability level a little bit more. We have five IND students [students with intellectual disabilities] in our group this year, but they are at all different levels. So instead of saying OK all the ESE students [SWDs] are in this group, we can say OK you are here based upon their levels. And they need an aide, but they need different types of help. I love the departmentalizing.

Co-teaching with special education and general education teachers is another way that the staff has found to better meet the needs of all the kids in their class. In this structure, teachers pair up with another grade level peer and the grade level special education teacher to group all kids, across both classes, into various groupings throughout the day. Unlike departmentalizing, both teachers teach all subjects, but as a triad they share all 48 students, versus just their assigned 24. With this has come increased skills in planning, sharing the lead and how to use formative and summative data to guide groupings and instructional foci.

I've learned that I'm more adaptive than I thought I was, which is a positive... I've learned patience because there are some situations that I haven't had to deal with before that I'm having to deal with now so it's made me a stronger teacher in that way.

Thus, general education teachers have learned the benefits of being flexible, adaptable, and patient.

Evolving in their use of creative teaching structures, use of hands on and student led methods and dispositions towards SWDs are at the heart of the general education teachers growth at Craft. Next, I will present the perceptions of how general education teachers gained these new skills.

Learning process. The majority of general education teachers' learning, reported by all five teachers, was perceived to occur through trial and error. A kind of "learn as you" go mentality, which placed their teaching peers as the main source of knowledge and skill growth. Vicky shared:

My own skill set? Yes. I do. I mean I wish I had more training in that area. I mean its kind of trial and error. What works and what doesn't work. You can't even group together [or assume] all children that have autism respond this way. All children that have Down's syndrome... You can't generalize kids like that, but you learn tricks of the trade here and there on my feet, or watching somebody else do something.

Mastering inclusion before getting in and doing it was not how learning occurred for this group of teachers. It was necessary for them to just dive into inclusion and learn as they went using trial and error. Another teacher explained, "It all was very general in the beginning. And we really didn't know, obviously, what we were doing. We just kind of dove in and tried."

Figuring it out as they go together for the kids was a reality for these teachers. Vicky shared:

We're all in this together trying to figure out the best way to do it, and I do think the bottom line is we all want to do what's best for all of the kids. I think that's kind of kept us working well together as a group.

And, while the general education teachers reported being a part of early trainings, it was the actual work in the classroom with teaching peers that provided them the platform for the most growth. When reflecting on the importance of the early trainings, compared to on the job learning, Gina shared, "I think the intention was good, but where we learned was honestly just getting in there and doing it. That's probably always true.", and:

In the beginning there was a lot of training for inclusion, but honestly it's kind of like when you are in college and you take a lot of classes and then you start your internship and dive in and really understand. Most of it was by just doing it in the classroom.

Related and similar to their special education teaching partners, general education teachers shared that they learned most of their skills by watching the special education teachers. With the inclusive structure, general education teachers are no longer isolated to their own classroom, teaching without interaction with peers. Instead, they are able to watch and learn from their special education peers, and this was reported as one of the main sources of learning, resulting in increased collaboration and shared responsibility for all students. One teacher shared:

And I learn a lot by watching her teach, and I think vice versa, cause I see her watching me and picking up on what I do too. We really play off of each other's strengths. And that is a strength that has increased for our team over all- we are so much more collaborative than we were before.

Learning from one another, especially from their special education teaching peers, along with being open to dive into the practice of inclusion and learn as they go has provided the general education teachers with the most significant areas for learning. In addition, some feel the early co-teaching trainings and inclusive education videos were helpful to increase knowledge and shift dispositions, but feel strongly that the real learning occurs as you go with your partners and with the students who drive them to change their practices. And, while much learning has occurred, many talk about significant areas of continued need. The next section will present these areas of continued need for the general education staff.

Continued need. Similar to the special education participant group, general education teachers expressed a concern with various structures and processes that they felt were challenges, or barriers, to their ability to teach in an inclusive environment. All five general education teachers brought up the effect of high numbers of SWDs and the severity of children's need in their classroom. As Vicky said:

Fifty percent of my students were special education students and it was unmanageable. I was told from Ellen [the assistant principal] specifically, don't worry, as long as you are meeting the needs of your students I am not worried. But I said to her, "I am not meeting their needs". No matter how hard I tried I wasn't meeting their needs. There were students that were suffering because I was overwhelmed with sheer numbers.

This phenomenon of large proportions of SWDs in one general education classroom was not unique to Vicky. All of the general education teachers spoke of how many SWDs were in their classroom, and how many of them had significant cognitive,

communication and functional skill delays. The group of students with significant delays (low functioning autism, Down's syndrome, cognitive delays) was referred to as "access point kids" or students on "access points", referring to the state's alternate assessment system. Teachers expressed the overall feeling that as a staff, and as individual teachers, they struggled to meet the needs of students who have the most significant needs at the school. As mentioned above, at Craft and presumably throughout the district, teachers refer to this group of students as students on access points as the children who most significantly challenge their own teaching skills.

The students on access points represent a unique challenge for these teachers. While they represented part of the group for whom teachers felt most proud of their growth and with being comfortable interacting, they also were the topic of many stories of frustration or challenges to their own teaching skills. Four out of the five general education teachers expressed that, while they were comfortable having the students in their classes without support, they relied on the special education teacher for instructional goals and behavioral crisis management. One teacher shared her concern:

I wish we could have more training on how things that we can do to help kids with more severe [disabilities]. I am talking more severe. Because SLD [specific learning disabilities] children have their own issues, but generally it's the access point kids that have things that I sometimes feel like I am not prepared for. I have gotten better at it, but so when our ESE [exceptional student education] teacher is not in the room I have no problem talking to and dealing and doing what ever. But it's when the explosion [occurs] and I have 21 students trying to teach them math, and I have this one who is now throwing things across the room.

Last, similar to their special education peers, general education teachers reported wanting the rulebook for inclusion. Gina stated:

Also, I think sometimes we'll joke that the rule book, there is no rulebook. What one administrator and what one person in inclusion will say is different than another person. So some will say, "well some pull out is ok because that is differentiated instruction". But then some people say, "oh there is too much pull out. You need to make it work in the classroom and work on their independence". Then another one will say like, you know you kind of feel like either way you're not doing it right.

And another general education teacher, Kris, stated, "Yes- you know it's the whole rulebook again- the rules, they don't work out- they conflict with one another."

Summary of general education teachers' perceptions. General education teachers felt their dispositions for SWDs evolved to one of less fear. They also perceived themselves to have broadened their own teaching skills to include more hands-on and student led instructional strategies. This learning was perceived to occur mostly by learning with and from their peers. Not knowing what is expected with inclusion, and needing continued support in their own learning were ways they perceived that growth is still needed. Next, the perceptions of administrative leaders will be shared.

Administrative leaders. Similar to general education and special education teacher leaders, the administrative leadership team spoke of growth, the learning process and continued needs. In the following sections, the perceptions of the administrative leadership team on staff growth, learning processes and needs will be presented.

Staff growth. Administrators shared their perceptions of observed growth in staff. Especially Ellen, who has been with the school since before inclusion began, sees (1) teachers better able to reflect on their own learning, (2) staff as more willing to go after and find the needed resources on their own, (3) an increase in both groups of teachers' skills, and (4) some important administrative lessons for her and her team as they move forward.

Special education teachers, in particular, she's noticed are doing a better job "knowing what resources and materials were available and using them with the right kids.", especially because of the teaching expectations placed upon them through the district's teacher evaluation process. In the past, she saw them sticking to just one pre-packaged curriculum program for the entire class, regardless of students learning style and need. The notion of "this is my class and you are doing reading mastery" because you're in it has dissipated. In general, administrators feel that special education teachers have improved instructionally through an increased focus on students, and by working to individualize instruction, figuring out what is best kid by kid. Ellen shared:

ESE teachers are doing a better job across the board instructionally than they were a few years ago, and maybe that's because you know of inclusion, but also just because there has been a lot of focus on them [the SWDs] you know, figuring out what a particular kid needs.

In terms of their own learning as leaders, Ellen had the most to say given her consistent past with Craft. She explained that her two biggest lessons learned were (1) co-teaching and the importance of pairing teachers that work well together to complement one another; and (2) going slower in the beginning to allow time for hiring

the right staff from the get go. For co-teaching, Ellen learned that keeping pairs together is one of her most critical roles. With this comes the importance of pairing them correctly in the first place. Finding teachers whose skills and personalities complement one another has shown, to Ellen, to be of the utmost importance.

Additionally, the need to go slower in the beginning of starting inclusion, allowing time to fight for the right staffing resources was a big lesson for Ellen as well. She shared this reflection:

If I had to do it over again I don't think I'd do it as quickly. I would do it now because I've had the experience. Neither one of us had had the experience with the change. I'd first fight for the personal first- getting the right people in- the right number of people in. As hard as we've worked we still have some people that we've developed all the capacity they have. We have a couple that we had and we've developed the best of their capacity.

The importance of the having the right staff with the skills and dispositions towards inclusion as a non-negotiable option for all students was a huge lesson for Ellen. She shared an experience of brining on one teacher whose past experience was in a self contained room for students with EBD labels. This particular teacher spoke of wanting to move to inclusion, but at each decision cross-road between developing her inclusive education skills or pulling small groups of students out to a different learning environment to work on alternative curriculum, she consistently chose the latter. Ellen shared:

She had some experience working with the types of students we had, but in a self-contained setting. I think that, you know, she wanted to be a team player and she

wanted to get on board, but, you know, it was not always the action to fit the talk. So, and not in a divisive way, just when you had choices to make I could see it kind of leaning towards [pull-out teaching].

This experience honed in the importance of hiring the right staff for Ellen.

Administrators shared her observations that the staff appears to be better able to reflect on their own learning, to find the resources available to them at Craft, and exhibit an increase in teaching skills for both groups of teachers. Last, Ellen in particular, reflected on administrative lesson of the importance of co-teaching partnerships and hiring the right people for inclusion. The next section will focus on how administrators view the process of learning for the staff at Craft.

Learning process. Learning was evident to these administrators based upon the growth of their staff and their own lessons. The process of learning seems to them to be one of figuring it out as they go, and learning from one another. District trainings seem to play a less prominent role.

As mentioned above both administrators perceive that special education teachers now use more of the same strategies as the general education teachers and vice a versa, which is reflective of the domains and strategies that are expected through the district evaluation process. Both group of teachers teach within the greater school context now, no longer in isolation from one another, and administrators noted this as an important step to their increased skills. “I think it’s been easier for them though because they haven’t been in isolation”. Both really see learning from one another as a major source for teacher learning at Craft. Ellen reported:

They've been with colleagues to watch and practice it together. I am sure they've both been able to learn from each other. And I think that a lot of it and things like the questioning and discussion techniques are so much easier when you have two people in the room... So I think, as a general rule for some of the inclusion teachers [both general and special education teachers], some of that was a little easier because they could practice together.

Similar to the teaching staff, the administrative team reflected that the majority of staff learning occurred through figuring it out as they went. Ellen shared that she feels she is not the expert and really encourages and trusts her staff that have more than three years of experience now to figure it out together as they go. One of her perceived roles is to coach staff and point out successes to them. She said, "we just have to figure it out, and, yes, you have a different group of kids this time. They are either more or less- their needs are different; we just have to figure it out."

In addition, administrators saw the teachers past experiences as critical to their ability to learn different inclusive education strategies. One administrator perceived the process of learning, for those teachers who " had already been in the classroom for a couple of years this has been a little bit easier for them because they weren't going from you know sitting all day with that kid in the corner with the block." The special education teachers, who were in the trailers, teaching in fully segregated environments, are still struggling with aspects of co-teaching and leading in front of the class. Where as the teachers who were already doing some in class support have been able to naturally take the lead quicker. For some, inclusion was a bigger change than for others.

Last, administrators saw the important role that the students themselves have on pushing the teachers to try new things and learn new strategies together. Ellen shared:

[That's] very honest- learn as you go and adapt based on needs of kids and personal. Try what you know, if that doesn't work try something else. Just really try to go to other people you think might have ideas or suggestions.

When no one on site appeared to have the knowledge and/or skill expertise that was needed for meeting the needs of a particular child, staff reported reaching outside of the school and district to find support. But it wasn't until staff felt a pressing need for help that they were able to know what support to bring in. Ellen shared, "It was a process of discovering student needs, assessing staff to see what resources we can tap into at the school site by working together, and finally reaching outside if needed.". First and foremost, different staff, each with their own expertise, are seen and used by all staff.

Jared shared:

Lori was very helpful with behavior plans/behavior aspects. Guidance and psyche are helpful and we're lucky for them. Behavior and Lanie [guidance counselor] now understand curriculum and objectives and is able to help teachers find curriculum materials and progress monitoring. I think that probably colleagues are the main [source of learning].

Once, when no one on site had the expertise needed and staff continued to communicate frustrations and burn out, outside support was brought in. This particular time, a group of special and general education teachers were consistently struggling with how to engage and increase independence for three different students with autism spectrum needs. They went to their peers and tried many different modifications and

accommodations, as well as side-by-side aide support in the room, but still, staff struggled to find ways for these two students to be independent. All reported that a disproportionate amount of time was spent with one or two students, not allowing them to get to all the different students needs. After asking the district for someone to help, an outside agency named Calt (pseudonym) was brought in because locally no one felt they had the needed expertise. This happened once in the past four years, and was reported to be extremely successful. Ellen said:

We couldn't find anyone in building to help someone. Then we had Calt [an outside agency for autism, come in]. That was extremely helpful. Not theory. Very concrete this is what you can do, this is how you can do it and here are some materials. They knew then how much they needed it.

Overall, administration feels that everyone is benefitting from inclusion and that they staff are more professionally satisfied. They see the process as one of “muddling through”, in need of more strategic staff training plans based upon current needs. Jared expressed:

They definitely want people to come in and show them with their group of kids because you can talk about theory and all of that, but when you see somebody working with your group of kids, then that bring a different enlightenment to the situations.

Important to the administrators is that the kids are doing better and there is more staff camaraderie where everyone “rallies around each other and just gets the job done” in a highly professional manner. This was one of the first observations the new principal made when he started just last year. The process of learning seems to them to be one of

figuring it out as they go and learning from one another. District trainings seem to play a less prominent role. Next, the administrative leaderships' perceptions of the continued needs for themselves and the staff will be discussed.

Continued need. Needs for administrative leaders triangulate around a common theme of continued and purposeful professional development based on gaps in staff skills. While most teachers did report feeling supported by the administrative team when kid issues arose, they expressed a need for proactive staff development planning based on teacher learning needs. Thus, during times of crisis, when students were acting up, or any other immediate need, the teachers trusted that someone from administration would respond to provide direct support, but that there was no proactive plan in place to prevent crisis. With an open door policy, anytime a need arose with staff, they were told that they could come and talk to administrators who would work with them on a solution. To this point, some, but not all, staff shared that they do often go to the administration for needs that they cannot solve with their teaching peers once the situation feels out of their control. However, proactively seeking information from staff of what is needed at Craft, before a crisis or loss of control is felt, is an area that many staff feel is missing. In speaking about the administrators, Gina shared:

As a school I think it would be great if our leadership did what you're doing now, and maybe not one at a time, but maybe have all of the inclusion teachers come together and discuss (and I don't know if everyone would be honest).

And Pam shared, "even though they have that open door policy, not everyone feels free or has the time.". Thus, even with the open door policy, many staff shared that they would like to have their opinions heard regarding how inclusion is going, what is still

needed and what problems exist. Further, as mentioned above, most learning is crisis based and is driven by moment-to-moment needs that arise. No one spoke of proactive professional development, but Jared did note this as an area of need:

It think the more skills they can get... we discovered through our leadership team through the EET also, some deficiencies, not deficiencies but things to work on...The more tricks you can have in your bag the better. A lot of [how to teach] turn and talk too to get more [student] dialog...In terms of professional development specifically, we've got our areas where the teachers go to those programs, but nothing specific.

It was also noted that more outside support would be helpful, given how successful it was perceived to be. Ellen reflected: "we probably need to sit down with group and do needs assessment. They're not coming saying what they need, but if we sit down and talk about it, it comes up.". She also noted that formal inclusion training has decreased over the past years, and that brining more in now may be needed.

I would say we probably really have kind of slowed down. It's not just that. Slow down is not the right word. We haven't had the formal training. It's not just that- we always had state inclusion support and when they fell away.

With this came the realization that, overall, teachers need skill development in the areas of differentiation, cooperative grouping structures and how to get students to work with one another independently using turn and talk or other similar student to student learning strategies. As mentioned by both administrators, there are areas of need and skill development with the staff to focus continued in-house professional development on.

Summary of administrative leaderships' perceptions. Similar to the teacher leaders, administration saw growth in the teachers' knowledge base and skills for inclusive education strategies. Additionally, both leaders noted the continued need for data driven teacher development. Overall, administrative leaders are seen as supportive and work to have an open-door policy. However, this policy was not always felt nor acted upon by all staff, who feel they need to have a system in place that allows staff to share concerns and continued areas of need.

Cross case analysis of RQ1. Each subgroup spoke of the perceived growth in staff, the process by which this growth occurred and areas of need at Craft. In this final section for RQ1, results from analyzing the superordinate themes across all three participation sub groups will be presented. The analysis returned results indicating that across all subgroups there was (1) growth and evolved capacity for staff, (2) a consistent learning process that focused mostly on diving in and figuring it out as you go, and (3) teachers have continued professional development needs to increase their feelings of effectiveness with inclusion.

Growth and evolved staff capacity. General education and special education teachers both reported that general education teachers' teaching practices evolved with inclusion to be more "ESE friendly", using more student led lessons, cooperative groups, and hands-on activities. This was reported to be a result of both the new teacher evaluation guidelines and trainings as well as from interacting with, watching, and learning from the special education teacher colleagues. In addition, all teacher leaders discussed the process of discomfort with students with disability labels dissipating from general education teachers. Their dispositions toward SWDs evolved from one of fear to

one of equality. No longer did they question how to approach, talk to or interact with SWDs. The staff reported that they used to ignore or even refuse to allow these students in their room, which now seems absurd to them. After reflecting on why, it became apparent to these teachers that they see individuals with disabilities differently than they did, seeing them now as children, just like all the other students, not as something different or to be feared.

Additionally, it was reported that the teaching practices of both general education teachers and special education teachers evolved to be more alike than different. In the past, there was a clear distinction between the practices, strategies and curricula used by the different sub sets of teachers, and now the each have evolved to utilize a broader range of teaching skills. This increased range results in general education teachers utilizing methods that are more “ESE friendly” and special education teachers adopting methods that were once considered general education specific strategies. Further, while in the past special education teachers based their lessons solely on IEP goals, which often had no alignment with general education standards, now base lessons from the general education curriculum first. This shows a significant increase in the special education teachers’ knowledge of general education curriculum across all subjects.

Co-teaching is an area where skills have increased across all leader subgroups. One area is the importance of pairing co-teachers together whose personalities and teaching skills and styles complimented one another. This importance of fit was learned after a few poor matches, but now all leader groups discussed how they’ve realized it is critical to find the person who has the skills, personality and teaching style to match the position. Leadership makes this decision, and so too have evolved in how they match co-

teachers together, working to keep partnerships stable across the years, but realizing that match is more important than stability, so are now perceived to be more open to changing partners, should the original pair be a poor match.

Ad-hoc learning. In the case of Craft there was very little a-priori learning. Staff dove in as full believers and figured it out as they went. For the teacher leaders own personal evolution, this worked out quite well. They spoke of the evolution of their own dispositions. Prior to inclusion staff's disposition toward inclusive education and SWDs were either (a) not believing in inclusion because their children didn't belong, and or weren't welcome in general education (for the special educators); or (b) being fearful of how to approach, interact with and especially teach those kids, their kids (the general education teachers). Three and a half years into inclusion, all staff, when asked how they grew, first and foremost spoke of their shift in beliefs towards not being as fearful of inclusion and SWDs. General education teachers spoke of their fear dissipating and comfort in interacting with and taking the lead from time to time for most all SWDs in their class.

Diving in and learning as they go also allowed the teachers to learn from one another as they discovered what they needed to learn. While large group trainings were offered in the beginning of the innovation, very few learnt skills were discussed as being from these trainings. Instead, the teachers all spoke of learning from one another. General education teachers became more "ESE friendly" over the years. Special education teachers, on the other hand, grew in their knowledge and ability to teach to general education standards and curricula. They spoke of getting out of their own isolated world that was strictly IEP and specialized curriculum driven, with little or no thought to what

was happening in general education to being knowledgeable and comfortable teaching, adapting and modifying general education to meet the IEP goals and general education standards. This was a big shift for both groups of teachers.

The administrative leadership spoke less of their own learning, but agreed and spoke to the notion that teachers seem to first and foremost learn from each other. One administrator even mentioned that she now sees the teachers themselves as the experts on inclusion and that she now takes a back seat behind her staff in terms of learning how to work with and educate SWDs. However, while many learning gains were discussed in terms of staff dispositions and growth in skill, knowledge growth seemed to stagnate. Teachers, both general and special education, spoke of needing more guidance and more knowledge. General and special education teachers consistently spoke of needing more knowledge about specialized curricula; disability characteristics and learning styles associated with each; and general strategies for how to plan differentiated lessons that embed individualized learning. Many of these teachers spoke passionately about this, reporting that they requested help in these areas year after year to anyone who would listen- school administrators, district staff, peers, outside support and each other- but that the support never came. This, reported three of the teachers directly, and implied by all others with the exception of one teacher, has led the staff to make teaching choices that mirror the old norm of segregated and pull out education for students with IEPs. Remember Lori, who shared, “I know it works. I’ve seen it work other places, but I don’t know how to do it. Please, someone show me how to design a lesson, a lesson not a station, that meets everyone’s learning targets, because I don’t know how to do it so I’m doing what I know how to do and it’s working”. In addition, reports of curriculum for

students with more significant disabilities indicate that most teachers utilize in the moment curriculum decisions for these students; causing feelings of angst and frustration daily to a staff that was historically very confident in their abilities. “I am tired”, “I don’t know what I’m doing”, and “we just take it day by day, every day is a learning curve” was heard over and over again.

Need for systematic professional development. There is a consistent theme that runs within and across leader sub groups and that is this notion of need driven support. In some cases it works out well, to wait to offer professional development support to teachers until they know what they need and request it. It allows them to get into the innovation and see what they need. However, many staff, especially the special education and general education teachers, spoke about this in a negative light. The lack of a strategic training plan came up from all sub-groups and administration noted this as a particular pressing need, sharing that they need to use evaluation data, teacher interviews and student data to do a needs assessment on staff, and then plan professional development accordingly. In year four, the staff is realizing the need for a strategic and proactive professional development plan.

Another common theme around professional learning was a need for modeling. There was one example that seemed to provide a sense of relief to the request for modeling, and that was from Calt, the outside agency specializing in teaching students on the autism spectrum. Many teachers reported this being the one source of significant learning and growth for them. It was implemented one time during year three, in two classrooms. Specifically it was the modeling and “show me how do it” that was consistently requested from both general education and special education staff. In the

absence of knowledge, both sets of teacher leaders have begun making choices that align more closely with segregated and pull out service delivery than with inclusion. The first two years staff reported being excited and firmly believing that inclusion was the right thing to do. They all requested guidance and support, mostly in the form of side-by-side modeling, “show me how to do it”. In year four staff, still requesting side-by-side support, report questioning inclusion and the definition. Without the skills needed and requested, they are feeling ineffective and burned out. One is even leaving teaching all together and is reportedly sad to “leave on this note” of perceived failure.

The above results addressed individual staff learning. Next, results from RQ2 will be presented. This research question shifts to a broader focus, from the leaders’ perceptions of their own development, to perceptions regarding changes in the broader school structures, policies and overall organization; as well as its relatedness to the broader district community.

School Capacities (RQ2)

RQ2: How do school leaders perceive the school’s capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms?

RQ2 focuses on leaders’ perceptions regarding evolutions in school structures, policies and overall organization; as well as Craft’s relatedness to the broader district community. To answer RQ2, all themes focusing on school structures and policies, the evolution of inclusion as a service delivery model, available and needed resources, as well as the broader district context that this school is situated within, were analyzed and are presented following the same structure as was used with the presentation of RQ1’s findings. First special education teachers’ perceptions will be presented. Then, general

education teachers' perceptions are offered followed by the administrative leaders' perceptions. Finally, results from the cross case analysis of all three leader sub-groups will be presented. Table 4.7 presents the code mapping and sample narrative text that was assigned within each superordinate theme.

Special education teachers. Special educators at Craft Elementary spoke of school structures and broader district and larger national education scene that they must operation within and under. What follows is a presentation of their perceptions of how school structures, resource allocation, and the definition of inclusion is evolving at Craft. Finally, their perceptions around the impact of the broader district and national context will be offered.

Structures. The structure of having all SWDs in one or two classrooms per grade level was shared as a consistent struggle for these teachers. While it was reported to allow them to share their time more equally across the rooms, versus having to be in multiple places, it triggered their own questioning of whether inclusion was best for the students in the classroom, since the distraction level in these inclusion rooms appeared to be consistently higher than the other classrooms at each grade level.

When speaking of the effects of a high number of SWDs in one inclusion classroom, Lori shared:

I feel like having a certain number in a classroom makes things difficult sometimes when you have to group and the ESE teacher is going to have to move around a lot and if we're going to group and the group is too big, the ESE teacher has to be in there the whole time. You know I feel like the scheduling constraints, which aren't necessarily the school, but the district, that makes things really hard.

Table 4.7

Code Map for Superordinate Themes: Structures, Model, Resources and Context

RQ2: School Capacity	
School Structures Leadership team PLC School problem solving Steering committee Scheduling Structures Case load Coverage Fragmented day Managing it New students Spread thin Staff organization Student placement	<p>Pam: It's grade level organized. All ESE people want more time of ESE interaction. It helps us as ESE people. We have done it somewhat but it's hard to fit in. There is not enough afternoons for meetings and committees.</p> <p>Paula: We really talk about the data. The PLC [professional learning community meetings] we talk about the data. They're [SWDs] included, but in terms of I think with me being here, it's like she's [the special education teacher] going to be working with them, but I don't work with them in isolation. I work with all of them. But they look to all of us for strategies and how to work with them. We are all included in the strategy part.</p> <p>Jared: I personally put together the ESE schedule with the teacher during pre-planning. It was a challenge. We did use the post it notes, but I am more in tune to spread sheets and stuff like that [new technologies applied to system]. Pulled the data from the... district resource and what not. We pulled the data from that and kind of filtered things out and went from there. That's basically what we did with that.</p>
Evolving Model Balance Frustration The norm Inclusion definition Pulling out more Questioning Stagnated	<p>Vicky: I think it really does based on the needs of the children and that's what we really try to do is meet their needs. It may not be exactly the model that other people may think is the best way to do it, but we're just trying to meet the needs of the children that we have.</p> <p>Gina: I think we are doing well with in our grade. I feel like we really balance the whole pull out not pull out and also not differentiating it too much. It's not an ESE corner. We are not going for that. Sometimes when she pulls them she may be pulling some typical peers. And really does happen. Whereas before we knew that was the goal but it didn't happen and now I think that happens a lot more.</p> <p>Dana: The SLD students are suffering- there has been so much emphasis on access point students- and making sure they have this amount of time, which they should, but now SLD kids aren't getting their minutes with the ESE teachers. And I hate to say it but those are the kids that are going to be taking the standardized test. So there are definitely cons.</p> <p>Pam: And all or nothing is not always the right fit. So, we have to remember that we're still looking at the individual needs of the child. Just like before we can't say that every child needs to be in this excluded environment, we can't say, it's safe to say that it's maybe not the best for every kid to be in an inclusion environment. Or at least you in a full time capacity.</p>
Resources Best teachers Hiring Material need More work Need to celebrate Staffing resources Teacher burn out Time as Resource Wanting incentive	<p>Ellen: Yeah. Yes. And I will say that they do, especially the work stations and that stuff, you know I think they probably need to have a wish list going because I know they spend a lot of time and energy on things that could be purchases to make their life easier, but they have not asked me for them.</p> <p>Dana: We would like more support, but... more staff, but I know that we have more than some of the places do, which is nice, but we would like more.</p> <p>Vicky: He is like the district wants us to share across multiple teachers and it is not going to happen. It doesn't happen, so things like that. I don't know the answer to that. I happen to walk in with my meeting for my observation and he shared with me, "you literally have to fight to get some of the things that you need."</p> <p>Gina: I think our materials have changed period bc of common core. So our standards have risen, but as far as the way we supplement and modify lessons to fit our students with dis I feel like we pull from the same resources.</p> <p>Pam: Everything is about having enough time; hours in the day.</p>
Context, District Context Inclusion mandated Island/Trophy School District , District PD National Policy Context National Policy	<p>Paula: And I think everybody has more demands on them. I think that if you want to isolate stuff. I think that new teacher evaluation. They want to make sure that they do everything, and that is a whole new mind set, and they want to get the kids ready for FCAT. There is a lot of distractions. I don't want to say distractions, but responsibilities. And it just seems like you can't fit everything in perfectly, so I would hate to think that it would the ESE kids, I mean the IND kids that don't fit.</p> <p>Ellen: It's not been just the inclusion change. IT's been the EET change. It's been the common core. I've been doing this a long time and it's been a lot of change at once.</p>

Additionally, being spread across different classrooms with a “schedule that is down to the second” made Pam feel as if she was operating with “a banana peel under [her] feet all day long”. When asked about what processes exist to help them, as teachers, when they have students who are challenging their own teaching abilities, special education teacher were at a loss. “Nothing” and “no, there’s no where for us to go” were the responses.

Overall, special education teachers felt spread thin and chaotic, with schedules that focused more on coverage than instruction that were down to the minute was reportedly taking its toll on them. Each special education teacher talked about the focus on coverage and juggling the schedules of paraprofessionals and themselves with the general education teacher’s schedules, and how covering multiple classrooms made them feel spread thin and unable to meet all students’ needs. For instance, Pam shared:

My only concerns are, again, and not to be repetitive, are being spread to thin and not feel like I can meet everybody’s needs. The days that I was frustrated and feeling like something’s falling off the plate, I’m letting somebody down whether it’s the kids or the teacher that needs me, or this teacher that needs me and this aide has to cover here because somebody’s out and you have, you know that’s the frustration, is keeping it all going.

Overall, special educators reported feeling spread too thin, focusing mostly on coverage, especially with high numbers of SWDs in each classroom, and not feeling comfortable leaving general education classrooms without having full special education staff support coverage. Together, this chaotic coverage focus and lack of teacher learning support systems was reported to lead to feelings of being unable to meet all SWDs needs.

Resources. When reflecting on resources, most special education teachers spoke about material and human resources at Craft. The desire for more staff and the need for more time was brought up from all five special education teachers. It seemed that increased staff was imperative for inclusion to run smoothly and that, while they had a good number of staff, they did not have enough to be effective. Pam stated this directly when sharing, “I wish we had more staff. I wish we had more time.” She was not the only one who perceived there to be a need for more staff and more time. Further, this perceived lack of support was felt by many to have caused teacher burn out from exhaustion. Yvonne shared, “I think we’ve burned out a whole lot of teachers who are exhausted [from] lack of support.”

The desire for more human resources dominated this group of teachers’ interviews. However, it is important to remember here Lori’s reflection shared above, that merely having more staff would not solve the skill gap she felt with how to develop an inclusive lesson. She realized that inclusive education lessons and curricula were a necessary component of effective inclusion.

Pam also shared a need for inclusive education curriculum materials, saying, “I don’t know what [to use] to teach these kiddos in here [speaking of in general education]”. She went on to explain that she was an expert, complete with an array of instructional materials, on teaching fully self-contained alternative curriculums, but that she struggles every day with knowing what she should be teaching and with what materials, especially for the students with the most significant support needs that are still working on basic facts and functional skills, such as students with low functioning autism and other developmental disabilities.

This need for inclusive education teaching materials was not new. In the fall of 2011, field notes captured a conversation with Pam about the need for more inclusive education and modified general education materials. The idea to create a library of general education curriculum modifications was discussed, but this appears to have not materialized at Craft and special education staff continue to share that they either purchase materials themselves or create the majority of their own inclusive education materials and instructional technology. Monica shared:

I don't think I have the technology that I need. I don't even have a laptop. And then if I bring my own laptop in here certain people say that it is frowned upon because the whole if you have a virus or something. You know. So I don't bring my laptop. So I have a mimeo that I can use and I have all the things, but I can't use it because I don't have a laptop. I am on the list.

And Lori shared the need for more curriculum materials:

Yeah, and this is a problem because they [ESE students and teachers] are not in two self-contained classrooms anymore. They are in 6 different grade levels and numerous classrooms and the district sends us one math curriculum and it is a k-12 kit so everybody needs to use this one kit.

Curriculum materials available to special education staff from the district were developed for self-contained classrooms. Yet, special educators were told from administration that, according to the district, these alternative curricula must be used for students on access points. The district provided Craft with one or two sets for each subject area, which must be shared with the kindergarten through fifth grade population of students on access points. Pairing this limited supply of materials with the fact that they are not aligned with

general education curricula makes it difficult for special educators to use within an inclusive model.

The limited materials and staffing resources that match the needs of inclusion seems to be pushing special educators to find alternative pull-out times and places to teach SWDs in segregated groupings with students from across grade levels to teach these district curricula.

Evolving model. Stemming from the perception that inclusion might not be best for all students, a new balance between self-contained pull-out teaching for some students and inclusive service delivery was part of every special educator's interview. The service delivery model that was described and observed in years one to three of implementation to be full in-class placement for all SWDs is evolving to one where some students are pulled out to different environments for part of their instructional time. This was talked about as an on-going change that was evolving to be more and more pull out. Paula explained, "Now we are going to be doing some changes. I don't know if you heard. And so, well we are going to actually have one hour of [segregated] access point teaching."

One teacher, not wanting to give up inclusion to segregated pull-out for SWDs, reported working with her general education peers to creatively structure space outside of the classroom that has become an extension of the classroom for all children to go to for one-on-one or small group support. She shared:

I have, we have brought our pod as an extension of the classroom so we even have a sofa and little chair so when the kids are doing their independent reading they can come out into the pod. Any kid. Right so the kids are in and out so I don't feel like I am pulling the kids out of the classroom. So I am sitting there

doing a lesson and right there I have 4 gen. ed. kids sitting there and quietly reading. So we've made it an extension.

The other four special education teachers have found an isolated space, either in an office, an empty classroom, or in a pod that is not an extension of the classroom to teach small groups of SWDs during part of the day. Some are happy about this, "I think this year is good because being able to have small group, even if it is in the center of the pod, for a short small group for kids on access points that need a separate curriculum."; And some are frustrated with this change: "I guess I am just a little frustrated because yesterday I got told, 'well, you can be outside in the pod'.". One teacher reported being so frustrated that she is beginning the process for early retirement, stating that, "she hates to leave this way, but just can't take it [working hard for inclusion one year and watching other grade levels pull-out the same students she included] anymore.".

In essence, special educators are unsure what service delivery model is expected and all sense a shift from full inclusion for all students to pull out for some, but messages are conflicting, leaving teachers confused and frustrated.

Context. First and foremost special education teachers all reported feeling as the district uses them as the one and only district "trophy school" for inclusion, but that the district actually has no idea what they are talking about because they have never actually visited Craft, nor spoke directly with the teachers' leading the inclusion efforts. However, while they reported feeling that the district advertises Craft as "the [district] inclusion school", many are not confident that all levels of district administrators are in agreement with wanting inclusion to stay at Craft, causing tension and stress as to whether or not support will remain intact over the years. Pam shared:

She was, it's my understanding that the district, all the way up to the [superintendent] want inclusion. And they want this school to be the inclusion model. So it is my understanding that it will continue. So I think that the district wants that model, but I don't know if everybody all the way down is in agreement with that.

Additionally, the reality of multiple district initiatives such as response to intervention (RtI), teacher allocations based strictly on student numbers without taking into account severity of needs, and the impact of teacher evaluations was discussed often by this group of teachers. All these initiatives are seen as competing distractions for special education teachers. Paula shared:

I think that new teacher evaluation. They want to make sure that they do everything, and that is a whole new mind set, and they want to get the kids ready for the [state standardized assessment]. There is a lot of distractions. I don't want to say distractions, but responsibilities. And it just seems like you can't fit everything in perfectly, so I would hate to think that it would be the ESE kids [SWDs], I mean the IND kids [student with intellectual disabilities] that don't fit.

The reality of competing initiatives that may take away focus from inclusion, especially for students with intellectual disabilities, was talked about from Paula, above, and other teachers as well. It seems that over all, fear dominated these teachers feelings of the role the district plays.

Teacher allocations seemed to be a specific cause of tension and frustration for most all of the special education teacher leaders. It appeared to these teachers that the

district continued to allocate staff according to a self-contained model, not taking into account the unique needs that inclusion brings. Paula shared:

FTE [teacher allocations] and I, in October and in January we have to turn our FTE in, which means we have to communicate who we are seeing for what subjects, for how many minutes. Whether it is a co-teach situation, a support facilitation, or a consult situation or resource. So we have to communicate to them [the district]. We do through our data processor. And it's like a big cloud that everybody fears because if everything isn't perfect and then you're audited and you could lose money.

Summary of special education teacher perceptions of school capacity. Overall, special education teachers perceived there to be consistent structures in place for enrolling SWDs in one or two classes per grade level, which helped their scheduling process, but made teachers feel spread too thin. They also shared a sense that inclusion is evolving into a different service delivery model that has more pull out for students with more significant needs and that no school processes exist to help them, as teachers, problem solve around students who challenged their own teaching abilities. Additionally, it was perceived that resources were aligned more with a self-contained model than inclusion, as was the support felt by the district. Next, findings related to the general education teachers' perceptions on school structures, resources, the service delivery model and district support will be reported.

General Education Teachers. Similar to special education teachers, general education teacher leaders shared perceptions of the school's capacity for inclusion. These perceptions converged around the same four themes: school structures, resource

evolution and needs, an evolving service delivery model and the interaction with a broader district and national policy context.

Structures. General education teachers spoke of the importance of scheduling adequate support in their classrooms. In the earlier interviews, general education teachers spoke more of the importance of having special education staff in their room (aide or teacher) as much as possible, if not all the time. However, the most recent interviews, three and a half years into inclusion, the teachers spoke more about the importance of consistent and reliable support and not so much the importance of merely having anyone in their rooms at all times to support the children. This increased comfort level in educating SWDs was discussed as a teacher capacity evolution above.

However, what continued to be talked about over the three and a half years was the challenge with the scheduling of support and coverage. It was reported as constantly changing, resulting in special education staff running from place to place. This made special education teachers seem unreliable because moment-to-moment needs of the children who challenge teachers behaviorally often demand more time than is scheduled in for them. The result is that the special education teachers and aides aren't always where the schedule depicts they will be, making the general education teacher feel less supported from time to time. The teachers are very supportive and understanding of their peers and spoke with an apologetic tone, but definitely shared that this has been a consistent challenge to inclusion's effectiveness. It seems to be that the scheduling of special education staff is based upon coverage of time. The emergence of balancing the time students with intellectual disabilities who are on the access point curriculum track spend in general education versus pulled out for specialized instruction was shared. This

increased pull-out, shared above, has become the new model as described by the general education teachers. And some seem relieved, such as Vicky, who shared:

So basically what we started doing this year, which is a little different than past years, is that there are times that they're pulled so their instruction is more meaningful. I am talking more about our access point kids. Our SLD kids are with us all day long, but our access point kids who are still learning reading and writing and basic math are going to get more of their learning if it is in a smaller setting with one teacher. So we are kind of having a mix of in the classroom and in a small group setting. And that's what I think is meeting everybody's needs in the best way possible.

Yet others are not, and see the pull out as a type of punishment or penalty:

Kris: And so these children learned how to be social in a classroom of their [same age] peers and learning that when it was learning time, and when it was carpet time that it was a listening time not a whatever time, and now they're being pulled out [to learn these things] where they can [actually] do all of that [in the general education classroom]. And I may be completely wrong, but they can do all of that so then when they are brought back into the group they don't know how to act... They [SWDs] are getting penalized more and they are being pulled out [into a segregated small group].

Related to this notion that inclusion is not an all or nothing approach at Craft, general education teachers explained that being a part of inclusion at Craft is optional and voluntary for the general education teachers. One teacher estimated that roughly 33% or less of the general education teachers were involved. This number remained consistent

over the three and a half years of implementation thus far, and many reported that there was not an indication that this percentage was going to increase. Currently, there are one or two general education classrooms per grade level that are considered the “inclusion rooms”. This means that all the SWDs at each grade level are placed in one or two rooms. There is one exception to this. This year, 4th grade added one classroom. The rest of the grades have the SWDs clustered into one room. The increased room in 4th grade may be an indicator of evolution in structure, but currently the focus is not school wide. The result is a disproportionately high number of students receiving special education services in these rooms, which has put a heavy burden on the general education teaching staff. Sally shared:

It’s also the fact [because of the number of SWDs in my class] that sometimes you have to give to [instruction simultaneously] those kids [SWDs] when you are giving one-to-one to some kids [with more significant disabilities], and I can’t give anything to those others. Then, what is happening to those other kids that need the help? ... You feel very guilty either way. I don’t want to leave them out because they’re entitled to that too, but I’m not sure they’re getting exactly what they need because I don’t think we can all do it. You can’t do everybody and that’s not fair because somebody loses and then that blame is put back on us.

As expressed by Sally, general education teachers perceived to be personally blamed if they do not teach all students equitably, but reported feeling unable to meet all the students needs with the high numbers of SWDs placed in their classrooms. Also, the shifting model was as real to this group of teacher leaders as it was to the special education teachers, although not all felt positive about this shift and some worry what

that teaches the SWDs about where they belong and what is expected of them from grade to grade.

Three of the five general education teachers talked about different school level teaming structures. The different structures were perceived to be a formal way to communicate between administration and staff, but none were understood to target teacher problem solving around student needs. Even RtI meetings were understood to only be for student who did not have disability labels, and the professional learning communities, where data was examined, had a targeted focus on students without disabilities. When probed further, teachers all shared that there was nowhere to go within Craft to help them problem solve around students who were struggling.

Resources. Other than speaking about the need for more special education teachers, general education teachers didn't have a lot to say in terms of a change in or impact of materials and other resources. This omissions may, or may not, indicate a lack of available resources such as assistive technology, but it is hard to say at this point with the available information. However, all general education teachers perceived there to be a need for more special education teachers at each grade level. This was reported to be important to be able to decrease the proportion of SWDs in general education classrooms and to allow for more planning time, reducing the stress on their special education peers. These teachers seemed sensitive to their special education teacher peers' schedules, often sharing that they were "spread so thin" and "were doing the best they could spread across multiple classrooms". They shared over and over again that if the district wants "this [inclusion] to be effective then they have to support it", and by supporting inclusion, they meant give more teaching units to Craft.

Evolving model. As mentioned briefly above, similar to the special educators, general educators are beginning to question if inclusion, as the one and only service delivery option, is the correct model for all SWDs. Vicky summarized the general perception of these leaders when sharing this:

Is the goal to include them all day? Is the goal to have them learning? Or is the goal a combination of inclusion and learning. And to me that is the goal. And if that's the best thing then I don't think that they should be in a general education class all day with everything that is going on. So basically, what we started doing this year, which is a little different than past years, is that there are times that they're pulled so their instruction is more meaningful. I am talking more about our access point kids. Our SLD kids are with us all day long, but our access point kids who are still learning reading and writing and basic math are going to get more of their learning if it is in a smaller setting with one teacher. So we are kind of having a mix of in the classroom and in a small group setting. And that's what I think it meeting everybody's needs in the best way possible.

Vicky was not the only teacher to talk at length about the effectiveness of inclusion as the only option for students with more significant disabilities. All five general education teachers shared that they think inclusion is important for all students in terms of social gains and membership in the greater school community, but that students on access points may be better served in small group settings with a special education teacher.

It is unclear why teachers feel this way and it may very well be linked to the perception that they do not currently hold the skills necessary to plan a lesson that meets these students' needs inclusively, as shared above, but what was clear is that these

teachers are questioning age-appropriate general class placement as a one size fits all service delivery model for students with intellectual disabilities that are on the state's alternative curriculum track.

Context. Recognizing that the district did provide Craft with one-half of an additional teacher since inclusion began, general educators report feeling little one way or another about how the district supports inclusion at Craft. In fact, many shared that they perceive the district to be invisible other than its apparent decision to tout Craft as the district's trophy inclusion school, but not support it accordingly. Dana explained this frustration succinctly; "if they are going to say this is the school we should be able to get more teachers in here to help out." This seemed to frustrate general educators, as it did their special education peers, but not as passionately.

However, the broader context of teacher evaluations, test based student accountability and merit pay were omnipresent. A new phenomenon that emerged during this round of interviews that was not reflected in the pre-existing data for general education teachers, was the effect of test based accountability and evaluations on teachers' willingness to teach in inclusive classrooms. Kris shared:

It makes some wonder sometimes in far as now with all the, it doesn't affect me because of the number of years I have left in the county and lack of years I have left in the county, but with this salary [connected] with your evaluations and your scores from your children affecting your salary. Because on my roster- I have 18 children on my roster- they all show up, but they are not going to make the [adequate] progress. They are not going to show the progress that and I have to [show progress for all my students]. I don't know if you know what the FAIR

[district reading assessment] testing is, but I have to FAIR test them [SWDs]. It is good, but that could be a huge issue in terms of staff wanting to do inclusion.

Clearly, as was exemplified in Kris's reflection, general education teachers are caught in a place where they are not sure how inclusion fits in with the broader policy context of teacher evaluation, test based teacher accountability and merit pay.

Summary of general education teachers' perceptions. General education teachers perceive inclusion to be evolving into a more balanced service delivery model where pullout teaching is again accepted for some SWDs. Additionally, materials and human resources are not perceived to have evolved along with inclusion at Craft. Finally, the broader context of teacher evaluation is leaving teachers in angst of how it may affect inclusion. School staff collaborative structures were perceived to be in place for sharing information and looking at student level data for all students other than SWDs, but nothing was shared for consulting around teacher learning needs. Next, the perception of administrative leaders at Craft will be shared.

Administrative leaders. The administrative team at Craft also spoke of the need to evolve school structures, how resources are allocated, the definition of inclusion and the impact that the broader socio-political district and national context in which they must operate within has upon their local inclusion efforts.

Structures. Similar to both general and special educators, both administrative leaders discussed the importance of scheduling. The structures used were seen as a challenge, but evolving. When talking about the importance of putting together a scheduling process that addressed this challenge, Jared shared:

I personally put together the ESE schedule with the teachers during pre-planning. It was a challenge. We did use the post it notes, but I am more in tune to spread sheets and stuff like that.

The different school based teaming structures for utilizing key staff and for problem solving at different levels was also shared as important to the leadership team.

Jared stated:

We've got, our guidance staff is very good, our guidance counselor is excellent-between our problem solving leadership team, between our RtI instruction, which we have our team time [for]. That could be better, but it will get better as the year goes.

Ellen, who didn't have as much directed information to share about these teams, did when prompted, share that they were there and used, mostly for response to intervention purposes. She did however, as mentioned above, seem to perceive the ad-hoc nature of learning informally from one another as more important to the staff's development than were the different school level problem solving teams. She shared, "they really learn from one another" and "figure it out as they go".

Resources. In terms of how resources were used and perceived to augment inclusion at Craft, leaders took steps to use what they had effectively. The strategic use of human resources was the most apparent focus for leadership. First, leaders realigned staff at the on-set to configure staff into grade level teams versus disability label driven teams. Additionally, the leadership team engaged in strategic hiring of an exceptional student education specialist, who reportedly played a critical role in helping staff develop their behavior and classroom management strategies.

Additionally, administrators reported feeling fiscally supported by the district, but realized a need for more curricula and materials. Ellen reflected, “we’ve always gotten what we asked for”, but perceived there to be a continued need for more curriculum materials. She shared:

That they [the teachers] haven’t gotten more than one kit for the alternative curricula [is difficult]. I think we needed more because they’re spread out- they are not all using them at the same time. But then as far as the reading mastery stuff, we had a cabinet full. I have asked for another EQUALS math kit, which costs about \$2000, which we haven’t gotten yet but they haven’t said no yet so I think it’s on their list to get.

In addition, Ellen reflected that she realizes there is a need to know special educators’ material needs better in order to provide them with more student specific materials:

And I will say that they do, especially the work stations and that stuff, you know I think they probably need to have a wish list going because I know they spend a lot of time and energy on things that could be purchased to make their life easier, but they have not asked me for them. You know.... I guess that is one thing I probably need to say to them. You know I do a curriculum wish list for each grade level that they keep, so when I have money or something comes available [I can buy them things off this list], but I probably need to just give something to them [the special educators], because they are probably like spending their own money and making their own things.

Overall, both administrators shared that they work to get whatever the staff need. Paula shared, “So anytime they are excited about anything or something like that I am like let’s figure out a way to get them at your finger tips”. Similarly, Jared shared, “anything they need I’ll get for them”.

Evolving model. The administrative team also shared perceptions related to inclusion no longer being the one and only service delivery model at Craft. Reasons were speculated, one being the change in principal leadership during the spring of 2012 and another was teachers feeling frustrated that some students don’t get the education they feel is needed with full inclusion. Regardless of the reasons, administrators perceive the definition of what is accepted for SWDs and what inclusion is defined as at Craft seems to be shifting to a more balanced approach between pull out and general classroom placement, especially for students with more significant needs. Ellen, who has been with inclusion from the beginning at Craft, shared the impact of the principal change:

I think that would be different if we hadn’t had the administration change. It’s [inclusion] not his priority right now, but that’s not to say it will never be. It’s growing on him. He’s rightly so listening to parents and the district regarding the high-end kids and needs for enrichment. It has to be balanced.

Jared also saw a struggle with getting kids with more significant intellectual disabilities on access points the instruction they need in an inclusive model. He shared, “that was challenging just trying to get the kids everything that they needed. In terms of solid instruction, but also getting the access points in as well.”, but didn’t say anything specific about how he sees this being resolved.

Context. The broader district and national context was perceived as important by administration as well. How the district assigns teaching units based upon a teacher's scheduling report, called the FTE report, was specifically important. Fear that support will be pulled if they do not code their teachers correctly was shared. Regarding this fear of the impact on support based upon the FTE report Paula shared:

And she [the special education specialist who turns in the reports for Craft] has actually caught something already where some teacher tried to schedule resource time and she was like, she brought it to my attention and we changed it back to co-teach. ...She did catch that and said, you know I feel like if we're an inclusion school then we would want to see this reflected in this schedule.

The importance of having the district maintain or increase the teaching units at Craft was obvious. Thus, finding ways to report student enrollment numbers was one way, in addition to the FTE reporting shared above, that administration used in their favor to work within the larger district context. Ellen shared:

I feel like for one thing, you've known from the beginning we've counted our ESE students into our regular education class size. So that in and of itself has kept class sizes down. Because they [the district] very easily could have said you know you are going to have 18 regular education kids in every primary class plus fit these ESE students in, which would have been disastrous, and they didn't have to do that. They did that from the very beginning and really that is kind of an unspoken thing.

The perception that they have to fight for resources from the district was also shared:

Was it a headache just to get [one half of a unit]? We were limbo about the extra unit for such a long time. I guess we'll see at the end of the year if everything just goes smoothly or if they take it and we have to fight for it every year. You know what a pain.

Summary of administrative leaders' perceptions. Craft's administrative leadership team saw a need to assess staffs' unique material needs, especially in the area of curricula and instructional materials. Unlike the teacher leaders', administrators reported feeling that the district had been supportive in terms of staffing resource, but fear the relinquishing of support and therefore make sure to take care when report staffing structures. These leaders felt it important to turn in reports that continue to justify their current teacher allocations. They, like the teacher leaders, sense a more balanced services delivery model developing at Craft. Also similar to the teacher leaders, administrator leaders did not articulate a school structure for staff members to problem solve around student and teacher needs.

Cross Case Analysis of RQ2. When combining all leader perceptions on the school's capacity for inclusion four themes arose: the need for problem solving structures at the school site, the presence of freedom and flexibility felt by staff, the impact of fiscal resources and their feeling of being an exception to the norm as an inclusive school.

Problem solving structures. General education and special education teachers reported a lack of a school structure in place that allowed for student problem solving around teaching students that may challenge their teaching skills and knowledge.

Administrators spoke about having a leadership team and a response to intervention team (RtI) in place for teachers. When asked about these teams, teachers reported not using them for the purpose of their own learning. Instead, they were looked at as a place to begin the special education referral and eligibility process. One teacher explained that RtI not for SWDs because they are already labeled, clearly showing that this process is viewed by teachers as a means to special education referral, not as a structure in place for teachers to evolve capacity around teaching a diverse student body (knowledge and skills).

Freedom and flexibility. Another summative theme that cut across all leader subgroups is teacher freedom, which allowed for a perceived flexibility in how to structure teaching and learning. Flexibility was evident with the group of general education teachers in this study who organized their schedules in collaboration with their fellow general educators. Some choose to do what was called “departmentalizing”, some “team-teach” and some stick to a more traditional structure where they teach all core subjects with their own group of students all day. As explained above, departmentalizing was the name some teachers have put on the practice of partnering up with a grade level teacher and each teaching specific subjects, twice each day; first to one homeroom of children and then to another homeroom. The students swap classrooms and teachers, allowing for one teacher to be the teacher for two specific subjects and one to be in charge of another. For instance, one teacher is the reading/writing teacher for two separate homerooms’ of students, and the other teacher is the science and math teacher for these same students. The students switch teachers during the day. The important thing to note here is that administrators do not mandate if this must occur or how to do it.

The grade level teachers decide to do this and move forward on their own. This allows for instructional and scheduling flexibility, whereby decisions can be based upon teaching styles and strengths as well as individual student needs. It mandates a great deal of freedom, trust and professionalism from the administrators. All of these traits are evident between general education teachers interviewed and the administrative team at Craft.

Fiscal resources. The majority of perceptions focused on the human resources element. Specifically, teachers reported wanting more support staff and more special education teachers. Teachers frequently shared that if they had more teachers or more teaching assistants, they would be more effective teachers and the students would learn more. In addition, leaders realigned staff at the on-set to configure staff into grade level teams versus disability label driven teams. Last, the leadership team engaged in strategic hiring of an exceptional student education specialist, who reportedly played a critical role in helping staff develop new teaching strategies.

Showing the need for evolved teaching materials, one special education teacher shared a need for inclusive education curriculum materials, saying, “I don’t know what to [use] teach these kiddos in here”. She went on to explain that she was an expert, complete with an array of instructional materials on teaching fully self-contained alternative curriculums, but that she struggles every day with knowing what she should be using to teach the students with the most significant support needs that are still working on basic facts and functional skills such as students with low functioning autism and other developmental disabilities within general education. Conversations began around the

need to create a library of general education curriculum modifications, but nothing has been started to date.

Exception to norm. Inclusion is still the exception to the norm in the school, district and surrounding neighborhood communities. First off, it is important to remember from above that all teacher participants and one of the two administrative leaders shared that teachers have a choice as to whether they want to be an “inclusion teacher”. At Craft, an inclusion teacher is one who has SWDs in their classroom. This brings about some interesting dynamics between teachers both within and across grade levels, as well as affects the proportion of SWDs in each class, again impacting the school’s ability to evolve into inclusion seen as the norm versus the exception. This all is discussed in another section. This is also evident that with the special education teacher perceiving that parents’ report being thankful for their child being included in general education, as opposed to expecting it as the norm. Important here is the note of general education teachers given options in terms of whether they will have children with disabilities in their class or not, maintaining inclusion’s place as an outlier to the norm of practice in the school and the broader district.

The conflicting curricula and professional development offerings at the district level is another example of inclusion at Craft being an exception to the norm. Thus, while the norm is starting to shift within Craft, the pull back to center of practice being defined as a self-contained service delivery model for SWDs is strong. The question is, has space been created to shift to a place where inclusion for SWDs is the normal way of work, versus an exception? Some signs show that it has. Only time will tell if these spaces grow to push the norm of segregated education for SWD, or if the force of the

district's norm of parallel and separate special and general education systems will swallow up Craft's work towards inclusion.

Conclusion

Perceptions of growth for teachers were shared in the areas of teacher dispositions towards SWDs and methods. General education teachers are perceived to have grown the most in the area of student led teaching, using less teacher directed strategies and more cooperative groups and hands on activities. This is perceived to be due to both the structure inclusion, which places teachers together, allowing them to learn from one another, as well as the district's teacher evaluation guidelines. In addition, their disposition towards SWDs has evolved from fear to acceptance. The norm in the school is to have SWDs part of the natural flow of the day, not isolated to a trailer or section of the school. However, inclusion is not a norm across the district nor the entire school.

Special education teachers have grown in the knowledge about general education curricula and their comfort with teaching large groups of students, but still mostly rely on one-on-one and small group instructions. Therefore, all leaders feel there continues to be many areas that staff need support with. Specifically, more systematic professional development around access point students and inclusion strategies for kids with more significant disabilities was discussed as a major barrier to being effective teachers under an inclusive education model. Additionally, the leaders perceive the school to be going through a major shift in their definitions of inclusion. What was considered an all or nothing approach to general education class based service delivery for all kids is beginning to shift to pull-out and segregated classes for some students.

At the school level, structures have evolved for scheduling and problem solving. However, system-wide structures are needed for assisting and consulting with staff around particular groups of kids that continue to challenge their teaching skills. Further, scheduling continues to be felt as an omnipresent process, which drives everything special education teachers do and limits their instructional options. Based on this perceived scheduling focus, staff are feeling spread thin, like they can't get in enough instructional time that they feel is necessary to meet all the students' diverse needs. Materials also were reported as a common need for teachers. While leaders would love more staff, they realize that they do have a lot to work with, but feel slighted in terms of materials available to them. It was felt that resources are allocated based upon a self-contained versus inclusive education model, often resulting in teacher's having to share one curriculum across five different grade levels and no computer access, nor assistive technology. Teachers feel that the district has not adjusted staffing and material resource allocation to meet the different demands of teaching in an inclusive education model. With these limitations, teachers reported feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and burned out. They feel ineffective, and for a veteran staff in a consistently high-performing school, this is an atypical feeling for them, which is making at least one staff member begin the process of early retirement.

The beginning section of this chapter outlined the analytical process used to examine leader and school capacity at Craft. Following that section, qualitative findings were presented for RQ1 and RQ2. First, the leaders' own perceived capacity development was presented. Next, the perceived capacity development of the school was shared. The

chapter ended with a summary of these results. Next, Chapter 5 will present the findings of RQ3, comparing the results from RQ1 and RQ2 to the literature.

Chapter Five

Findings of RQ3: Analysis and Discussion

Comparison of Results to the Literature

The findings presented in Chapter 4 are better understood within the context of the third research question, which asks how the leaders' perceptions compare to the extant school capacity literature. Therefore, Chapter 5 will answer RQ3 by examining and discussing the findings from RQ1 and RQ2 in their entirety through the proposed framework of the current school capacity literature presented in Chapter 2.

RQ3: How do the school leaders' perceptions of their own and the school's capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice align with the school capacity literature?

As explained in Chapter 3, theoretical propositions derived from the literature drive the design of a Yin (2009) Case Study; therefore, results from the RQ3 analysis (alignment with school capacity literature) will be organized by the following research proposition shared in Chapter 2:

1. School capacity is multi-dimensional- each of the following dimension must be coherently interwoven and developed around a common purpose.
2. Human capacity must be developed:
 - a. All staff and all students are included in the inclusive education school policies and practices (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009; Kozleski, 2002; Ryndak, Jackson, and Billingsly, 1999-2000).

- b. Substantial changes in instructional practices are evident. (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005; Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Copland and Coseby, 1999-2000).
3. Structural capacity must be developed:
 - a. Data driven instructional improvement structures are in place to help teachers meet the needs of all students (Gravios et al., 2002) and the teachers' goal is to teach it right the first time, without relying on interventions (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005).
 - b. Substantial changes in school structures are evident. (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Ainscow, 2005; Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Copland and Coseby, 1999/2000)
4. Technical, material, and human resource capacity must be developed:
 - a. Strategic hiring and allocation/use of resources is used to support the inclusive education vision and mission (Capper & Frattura, 2009).
 - b. Instructional technology and appropriate materials and instructional resources need to be in place daily.
5. Organizational capacity must be developed:
 - a. Age appropriate general education class placement for all SWDs is led primarily by general education (Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor, 2008-2009) with natural proportions (Ryndak et al. 1999-2000).
 - b. The working nature of the school consists of a collaborative culture among all staff members (Ainscow, 2005).

6. Principal leadership and district support are key driving forces for school capacity coherence.
 - a. There is a system/school wide focus (Sailor, 2008-2009; Kozleski, 2002; Ryndak et al., 1999-2000).

These research propositions were developed from synthesizing and weaving together the extant knowledge base of school capacity and inclusive education systems change. Table 5.1, presented first in Chapter 2, summarizes the literature that was used to develop these propositions.

The propositions represent one view of the current literature on inclusive education and school capacity building, and served as the guiding lens for this study. Therefore, to examine RQ3 I analyzed the major findings from RQ1 and RQ2 through the lens of each proposition, examining how they may extend, refute or build upon the extant literature.

To begin this chapter I summarize the major findings from RQ1 and RQ2 this summary, a discussion of the findings related to each of the propositions will be presented, in their entirety. First, a presentation and discussion of human, resource, structural and organization capacity, as well as their interconnectedness will occur. Last, a presentation of results and discussion of the perceived role of district support and principal leadership compared to the literature.

Summary of Findings from RQ1 and RQ2.

Evidence seems to indicate that overall, general education teachers were better able to and more open to shifting their roles as teachers than were the special education teachers. In essence, it appeared that special educators coped with this conflict between

Table 5.1

Summary of the Extant School Capacity Literature

Dimension	Literature Base
District Support	<p>Align curriculum to state standards, help build staff instructional capacity and collaboration with one another, foster relationships between schools and internal (district) and external resources, and align funding streams to school goals (Florian, Hange & Copland, 2000).</p> <p>Districts play a critical role in supporting local education agencies to carry out reform efforts (Rorrer et al., 2008).</p>
Principal Leadership	<p>Promote instructional coherence by sharing and distributing leadership responsibilities and providing formative and summative evaluation, shaping consensus around instructional coherence to promote ownership while reducing divisions among staff (Kedro, 2004).</p> <p>There is a strong associating found between principal leadership, program coherence and capacity building of staff (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000).</p> <p>Leadership has the placement in the organization as well as the legal authority to make decisions that align resources and create buy-in around a common vision (Dimmock, 2011).</p>
Material, Technical, and Human Resources	<p>Fiscal and material resources available to the system (Century, 1999)</p> <p>Enhancements to material and human resources that align with the reform efforts must occur (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000)</p> <p>Leadership must align and allocate resources needed for the reform (Dimmock, 2012; Gravois, 2013)</p>
Organizational/Professional Community	<p>Refers to relationships among individuals both within the district and with individuals outside the district (Century, 1999)</p> <p>Individual teacher competence must be collective and organized around shared goals for learning, inquiry process to address challenges and opportunities for all staff to influence school activities and policies (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000)</p>
Coherent School Structures & Instructional Programs	<p>Refers to the elements of the system that are independent of people such as formal procedures and policies, professional development programs, and curriculum frameworks (Century, 1999; Florian, Hange, & Copland, 2000, Newman, et al., (2001)</p>
Individual Staff Member's Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions	<p>Knowledge, skills, dispositions, and self-perceptions of people within the school system (Century, 1999; Florian, Hange, & Copland, 2000)</p> <p>Staff that are “professionally competent in instruction and assessment centered on curriculum appropriate for their particular students” and that “hold high expectations for students’ learning” (Newman, King & Youngs, 2000)</p>

their past professional role and the new roles demanded of them by continuing to define themselves the same way, just in a new context. However, more examination into the impact on special educator's role shift is needed to fully understand this phenomenon.

Additionally, evidence of constant tension between the district and the school's efforts at inclusion were present. This occurred with materials available, curricula, staffing policies and professional development opportunities. This also was seen in the perceptions by some leaders that teacher evaluation would be tied to test scores and teacher pay, as well as the practices of clustering students with specific disabilities labels at specific school sites, making Craft be the inclusion school and the school for students with intellectual disabilities in the district. This practice resulted in a dis-proportionately high number of SWDs with high needs at Craft, and served to over burden the teachers.

Finally, the leaders' perceived themselves and the school to be evolving in their understanding of what inclusion meant to them and what structures for teacher support needed to be in place. It was clear from the interviews and pre-existing data that Craft was a school in transition that saw itself as still on a journey to inclusion. This perception was heard in leaders' request for more teacher learning support in the form of side-by-side modeling and inclusive education trainings, as well as in the passionate request by most all teacher leaders to tell them what the rules were. These staff members reported still trying to figure out what was expected of them in terms of services for SWDs. As they continued to struggle with feelings of ineffectiveness, a mandate for using alternative curricula, and the need for more inclusive education skills, teacher leaders were defining their current practices as steeped with an ever-increasing amount of pull-out for SWDs than originally thought acceptable in inclusion.

Capacity Framework

Chapter 2 outlined how school capacity building has been shown to be multi-dimensional. Outlined was each of the six inter-related dimensions: human capacity, resource capacity, structural capacity, organizational culture capacity and the role of district support and principal leadership. To address RQ3, the following sections within Chapter 5 will discuss the findings in light of the extant literature for each dimension, beginning with human capacity and ending with a discussion about the importance of district support and principal leadership.

Human capacity. Human capacity has been defined as individual staff members' knowledge, skills and dispositions related to the innovations (Century 1999 & Mattos, 2011). Additionally, McLeskey and Waldron (2002) remind us about the expectation for teaching practices to look significantly different under an inclusive education model. Therefore, when considering teachers' individual teaching practices it becomes important to consider their evolution to becoming effective inclusion teachers. A shift in instructional practices is perceived to have occurred at Craft. This shift is perceived to have occurred mostly with the general education teachers. These teachers are looking more "ESE friendly" through their use of cooperative groups, individualized student led lessons and more hands on and multi-sensory activities. Special education teachers, on the other hand, are reported to remain focused on small group and one on one instruction, often feeling pulled in many directions at once trying to fit in all the possible configurations of small groups they perceive are needed to meet the needs of all students in one grade level this way. It was reported that they have increased knowledge in general education curriculum and standards, which is an evolution in and of itself.

However, they have not shown signs of significantly shifting their instructional practices, nor the consequences of their decisions on student learning.

While special education teachers all have grown in their knowledge base and general education teachers show signs and perceptions that imply their practices have shifted, this is isolated to the teacher leaders. At Craft this is 100% of the special education teaching staff, but not 100% of the staff. Remember, at Craft approximately 33% of teachers are a part of the inclusive reform. When considering this across grade levels, that makes about one or two classes, out of four or five, per grade level that includes SWDs. Additionally, there was no mention of the many other staff members such as speech, occupational therapy, reading interventionist, which makes me wonder if they are a part of the inclusion family. Therefore, Craft does not have all staff included. When comparing this to the literature developed proposition on human capacity, Craft's ability to develop its staffs' human capacity is limited to a small percentage of staff, affecting natural proportions and making the ability to scale up knowledge and skill growth difficult, if not impossible.

Related, all staff members are not included in the inclusive education professional development, which also may serve to limit the ability for new knowledge and skill growth to spread across the school to all teachers. The inclusion group quickly insulated itself from the rest of the staff, and along with that insulation took away the possibility of shifting the broader school norm from traditional to inclusive education. The capacity for inclusion stayed insulated with in the sub-set of teachers involved, which has remained consistent over the past three and a half year of inclusion at Craft. Further, by naming one or two classrooms as the inclusion classroom and placing all SWDs at that grade

level in those classrooms, staff is feeling the weight of this high percentage of students with needs. They are feeling ineffective and even as failures. This feeling is pushing the staff to consider different student placement options that mirror the old way of multi-age, disability specific segregated education. There is more pull out this year than in the past, and staff shared a sense of relief that this was allowed. It is not clear to them yet if inclusion means 100% in general education as they were perceived to be told it was to be back in 2009, or if meeting the federal threshold of 80% is the actual target to be satisfied with. This precise definition of inclusion is still evolving for staff at Craft.

Therefore, it is important to consider that if, in fact, only a certain percentage of teacher's instructional capacity is tapped into during the reform process, what the might leaders be able to expect out of inclusion? What does this mean for the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusive education at Craft? Is Craft setting itself up for a failed reform effort due to teacher burn out and frustration as Elmore (2000) found to be the case when all dimensions of capacity aren't developed?

Structural capacity. Similar to human capacity, Craft's staff and leadership perceive to have worked hard on their structural capacity. They worked out a new scheduling process and initiated grade level professional learning communities (DuFour & Eacker, 1998). Both of these new structures have served to extend Craft's other capacities over the past three and a half years. However, a process for obtaining teacher-learning support is missing and desired.

Neither substantial changes in school structures, nor data driven improvement structures to meet the needs of all students are reported to be in place at Craft right now. RtI is in place as one structure, but it is perceived to be reserved for students that do not

have disability labels, and is focused on pull out interventions and on the special education referral process rather than on teacher learning. Teachers have an hour a day where the entire school is broken apart into ability based intervention groups. This structure results in all SWDs being in one group. In each classroom, teachers have found creative ways of organizing staff to try to meet the differentiated needs in the classroom, but the focus is on teaching it one way and then to use data to figure out who goes in the re-teach or enrichment groups, rather than how to proactively designing instructional strategies that are likely to meet the individual needs of all students, as found to be important by Capper and Frattura (2009). Thus, students are again organized into ability-based groups where SWDs stay together as a separate group for the majority of instructional time.

And, while teachers have shared many examples of how they've incorporated more and more diverse teaching strategies to make sure everyone is a part of the lesson, no perceived school structures exist that support teachers in how to meet the needs of learners who may struggle with the general education lessons. Instead, support is based on ad-hoc basis from teaching peers. It is important to realize, however, that this ad-hoc peer support is viewed as extremely beneficial for the staff. One teacher even expressed concern with losing this informal manner to a more formalized process, something she did not want. However, it became evident that teachers perceive themselves to need more directed side-by-side support and that there is nothing school wide, nor district wide, in place to date that supports this level of teacher learning.

When I first met with the administrative team, I was told of the plan to only include teachers who volunteered to have all children with diagnosed disability labels at

their grade level included in their classroom. I understood this path to be one of least resistance, and thought perhaps it was a starting point for Craft. However, after further investigation with the staff at Craft throughout the past four years I learned that the practice of only having one or two classrooms, out of four or five per grade level, included in the “inclusion family” was part of the on-going structure and culture of Craft’s reform efforts. And while it is reported over and over again that the best “cream of the crop” teachers are included at Craft- at least in terms of the staff involved with inclusion- all did not mean all and the reform was neither systemic nor coherent across the entire school, as recommended by Kozleski (1999). Therefore, we are left to deeply consider what student placement structures need to be considered when developing an inclusive school, learning from Craft that natural proportions must continue to be a goal of inclusive schools, and that placement structures and policies must take this into account when being developed.

Fiscal resources capacity. Fiscal resource capacity is best understood to be the materials (curricula, text books, manipulatives, tables, desks, ...), technology (i.e. assistive technology, computers, ...) and human resources, including access to people with good ideas (Century, 1999). It too, has been shown as important to develop when schools shift how they educate students (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000). The idea is that new ways of work require new materials and staffing resources. Staffing is the area that, based upon interviews, appears to be the one area of capacity that leaders fall back on when seeking solutions to challenges that arise with inclusion. At least once during each interview or conversation around needs at Craft, teacher and administrative leaders spoke about “needing more staff” or “more aides” or “an additional teaching unit”. Here

we see the challenges to reform sustainability when materials are not aligned or enhanced to meet the new needs of inclusive education. The limited repertoire of new teaching strategies has yet to be purposefully addressed at Craft.

Teacher leaders at Craft explicate the effect of unaligned resources on the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusive education instructional practices; teachers reported feeling burned out from what seems to be a shortage of technical materials for inclusive education and are reverting to old ways of educating SWDs because it fits better with the available resources, causing less friction between practice and resources. It appears that curricula is designed and allocated based upon the needs of specific groups of students within self-contained classroom environments, none of which were perceived to be flexible enough to evolve with the needs of inclusive practices. Further, teachers reported spending their own time and money to create needed materials. Leaders discussed the need for a wish list for special education teachers, and reflected on the importance of beginning a process that brings needed materials to these teachers in support of their inclusive work. Therefore, we learn from Craft the importance of having curricula for all students that is aligned to general education standards and benchmarks as well as related instructional materials that allow all SWDs to access the curriculum while also working on embedded functional skills.

Organizational culture capacity. Organizational capacity, also one of the central dimensions of school capacity that needs to evolve with educational reform, is best understood as the professional culture of the school (Spillane and Thompson, 1998 and Century, 1999). This is often referred to as the social capital of a building and is linked to how teachers work together, collaboratively (Bourdieu, 1986). As mentioned earlier,

Craft's school-level instructional capacity was not school-wide and this presented problems as the school moved forward. Currently, less than half of the general education teaching staff is involved in the inclusive education initiative, and thus the entire school population is not involved collaboratively with the reform. However, externally, the school is making strategic partnerships with the local university and other support networks and regional inclusive education professional development centers. Overall, some evolution of organizational capacity is present at Craft, but this is not school-wide. This seems to be adding to the insulation of inclusion. Thus, the system-wide organizational culture, while perceived to be present with the inclusion family co-teaching teams, at Craft is not perceived to have shifted towards the collaborative level indicated as a need for effective inclusion.

School capacity coherence. Spillane and Thompson (1998) and Century (1999) were the first to discuss the four dimensions of school capacity. In their work it was pointed out how these different constructs are meant to work together, building upon one another, and not in isolation. What is important, and has been shown in more recent work on school capacity for reform, is how school systems coherently build all four dimensions of capacity, system wide, around one the reform initiative (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000). This current case study work with Craft examined capacity coherence around inclusion. Here, the focus of inclusive education capacity at Craft can be considered to be isolated to teacher development and staffing support. While it does cut across all grade levels, and is the intended service delivery model for all students receiving special education services, it is not the reality for all the classrooms. General education, special education and administrative leaders explained that being a part of

inclusion at Craft is optional and voluntary for the general education teachers. The result is a disproportionately a high number of students receiving special education services in these rooms, which puts an unnecessarily high and un-natural burden on the teaching staff. One could argue that a structure like this has set the teachers up for the failure they report feeling. In fact, Sailor has been speaking of the importance of natural proportions since 1992 and Brown (1974) before him. It has been an empirically tested reality of inclusion that classrooms must follow the natural proportions guideline, and if it doesn't the effectiveness of inclusion will be comprised.

Additionally, this insulates the initiative to a few teachers and has not shown to push the evolution of school-wide structures, materials nor technology resources. Teachers report making their own materials or being mandated to use self-contained curricula for SWDs. Thus, the capacity for effective inclusion at Craft does not appear to be developing coherently across all dimensions, and as as Mattos (2011) found in his dissertation on capacity development, for teacher's human capacity to evolve and sustain, all dimensions of capacity must be developed coherently.

In 2000 Newman, King and Youngs found five elements needed to coherently develop capacity for reform initiatives. Important to note here from their work, that we also saw with leaders' perspectives at Craft, is that human capacity, the knowledge, skills and dispositions of individual teachers, is not sufficient alone to coherently build capacity for inclusion. A collaborative professional community; sustained focus on learning goals that integrate standards with instruction and assessment; enhancements to human and technical resources; and strong principal leadership to communicate the purpose and guiding vision of the school is also necessary to building and sustaining school capacity

for reform. Craft adds to this list by explicating the important role of the district and what can happen to school level reform efforts if district support, curriculum mandates and professional development offerings are not aligned with the initiative. Without perceived support from the district, Craft's capacity was challenged and changes are not showing to be coherent around one inclusionary purpose.

District support. As pointed out by Rorrer et. al (2008), the role of the district is often neglected in school reform initiatives. Their work served to explicate the critical role of the district in supporting school level work. Data at Craft also showed this importance by being an example of what happens to reform efforts when the district is not in alignment with, nor perceived as supportive of, the local school's efforts. This was indicated by the omnipresence of fear that the district may pull support at any time. Thus, the district was not perceived to be supportive of Craft's work towards inclusive education. First of all, frequent comments in interviews and informal conversations about unaligned initiatives, such as response to intervention (RtI) operating as a special education referral process and not for problem solving around SWDs needs were shared. Additionally, unaligned initiatives existed with the district's perceived commitment to both (1) a segregated model of special education and (2) cluster school placements versus neighborhood placements. Each of these district initiatives impacts the work of teachers and staff at Craft. Further, with the national and state level push to focus on high-stakes accountability measures and student testing, teachers regularly expressed feeling the pressure of raising tests scores for all students in their class, regardless of the service delivery model used.

One exception to this mal-alignment with district policy was the new teacher evaluation process. While it was evident that the evaluation process brought great stress to the teachers, the criteria to be a successful teacher under the evaluation rubric lent itself to teachers increasing their differentiation and inclusive education skills. However, many teacher leaders did share that evaluation paired with merit pay and job security had the potential to impact teacher's openness to embrace and support inclusive education. The importance of district support was found by Rorrer et. al (2008) and Byrk (2010) in their case study research, and is replicated here with Craft.

Looking at Craft, it was clear from the interviews and meeting minutes that there was not a system-wide focus on inclusion. In fact, more than one teacher reported feeling isolated within the district and that Craft "is an island". Kozleski (2009) wrote about the importance for inclusion to be system wide in order for it to be a sustainable initiative. Therefore, Craft being an island that is in conflict with district initiatives may have sustainability consequences. The continued mandate, real or perceived, to use separate science, math, reading and social studies curricula for students who are on access points is an example of a conflict between inclusion at Craft and the school system's broader focus on self-contained special education service delivery models. These curriculums are designed for self-contained, multi-age classrooms where the students do not have interactions with general education curricula. The requirement for special education teachers to use this curriculum at Craft has created a tension between general education access and separate segregated special education models, one that teachers are left to figure out on their own.

Principal leadership. Principal leadership has long shown to be critical to the culture and effectiveness of schools (Dimmock, 2011). Leaders serve to set visions, create buy-in for the changes and distribute their leadership, all of which have shown to lead to increased sustainability of reforms (Leithwood & Day, 2007). Leaders at Craft report being ready to seriously analyze and examine the teaching practices of their staff. Some ways in which they planned to begin this analysis was to develop, administer and examine needs assessment data and use teacher evaluation data to inform them of teacher learning needs. However, structures to accomplish this task must still be developed. Which makes me wonder what administrators' current capacity to carry out the function of data driven teacher learning for all students is, indicating again, that capacity development at Craft is an ever-evolving process. A staff that was proud of their historic successes with SWDs under a self-contained model does not easily transform their practices. But, McLeskey and Waldon (2002) remind us, teachers must be ready to embrace significant changes in their instructional practices for reform efforts to be effective and sustainable. Therefore, it is important to take away from Craft the lesson that capacity development must continue past the initial years of implementation, and that one leadership role is to continue to evolve themselves in how they structure support for teachers' learning and development.

Conclusion

The administrative leaders, defined as the traditional principal and vice-principal team and teacher leaders at Craft, as well as the district, may not lead currently with a vision to develop all four capacities around the tenants of effective/system-wide inclusive education. Indicators of this was the reported need to develop (1) structural capacities for

scheduling, (2) aligned material, curriculum and technology based resources, and (3) evolved structures for supporting and developing their current human resources- the teaching staff. On the other hand, the strategic hiring and the creative use of current human resources in a strategically flexible and adaptable way is one way that leaders and staff show evidence of evolving in their own capacities. Advocacy for district support in the way of continued staff allocations and professional development around inclusive education instructional strategy development with side-by-side support might in fact occur, but needs more development into a systemic structure of continued support for teachers.

In terms of Craft's organizational capacities, the impact of not including the entire staff in the collaborative inclusive culture was evident as a divisive factor for the staff. All does not mean all and the limiting impact of that on the school's overall inclusive education capacity is important to note. Teachers' own capacity (termed human capacity by Century, 1999) to significantly change their instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners evolved, but continues to be challenged by special education teachers identifying with traditional roles of one-on-one and small groups methods, and how both groups of teachers reported struggling with how to design lessons that meet the needs of students with more significant disabilities.

The following findings about school capacity were found:

1. Natural proportions criterion must be a goal of inclusive education and drive student placement policies.
2. Related, structures must be in place that allow for the eventual involvement of all classrooms in inclusion. Volunteerism doesn't work.

3. Structures that allow for both ad-hoc peer learning and systematic, data driven problem solving for teacher learning need to be in place.
4. Structures that proactively and purposefully provide a means for teachers to develop skills for how to design lessons that are universally designed to meet individual student needs inclusively are needed.
5. General education teachers seemed better able to shift their roles as teachers than were the special education teachers. However, more examination into the impact on special educator's role shift is needed to fully understand this phenomenon.
6. Districts must align support, resource allocations and professional development with inclusive initiatives and school site needs.

To begin this chapter I summarized RQ1's and RQ2's major findings. Following this summary, a discussion of the findings related to each dimension of the proposed capacity framework was presented. The final section of the chapter offered a discussion of the perceived role of district support and principal leadership compared to the literature. In the next chapter the major findings, conclusions and implications for research and practice will be presented.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Implications

Craft and Capacity: Pulling Back to the Norm

Results from nearly four years of data at Craft indicate the importance of applying a school capacity framework for examining a school's inclusive education reform. The focused Yin (2009) case study design allowed a deep examination of Craft's inclusive education reform using the proposed school capacity framework developed from extant school capacity literature. In the previous chapter I applied the major findings from RQ1 and RQ2 to each of the four capacities within the larger school capacity framework: staff's human capacity (individual staff members' knowledge, skills and dispositions); technical, material and human resource capacity; structural capacity; and organizational culture capacity. Within each dimension I discussed what we can take away from Craft to help us understand, extend, or refine the framework. I then discussed the importance of alignment with the broader district context and principal leadership to tie capacities together into one integrated whole. These findings from Craft teach us about the importance of systemically building a school's capacity by developing human, resource, structural and organizational capacity while partnering with the district, pushing it to align with school based efforts, and not work in opposition to it.

Major Conclusions

The biggest lesson that was learned through Craft's experience with inclusion is that without supported alignment from the district, the school's practices are pulled back

to the norm, which is set by the broader district socio-political context. The political tension between school site's inclusion efforts and the district's continued commitment to segregated service delivery for SWDs was alive and real, and was felt in all dimensions of capacity development at Craft. From a mandate to use alternative curricula for SWDs to the district's professional development courses offered for separate groups of teachers, the district politics and policies continued to set the norm of segregated education practice at Craft.

Summary of Major Conclusions:

1. Non-negotiable missing: The operational and philosophical definition of inclusive service delivery at Craft is evolving, but still unknown. There was no shared vision of what education of SWDs should look like for staff, an element of systems change for inclusion found to be of critical importance by Ryndak and colleagues (Ryndak et al., 2007). Thus, there is no non-negotiable at Craft when it comes to how to educate students, as is recommended by Caper and Frattura (2009). It was evident from all staff members that what special education looks like at Craft is still evolving and the journey of reform continues for staff. What looked like 100% general education placement, 100% of the time, for 100% of the students in the first two years of implementation looks different now and how it looks changes daily, differing from teacher to teacher. Thus, Craft is still evolving in how they define as inclusion of SWDs and we learn from them that leaders must develop some non-negotiable ways of practice within the vision for the school. Without it staff are lost for direction and go back to what is comfortable, in this case, segregated education for SWDs

2. Limits to human capacity when organizational capacity development is not system-wide: It was evident from the interviews that special education teachers, specifically, were missing the knowledge and technical skills necessary to educate students with more significant disabilities within general education. The special education teachers never really learned how to include students with more significant needs. This seemed to be an outcome of not having a systemic capacity development plan across the school and district. The singular focus on ad hoc professional development lacked purposeful and systematic teacher learning in identified areas of needs. One outcome of this focus was that special education teachers never developed the technical skills to educate students with significant disabilities and had no where to go to learn these skills. The knowledge and technical skills needed to feel effective was missing from the staff as a whole, therefore, learning from each other, as the sole means to gain knowledge and skills did not provide staff at Craft with access to many inclusive education strategies and skills. For example, the use of same age peers as an instructional strategy and the use of assistive technology was missing from the teachers' own reflections. As Mattos (2011) found, it is critical to have an organizational culture that supports the development of teacher's human capacity for the reform to be effective, the same is shown here by not having an overall culture that fostered learning inclusive education skills and strategies. Shifting dispositions of some general education teachers was not enough. The belief systems and values of all teachers and the skills that may follow, did not evolve far enough for teachers to significantly change how they taught, as McLeskey and Waldron (2002)

expressed was critical to effective inclusive education reform. It is unknown if this is because they did not gain the knowledge of these two strategies or not, but when prompted not one special education teacher spoke of these two commonly asserted elements of inclusive teaching practices. However, it was evident that when working to make an organizational shift in practice, professional development must be systematic, strategic and involved side by side coaching, as has been recommended in the professional development literature for years (see for example Joyce & Showers, 1982).

3. Importance of evolving structures to include a professional learning structure:

Related to the above conclusion is the conclusion that as a collective group, staff did not know enough about inclusive education practices to be able to know what they needed to know. Therefore, learning as you go as the dominant teacher-learning model turned into a crisis driven model. The professional development plan in place was for staff to figure out what their own learning needs were as they moved through the implementation of inclusion. However, this was able to take Craft staff only so far. In essence, they hit a glass ceiling based upon their own collective and individual limitations with inclusive education knowledge and technical skills. We learned here that schools must develop structures to allow for teacher learning.

4. Effect of broader district political tensions: Last, Craft's inclusion initiative

remained insulated and the powerful district norm served to pull Craft back towards traditional segregated and pull-out education for SWDs. The norm at Craft never shifted to one that was defined by an inclusive service delivery model

for all students and all staff, which past research teaches us that an overall collaborative culture to be one of many important elements for effective inclusion (Ainscow, 2005; Ryndak et al., 1999-2000). By insulating the inclusion model to a small percentage of general educators and not being in line with the district's larger service delivery model and accompanying structures (curricula, professional development offerings, staffing, response to intervention model, etc...) Craft special education and general education inclusive teachers' felt pulled back towards traditional pull-out education for SWDs.

By analyzing inclusion through the proposed school capacity framework presented in Chapter 2, I was able to examine each dimension of capacity within Craft's move to inclusive education. At year four of implementation, the staff reported being frustrated, and the air you felt when walking the halls was different than the first two years of implementation. This is in line with Elmore's (1992) earlier findings the staff will feel frustration and burn out if significant changes to instruction was not realized, but extends these findings to explicate that schools cannot take on this charge alone. As Rorrer et al. (2008) found the district plays a critical role, results here show the impact of district support on school reform efforts. With the omnipresent political tension between the district's maintenance of segregated service delivery for SWDs and Craft's commitment to inclusion the hope and eagerness dissipated from the leaders' voices at Craft, and in its place were words of frustration and questioning if inclusion was the right path, at least maybe not for all students. Their own capability to effectively include all students was reported to be taking a toll on them. The district seemed to be dismantling the innovation by taking away the driving change force, the past school principal, and

replacing her with a leader that had no inclusive education experience. And, while the new principal who started spring of 2012 was quiet and thoughtful, reporting that he was determined to support staff, staff perceived him to not yet act in a way that directly supported inclusion. Instead, he was perceived to be silent on inclusion, and more focused on teacher evaluation. This pulling of the core leadership for inclusion is but one example of how the district did not work to support inclusion. Thus, while the literature speaks to the importance of district support in schools (Rorrer et. al, 208 & Bryk, 2010), it does not connect this literature directly to what we know about school capacity for change, as Craft explicates for us.

Therefore, what Craft's experience teaches us is the importance of linking and integrating both district support and the multi-dimensions of capacity. Thus, the theory is more about organizational change than school capacity alone. We must move forward in our understanding of what an educational organization needs to shift practices from segregated to inclusive education. As theorized, Craft's experience now becomes the link between two bodies of literature: (1) the work around the district's role in reform (Bryk, 2010; Rorrer et al., 2008) and (2) Century's (1999), Newman, King and Youngs' (2000), amongst others who have built up the knowledge base on school capacity, work showing a need to focus on human, material, structural and organizational evolution. These two lines of thinking, while related theoretically in the propositions offered in Chapter 2, now are shown to directly linked in practice with Craft. At Craft, while local efforts existed to develop teaching skills, organizational culture, problem solving structures and materials, without the district providing the support simultaneously, they were unable to shift the norm of practice. Of course, it is not that simple, as Craft was lacking development of

some critical problem solving structures and a whole school focus; however, by being in situated within a district whose context supports and expects students to be segregated, the leaders at Craft were never pushed to consider whole school inclusion. The actually seemed to have made it be perceived as absurd to expect all teachers to teach SWDs inclusively.

Therefore, without the district also expecting inclusion to be the way of work, the school's efforts for inclusion stayed at the margins of practice. Truthfully, it became evident that the district seemed to expect Craft to fail at inclusion, in some regards anyway, and some may argue they sabotaged local efforts, even if unintentionally, by clustering far too many students with significant needs at Craft, not taking the inclusive education learning needs of the teachers in account when planning training, and by staying silent on requests to offer more inclusive education school sites in order to relieve Craft of some students. This unintended sabotaging teaches us a lot about how to link school efforts and district efforts to engage in sustainable organizational change. The reality is that teachers teach in a broader political context that is set and maintained by a district, especially in a large urban metropolis as is the case with Craft. Therefore, this must be purposefully addressed throughout reform initiatives, suggesting that one role of teacher and administrative leadership is district politicking. As Fullan (1985) has been writing about since the mid-1980's, Craft's experience reminds us of the importance of the district in school reform. However, it extends this district work by teaching us the critical role that local school leaders must play in finding a way to break into the larger political sphere set by the district, compelling those at the district to work with and

impact the evolution of district (and maybe even state) policy, practice, material development and adoptions, and allocations.

For example, a lack of material and fiscal allocation evolution was evident at the district level, and this, as was well documented as a potential outcome by Newman, King and Youngs (2000), stagnated the reform efforts. Teacher and administrative leaders at the school site advocated for more material resources: more teachers, more support staff, more curriculum materials, and increased time for planning. However, as we have learned from the extant research on successful school reform, the sole reliance on material capacity is not likely to lead schools to long-term and sustained student learning gains and further, the focus must be on evolving the materials and fiscal supports to the initiative, which was not the case at Craft, nor with the district (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000). Thus, we learn with Craft that materials must align and evolve with inclusion, and staffing allocations must be based upon individual student needs, not merely enrollment numbers, as was the case here.

Yet another example of a structure that stagnated reform efforts was the local commitment to volunteerism as a way for engaging teaching in inclusive education at Craft. The practice of allowing staff to volunteer to be a part of inclusion is not effective. As Sailor (2008-2009), Kozleski (2009) and many others before them (Burrello et al., 2001 and Ryndak et al., 1999-2000 for instance) have documented, inclusion must be system wide to be effective at changing the overall organizational culture. We see this clearly at Craft. Not only was inclusion not system side across the district, as explained above, it was not system-wide at the school level either. Therefore, the development of human capacity was destined to stagnate. We learn from Craft that volunteerism does not

work as a way to shift teachers' practices when moving to inclusion. As a service delivery model for SWDs, and arguably all students, inclusion must be extended to the entire school staff, not just teacher volunteers, in order to effectively and sustainably shift the norm of practice.

Thus, changing the instructional culture and norm to match the inclusive education innovation requires a coherent capacity development plan that builds the whole school's organizational, structural, material and human capacities of all staff, not just two or three volunteers per grade level. In order to authentically improve the human capacity of teachers (their knowledge, skills and dispositions) to substantially change their practices in benefit of all children, the school and district structures and supports must align, all augmenting an inclusive education philosophy. As we learned from Century (1999), Fullan (2011), and Rorrer et al. (2008), and see indicators of replication with Craft, there is a need for a leadership that coherently builds capacity system-wide that weaves together all four dimensions of capacity. Additionally, district support must align itself with inclusion in order to push the norm of practice; shifting inclusionary practices, materials, structures and organizational culture from being an exception to being the normal way of business for all teachers. As Elmore (1992) said almost a decade ago, if you do not change the instructional practices of teachers, reform efforts will not produce the desired results- increased student outcomes.

Refined School Capacity Framework

Given what we learned with Craft about the critical role the district plays in aligning the capacities and either pulling the ways of work back to the original norm if not aligned with the school site, or re-defining what normal is for SWDs, I propose a

refinement to the original school capacity framework. *Figure 5.1* shows the original framework proposed from Chapter 2.

School Capacity: Principal leadership (Newman, King and Youngs, 2000) and district support (Bryk, 2010; Honig & Copland, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008) are driving forces behind systemic program coherence, a critical factor for school capacity building.

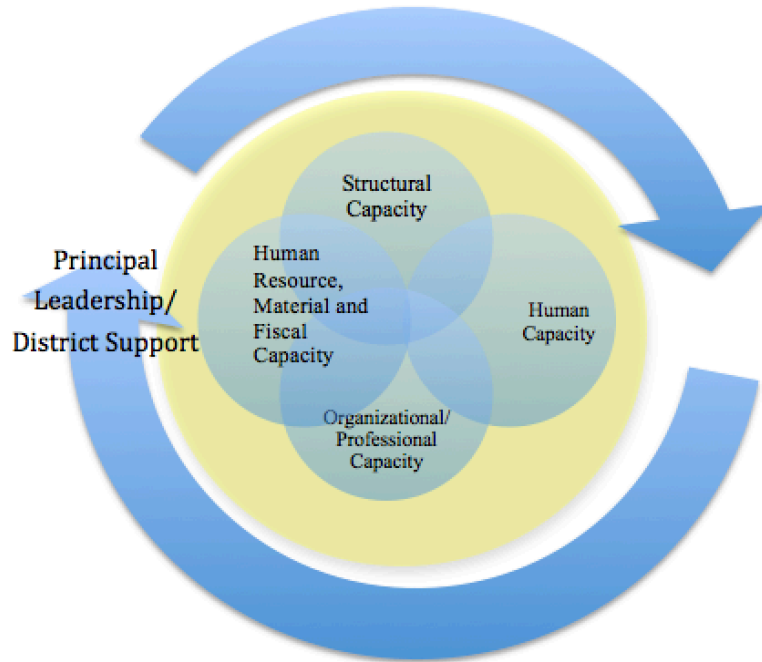


Figure 5.1. A proposed framework for understanding the interrelated dimensions of school capacity (on the basis of Spillane and Thompson, 1997; Cetry, 1999; Newman, King, and Youngs, 2000; Rorrer et al., 2008; and Mattos, 2011).

Within this framework school capacity theory suggests that all four dimensions must be aligned and that district and principal leadership play the role of moving of them together into one coherent system; the more aligned the district is to the school site's efforts at inclusion the more inter-related and successful inclusion would be. However, this original model does not address movement towards a new norm. It is a stationary model with overlapping pieces.

The refined framework, offered in *Figure 5.1*, takes into account this gravitational pull to the norm the district has shown to have at Craft when not in alignment with the school site's inclusion efforts. It also takes into account the theoretical forward momentum that district and leadership could provide when in alignment with the developing capacities at the school site. This is depicted by gears, versus a VENN diagram, to show how when the district's force is in tension with the school's efforts the two forces, school leadership and district support, are in opposition. These opposing forces have the effect of making the individual gears spin against one another; causing friction and burnout, and eventually pushing practices back to the original way of doing things as the system works to realign itself with the greater force, the district. Alternatively, as *Figure 5.2* shows, if the district support is aligned with school site leadership and innovation efforts, the forces move the gears of capacity together in a tight and beautifully engineered advanced gear system.

This figure shows how the system, when all capacity dimensions are aligned with the district's and the school site's efforts as theorized, serve to simultaneously increase all dimensions of capacity individually and move the entire system's way of work; which, in theory, will begin to re-define the norm for the larger system. This system level movement will begin the forward movement necessary to break through the insulated district socio-political system that drives practice because the system norm would be shifting. As the theory goes, without alignment simultaneous movement, the system will remain insulated and sustainable norm shift would be unlikely to occur.

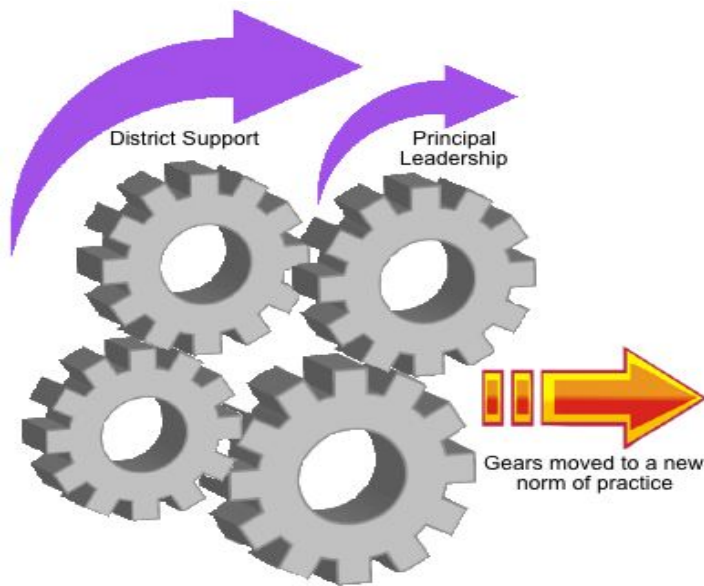


Figure 5.2. Refined school capacity framework. Each gear representing each of the four interrelated dimensions of capacity: structural, fiscal resources, human, and organizational culture.

Theoretically speaking, Craft has taught us that without the system and school evolving together, the larger system works against school level forward movement, engulfing school efforts and pulling local efforts back into its force, leaving those in its wake burned out- just as the friction of the gears will eventually start fire if not aligned properly with supportive force, the staff too will burn out from the frustration and fatigue of constantly working against a system whose student enrollment practices, material and technology based offerings, trainings, curricula and belief systems are set up for segregated service delivery, which is in direct opposition to inclusive practices.

Therefore, what this study adds to the extant literature is to show how the two bodies of literature (school capacity and district role in reform) are inexplicably linked in practice. When school's move to shift from one way of educating SWDs to another,

efforts must be aligned with district evolutions or burn out will occur. While we've known for quite some time about the importance of the district in reform and the multiple dimensions of capacity that must be developed, we haven't seen the how the two elements work simultaneously to support or stagnate local efforts. Further, the extant literature had yet to apply such a framework to inclusive education. In essence, inclusion was excluded from the educational leadership discussion on reform efforts and it was critical to bring the knowledge of decades of research to the field of special education, as that field works to address more than forty years of research on why inclusion is important, but struggles with how to scale it up. This work, thus, helps special educators frame scale up initiatives for inclusion. By learning that inclusion efforts, while important to start with local school and student needs, must be systemically working to evolve both the district's structures for professional development, material allocation and development, professional culture. Without simultaneous pressure on the system from district and local school leaders to evolve, the organization will fail to change, and most likely, all will feel the burn out of yet another failed reform.

Implications

Within Chapter 5 I offered an in-depth look into each of the capacities and what we learned from Craft in terms of the importance of weaving and developing all four dimensions. The main finding, shared above, is that for an educational innovation, inclusion in this case, to sustain past a few years through major policy and administrative changes, you have to shift the norm of the entire system, not just the school staff involved in the innovation.

The question that this study begins to answer is how might a school shift the norm. What Craft has helped us see is that you have to simultaneously, as implementation is occurring and not prior to implementation, develop all capacities from the bottom up (from and with the teacher leaders on site) and from the top down (from and with the district). It is powerful to see the effect of a district that operates differently than, and almost in opposition to, what the school based innovation of inclusion demands on teachers and staff. At Craft, we seem to see that when the school and district are not on the same path, those who seek to make change, the leaders in this case are somewhat out of luck to dramatically shift their own practices to a point where they feel effective to include all SWDs in age appropriate general education classrooms. Without alignment with the district's initiatives and structures, local implementers will push that norm as far as they can, but will be pulled back. Craft's teacher leaders helped us see this with the effect of district curriculum mandates that were separate for different groups of kids. These teacher leaders, even with the evolution of their co-teaching, planning and cooperative group teaching methods, in year four of implementation could not find a way to teach all students in one room when one group was expected to be working on alternate curricula for all core subjects. They were still missing the necessary knowledge and technical skills to effectively implement inclusive education for students with more significant disabilities. Additionally, the leaders' capacities were challenged by a conflicting material norm that pulled their teaching methods back to the old way of business: segregated pull-out teaching models for SWDs. This indicates that staff can only go so far with their own teaching skills before the district's gravitational pull to the old norm catches the small groups of teacher's working to evolve in it's force.

It is not enough at Craft to develop only the inclusion family's human capacity; their dispositions towards SWDs, their instructional practices and their knowledge base. The structures within the school that teachers operate within and under (scheduling policies, student placement, RtI process, district teacher evaluations, etc...) and the organizational culture (collaboration vs. competition, trust, inquiry based teaching, etc...) served as critical to the school's growth, and at times a hindrance to the teacher's own ability to feel effective. This may be part of why teachers were beginning to use more and more pull out, reminiscent of the days prior to inclusion at Craft, and would be an interesting longitudinal line of inquiry with Craft or a similarly situated school.

What's important to think about is that systemic change requires not only school based leadership for increased capacity, but also district alignment with the new way of work that comes with inclusion. Leaders must work to develop and continuously support a school's available resources (human, technical, curricular and material). Human, material and technology based resources must be strategically purchased and utilized to support inclusive education. They must also be taken care of along the way. School structures must be developed that offer a platform for both ad-hoc learning via professional collaboration and more formalized consulting around continued needs. The organizational culture of the school must be developed that clearly and consistently communicates a shared vision around inclusive education and collegial trust and collaboration not competition within the school and the broader communities.

Practice. Teachers need a context to teach in where all parts of the system are working together to continue supporting their learning over time. Increasing educators' access to models of inclusive education is an important implication. This should be in the

form of access to each other at the school site and with outside agencies and districts, utilizing people and sites that are seen as inclusion leaders. Craft teachers never were given the opportunity to see other teachers with similar students doing what they envisioned. Their technical skills failed to develop and certainly were hindered by the lack of natural proportion of the student placements.

Teachers' ad-hoc training was shown to be extremely helpful for staff at Craft. Therefore, structures that support and expect teachers to observe one another based upon their own needs and their peers' strengths, pairing teachers purposefully to grow teaching capacity needs to be purposefully developed. Additionally, school structures must be developed that facilitate and support inclusive education. A model such as Gravois's (2013) consultant teams should be considered.

The development and use of a staff needs assessment to guide administration in what teachers need to feel effective is important. This could be as easy as sending out a monthly electronic survey that probes staff to share what material and training needs they have. Data could also be garnered from problem solving meetings; analyzing where areas of teacher need may lie and planning professional development opportunities appropriately. One such area that is critical to address is teacher's access to side-by-side modeling of inclusionary practices. Therefore, finding ways to send teachers into other classrooms and schools to conduct meaningful field observations, allowing them to make professional connections for learning is important, as is bringing this expertise to the classroom via side by side modeling.

Policy. Policies need to be developed that incorporate resource, human, structural and organizational capacity building. In addition, educational leaders must begin

considering how they might work with policy makers at the district level to define policy implementation that is in line and augments inclusion efforts, such as how the teacher evaluation process at Craft was perceived to help teachers develop more skills with personalized learning that benefitted all students. Leaders can begin discussions with their own peers and with district leaders around how to match district policies to their own practice and make them fit into an inclusive education framework. This puts teacher leaders in a role of active policy agents. While they may not be able to change curricula overnight, they or can be active agents in defining how curriculum is utilized.

At the school level, policies need to be developed that address capacity building system wide. Inclusion must be spread beyond one or two classrooms per grade level. How this is done can and must be specific to each school site, however, inclusion must be a whole school initiative. In addition, structures and policies for continued teacher learning must be developed that continues individuals' professional learning past the first few years of implementation.

Last, the district must be in personal connection with the local school sites and evolve policies to be flexible enough for local schools to align them with their own efforts of educating SWDs. Learning what is needed to support teachers by spending time with them at the school is needed. Additionally, reframing policies as necessary to ensure none work to maintain the use of structures and materials that continue to serve as gateways to seclusion for SWDs must occur systematically. Curricula need to be developed that are flexible and universal enough to allow for the personalization necessary to meet the needs of all learners within general education and other natural contexts. This includes the opportunity for staff to embed functional skills into the

general education curriculum. Gone must be the days where separate curricula are developed and used for specific groups of SWDs.

Research. Multiple case studies of schools and districts that are at various places in their inclusion journey is an important implication for research. Examining more closely the impact on teacher role shifts with inclusive education will be important. This work only skimmed the surface of what happens to special education teachers as they are expected to move into a different capacity when teaching in an inclusive context, therefore more focused work in this area is needed. Additionally, longitudinal studies that look in depth into each dimensions of capacity and how they're related to student outcomes is needed in order to continue understanding the school capacity framework developed above. Such longitudinal examinations of the effects of these structures within the school and district that teachers operate within (scheduling policies, student placement, RtI process, district teacher evaluations, etc...) upon teachers' own inclusive education capacity is needed. Overall, it would be important for researchers to continue examining what elements are important to include in professional development plans for teacher and administrative leaders that address all the dimensions of capacity development. This line of inquiry would cut across teacher education and educational leadership, and therefore inter-disciplinary work would be another important implication for institutes of higher education to consider.

Finally, there is a need to build and further refine the proposed school capacity framework in *Figure 5.2* for future leaders and educational scholars to base their work off. This focused school capacity work can serve as a guide for inclusive education school capacity building, adding to both the fields of inclusive education and educational

leadership. And, while extending the school capacity literature to inclusive education initiatives warrants further research, schools will have an increased foundation by which to work towards effective education for all students. Often seen as an uni-dimensional initiative, only focusing on material resources (increasing teaching staff) or human capacity (professional development of teachers), this work offered a perspective for leaders to consider how they might focus their efforts across multiple dimensions or factors when trying to organize a school inclusively to educate all students.

The following research questions, among others, emerge from this study:

1. What is the effect of staff and/or school site volunteerism on inclusion reform efforts?
2. What does the refined framework teach us about school turn around reform efforts such as individual charter school movements?
3. What are individual elements that need to be developed in each of the four dimensions of capacity at both the school and district level?
4. What is the effect of political tensions and policy making at the district and state level on local school inclusion efforts, and how do leaders navigate and influence these political bodies?
5. What professional development structures are needed in inclusive education reform?
6. What material and resource allocations support local inclusion efforts?
7. What types of structures at the school and district levels exist that have been shown to facilitate or impeded inclusion, especially ones that address the issue of how to educate students across classrooms, without placing

them in classes beyond a natural proportion, that allow for effectively delivery specialized education to those with more significant disabilities?

Case Study Conclusions

In conclusion then, Craft's staff's individual human capacities and the school structures and organizational culture have evolved. This was perceived to occur predominately through ad-hoc learning together, driven by the needs of students. However, they are still on the road, building it as they go. It is a journey with a destination, but no a-priori map to guide the way and check off as they go. It is not over. It may never be. As we learned from Craft's experience with inclusive education capacity development, local schools are situated within a broader national and district context that changes and impacts school leaders' work. Learning is embedded within this broader context as a life long process. Therefore, educators must be willing to embrace constant learning and evolving, aligned around a common vision and goal when moving forward so that they may move together with enough force to shift the norm, and not spin their wheels towards burn out. Divergent and creative thinking within this alignment continues to be important; it brings new ideas and space for growth. However, eventually these creative divergences must align under one common system or forward movement toward more equitably and effectively educating all students together.

Limitations

No study is without limitations and it is important to be upfront and aware of a design's limitations on the onset of the work (Patton, 2002). Because of the nature of a single case design, whose purpose is to create a thick contextual description of a critical case phenomenon in one setting (YIN, 2009) with the goal of generalizing to theory

(Hocutt & Fowler, 2009; Yin, 2009) this study's generalizability to a broader sample and population of schools and teachers was limited (Patton, 2002). Thick description assists readers in the ability to make their own informed decisions to the helpfulness and applicability of this study to their own research and practice (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2010). Further, it is important in single case study research to use purposeful sampling in attempts to capture the wide array of perspectives within the context of the phenomenon and case being studied (Yin, 2009). In this design only teachers and leaders were included, thus the entire array of perspectives of the broader school community such as parents, students, community members and district personnel, were not represented.

Delimitations

In addition to limitations, a study is delimited by the boundaries of the case (Merriam, 2009). In this single case embedded study design, the case was defined as one school and the teachers within. Thus, this case study was delimited by the bounds of the school and its surrounding geographical and socio/political contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Case Study Protocol

(1) The research questions:

1. How do school leaders perceive their own capacity in initiating and implementing inclusive education reform?
2. How do school leaders perceive the school's capacity to include all students in age-appropriate general education classrooms?
3. How do the school leaders' perceptions of their own and the school's capacity to improve and implement inclusive practice align with the school capacity literature?

(2) Study Propositions:

- School capacity is multi-dimensional- each of the following dimensions must be coherently interwoven and developed around a common purpose.
- Human capacity must be developed:
 - All staff and all students are included in the inclusive education school policies and practices
 - Substantial changes in instructional practices are evident.
- Structural capacity must be developed:
 - Data driven instructional improvement structures are in place to help teachers meet the needs of all students and the teachers' goal is to teach it right the first time, without relying on interventions
 - Substantial changes in school structures are evident.
- Technical, material, and human resource Capacity must be developed:
 - Strategic hiring and allocation/use of resources is used to support the inclusive education vision and mission
 - Instructional technology and appropriate materials and instructional resources need to be in place daily.
- Organizational Capacity must be developed:
 - Age appropriate general education class placement for all SWDs is led primarily by general education utilizing natural proportions
 - The working nature of the school consists of a collaborative culture among all staff members
- Principal leadership and district support are key driving forces for school capacity coherence.
 - There is a system/school wide focus

(3) Procedures for data collection and data analysis:

Week	Phase	Procedure	Outcome
1	One	Site Visit Pilot Interview Pilot Observation Reflexive Journal	Reflexive Journal Audio Interview File Field Notes
2 & 3		Transcribe Interviews Concurrent Data Analysis Reflexive Journal Expert Debrief	Reflexive Journal 1 Transcription Pilot Analysis Report Expert Debrief Notes
4		Site Visit Interview Day 1 Observation Day 1 Member Check Reflexive Journal	Reflexive Journal 6-11 Audio Interview File Member Check Notes 2 Field Notes
5 & 6		Transcribe Interviews Concurrent Data Analysis 2 Reflexive Journals Expert Debrief	2 Reflexive Journals 1 Transcription Pilot Analysis Report Expert Debrief Notes
7	Two	Site Visit Interview Day 2 Observation Day 2 Member Check Reflexive Journal	Reflexive Journal 6-11 Audio Interview File Member Check Notes 2 Field Notes
8 & 9		Transcribe Interviews Concurrent Data Analysis Reflexive Journal	2 Reflexive Journals 6-11 Transcriptions DRAFT Analysis Report Expert Debrief Notes
10		E-mail member check Expert Debrief	DRAFT Final Report Final Analysis Report

(5) An outline of what to include in the final study report/dissertation.

1. Themes aligned with principal leadership
2. Themes aligned with district support:
3. Themes aligned with human/technical/material capacity:
4. Themes aligned with structural capacity:
5. Themes aligned with organizational capacity:
6. Themes aligned with human/ individual capacity
7. Implications and future recommendations

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Protocol

(Adapted from Mattos, 2011)

Date:

Participant Number:

Teaching Role:

“As I’m sure you remember, we’ve spent a great deal of time together over the last few years working to include SWD in general education. During my past few years I sought to support you all as much as I could and enjoyed being a part of the process. Today, however I am interested in something more specific in terms of the school’s and your own inclusive education capacities.”

1. First, tell me about your own experiences implementing inclusive education.
 - Presently-
 - In the Past-
2. What impact, if any, did the move to inclusion have on your teaching practices?
 - a. Did any change? If so please describe the change.
3. Were there any factors or conditions such as resources, people, materials, school policies and structures, etc... that contributed to your change in practice?
4. Were there any such factors that stood in the way of you changing your practices?
5. Would you say there is a change in your professional knowledge since implementing inclusion?
 - a. Describe some for me.
6. How would you describe your skills at implementing inclusive education practices?
7. What do you see happening differently at the school level?
 - a. Problem solving teams?
 - b. How you go about getting support for students who are struggling?
8. How do you feel the district supports, or stands in the way, of inclusion here?
9. Finally, is there anything you think I should know to understand how Craft, as a school and how you, as an individual ____ here, are learning to teaching SWD in the general education classroom?

Appendix C: Observation and Field Note Protocol

Date of Observation:

Description of people involved:

Description of Setting(s):

Notes re: principal leadership:
Notes re: district support:
Notes re: human/technical/material capacity:
Notes re: structural capacity:
Notes re: organizational capacity:
Notes re: human/ individual capacity:
Additional Notes:

Appendix D: Expanded Description of Researcher Role

In Chapter 3, I introduced my long-term relationship with Craft elementary, stating that a more detailed description of this role would be provided for in Appendix D. Here I will outline my annual activities for you.

Year 1: 2009-2010 Academic Year

- Meeting with my major professors to discuss my early research agenda I was taken on a tour of Craft elementary to observe their inclusive education practices.
- Attended a meeting with the district inclusion facilitators and Craft leadership team where staff presented their change process, including data analysis that showed an academic achievement gap, vision setting and staff buy-in processes used by administration.
- Beginning in spring of 2010, I started shadowing the district inclusion facilitator at Craft, working with individual co-teacher teams on skills and strategies to be effective co-teachers. These events also introduced me to the staff and began our relationship building. Often, these meetings focused on frustrations between co-teachers where the facilitator and I coached them on conflict resolution and how to use planning time to co-plan lessons and embed IEP goals.
- By the end of the 2010 school year I was meeting with staff once or twice a week on my own, continuing to support their needs with co-teaching, data collection and inclusive strategies. I worked across grade levels and focused my time with teaching teams that the school principal felt needed the most support. Often, these meetings took the form of informal observations with follow up conversations that addressed staff's frustration, allowing them time to both vent and brainstorm solutions. I continued to follow the lead of the principal and inclusion facilitator, who directed me to keep meetings informal and let the teachers guide what was discussed based upon their own perceived needs. Thus, this process was an informal way to build my rapport with staff at Craft.
- In addition to meeting with the teaching staff, I met about once a month with the principal and / or the assistant principal. These too, were informal, as I would stop by their office each day I was in the building to say hello, and if they had time, I would brief them on my work with the teachers and they would share their own needs and frustrations. This led to some specific training during the 2010-2011 school year.
- My major professor and I met with the district special education director and any staff she included to update the district about inclusion at Craft. During these meetings we shared teacher need and student outcome data from that indicated inclusion's success and local support needs. The director was new to the position and to inclusive education, so these meeting also became informal discussions about what inclusion is and why it is important for SWDs.
- I kept a field journal with detailed field notes for each day I spend at Craft and with the district special education administrator.

Year 2: 2010-2011 Academic Year

- During this academic year I continued my weekly meetings and school site visits with the teaching staff and the administrative team. I also communicated with the inclusion facilitators via phone and e-mail
- We continued meeting with the district special education director to discuss needs and success stories at Craft, bringing teacher need and student outcome data from the school. We also began discussion about the importance of extending inclusion in the district beyond Craft and were met with passive resistance by being heard, but observing no district level action to make a move happen in any other school.
- During the non-student days before school began, the inclusion facilitator and I co-led a co-teaching training for all general education and special education teachers who were part of inclusion. There were about twenty teachers present.
- Spring of 2011 I led an IEP training for general and special education inclusion teachers and speech pathologist's at Craft, focusing on how to write and implement inclusive education IEP's.
- Last, my major professors conducted interviews with inclusion co-teachers during the spring of this year and I kept a field journal with detailed field notes for each day I spend at Craft and with the district special education administrator.
- Summer of 2011 I completed an eight week internship with the direction of special education in the district, attending curriculum meetings and teacher evaluation trainings, among other district level shadowing activities.

Year 3: 2011-2012 Academic Year

- Again, I continued my weekly meetings and school site visits with the teaching staff and the administrative team. I also communicated with the inclusion facilitators via phone and e-mail
- We also continued meeting with the district special education director to discuss needs and success at Craft, continuing to bring data from the school that indicated inclusion's success and needs at Craft, and continued discussions about the importance of extending inclusion in the district beyond Craft.
- My time this year focused on a small mini-case study that the staff and I presented at an international inclusive education conference. This study documented the impact of inclusion on the life of one young girl with autism who was in a self-contained class prior to being in inclusion at Craft. A team of two teachers, the parent and school principal led the study with me. Together we shared the story of academic, communicative and social gains as well as the process used by the teachers to include this young girl. As a team, we met about twice a month until we presented in November. The administrators won an award, which I nominated them for, for their inclusive education work at Craft.
- During the spring semester I led a series of positive behavior management seminars. One series was for the teaching staff and one was for parents. Both were well attended by all the inclusion general education and special education

teachers, as well as four teachers that were not part of inclusion. The ideas were well received and evidence of the strategies being implemented immediately in all the classrooms was observed throughout my time at Craft.

- Spring of 2012 I began weaving in my dissertation ideas with staff at Craft during our informal conversations and talked a lot with them about how my time would be coming to an end during the next academic year. They all spoke about being sad to have me leave, but excited for my next step.
- During this academic year, I moved across the country, decreasing my time with Craft. This began the slow transition from teacher coach to dissertation researcher as my time with them went from meeting weekly to monthly. I no longer was able to be with staff once or twice a week, but did fly in once a month for coursework so was able to continue coming to Craft to meeting with teachers once a month.
- In the fall of 2012 my major professors and I, along with Craft's administrative team, hosted a meeting and site visit at Craft for a school board member and the director of special education, who visited Craft for the first time, to see inclusion first hand.
- Last, my major professor conducted interviews with inclusion co-teachers during the spring of this year and I kept a field journal with detailed field notes for each day I spend at Craft and with the district special education administrator.

Year 4: 2012-2013 Academic Year

- This year I conducted my dissertation interview case study, therefore spent two whole days with the staff for the sole purpose of interviewing participants and conducting informal observations for the study reported in this manuscript.

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter



DIVISION OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
 Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
 12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-7999
 (813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-5618

January 03, 2012

Amy Toson, M.S.
 Special Education, EDU 408B
 4202 E. Fowler Avenue
 Tampa, FL 33626

RE: **Expedited Approval** for Initial Review
 IRB#: Pro00004824
 Title: Claywell Elementary Case Study Phase 2

Dear Ms. Toson:

On 1/2/2012 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above referenced protocol. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on 1/2/2013.

Approved Items:

Protocol Document(s):

[4824 Phase 2 REVISED protocol](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s):

[4824 phase 2 adult consent.doc.pdf](#)

[4824 Phase 2 REVISED Parent Consent for Minor.doc.pdf](#)

Please use only the official, IRB- stamped consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachment Tab" in the recruitment of participants. Please note that these documents are only valid during the approval period indicated on the stamped document.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review categories:

- (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to,

research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John A. Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board