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The Leadership Role in Transitioning an Urban Secondary School from a Traditional Service Delivery Model to a Co-Teaching Service Delivery Model for Students with Disabilities: A Phenomenological Case Study

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The Leadership Role in Transitioning an Urban Secondary School from a Traditional Service
Delivery Model to a Co-Teaching Service Delivery Model for Students with Disabilities: A
Phenomenological Case Study

THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN TRANSITIONING AN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOL
FROM A TRADITIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL TO A CO-TEACHING SERVICE
DELIVERY MODEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
CASE STUDY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the leadership role in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. While there is an abundant amount of information on the service delivery model of co-teaching, sustaining co-teaching programs, and effective co-teaching programs for students with disabilities, the actual studies for the leadership role in transitioning to co-teaching are fewer. This phenomenological case study explores the leadership role in effectively transitioning an urban high school from a traditional service delivery of special education services to a larger continuum of services, specifically co-teaching for students with disabilities. Participants included secondary general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators for interviews with semi-structured questions. An open-response questionnaire was distributed to senior students in a co-teaching course. The interpretation and analysis of the findings include the discussion of the complexity of the leadership role and the barriers or obstacles that exist as a transition occurs to a co-teaching model of service delivery model for students with disabilities in a secondary school.

The obstacles or barriers that emerge from such a transition can derail the attempt to implement co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. The findings of this phenomenological case study offer school leaders an informative roadmap by which to navigate through these potential obstacles or barriers. These findings are an addition to the available literature and contribute by informing educators of the experiences of school personnel and students as this urban secondary school transitioned to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. These experiences and findings should be extrapolated to support other educators as they begin to make this transition.

This dissertation is approved for recommendation
to the graduate council.

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DISSERTATION DUPLICATION RELEASE

I hereby authorize the University of Arkansas Libraries to duplicate this dissertation when needed for research and/or scholarship.

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Ginni E. McDonald

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Ginni E. McDonald

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As I reflect on the road traveled and the people whom I met along the way, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of those who supported and encouraged me as I worked toward completing this goal. Without them, the journey may not have been as smooth.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband and daughter:

To my husband Joe, for your love, encouragement, and support you have given so willingly to me, believing in me, even when I thought the end seemed to far. When we started our college dreams so long ago, we thought if we could only finish in a few years we would be set. Thank you for supporting and allowing me to follow my dreams, even as they grew and expanded. To my daughter Kirstie, thank you for your smiles, laughs, and continuous encouragement. I hope that you will follow your dreams, believe in yourself, and remember you can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

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To Jodee, for questioning my meaning, for sharing your family, and for being that guiding strength when I needed it most, I could not have completed this journey without your friendship. I believe God places people in our paths to change our life. I have been blessed to have you placed in my life. You have forever changed mine. Thank you.

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Chapter One

Introduction

With the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) in 1975, special education was brought to the attention of public educators. While inclusion or co-teaching was not mandated, the least restrictive environment (LRE) was clearly defined as well as provisions for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). The limitations of this law were simply that it did not clearly define how public schools were to accomplish this mandate. Public schools responded by creating separate education facilities to provide an education to disabled students.

In 1990, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 101-476). This brought additional terminology to the LRE. This law further ensured access to general classrooms by requiring public schools to educate students with disabilities to the maximum extent possible (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2007). This law created a movement toward mainstreaming students with disabilities. Mainstreaming refers to the provision of services to students identified with a disability within a general classroom setting. However, while mainstreamed students were physically incorporated into the general classroom, there was a resource room with a special education teacher to provide educational services. With this movement, the accountability for academic progress continued to be firmly placed outside of the general classroom. Inside the walls of the general education classroom, students with disabilities continued to be outside looking in at the learning community. Although the structure of the education of students with disabilities had changed, the attitudes, expectations, and accountability remained virtually unchanged (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

The reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 brought a closer look at the equality of students with disabilities placed in general education for academic purposes. The idea of desegregation was lessened with a clearer focus on not only physically including students but also expecting a learning outcome similar to that of non-disabled students. With higher expectations for learning combined with a strong commitment to increasing the number of students with disabilities accessing general education curriculum, Congress provided a segue for co-teaching as a viable service delivery model (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

The transition from the traditional service delivery model to the co-service delivery model has not been without controversy and its attendant resistance. Public schools received no additional funding to meet this mandate. Furthermore, general educators' support was compromised by feelings of inadequate preparation as well as by fears of meeting the needs of diverse learners while being held accountable for high stakes assessments (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). While national organizations worked together, such as Council for Exceptional Children and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, to ascertain key characteristics to alleviate issues related to transitioning to the co-teaching service delivery model, the identified characteristics were broadly termed rather than thoroughly examined (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

This study seeks to explore the phenomenon of the leadership role in an urban school secondary school transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. The purpose of this study is to examine urban secondary educational leaders of their role in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. This is accomplished through interviews and open response questionnaires regarding the role of the school building leader as a school transitions from a traditional resource classroom way of serving students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing this service. There

is an abundance of research in co-teaching focusing on elementary levels, sustainability, and benefits for disabled students. However, there is little research solely focused on the role of the secondary leader in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model in an urban secondary educational setting. It is anticipated the urban secondary leader has a critical role in preparing staff, providing a plan, supporting a culture to promote acceptance of the transition, and sustaining the transition to a new model of providing services with higher expectations of learning from teachers. The intention is to add to information available for secondary leaders considering transitioning a secondary setting providing traditional service delivery to students with disabilities to a co-teaching service delivery model.

A phenomenological case study approach was used in this qualitative research to examine the experiences of an urban secondary school as it transitioned to a co-teaching service delivery model to provide educational services to students with disabilities. This study was undertaken with 35 participants, including teachers, students, parents, school leaders, and district leaders. Data were collected, coded, and analyzed to identify themes or categories relevant to leadership role in this transition.

This chapter begins with a brief contextual background of this study. The problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions follow. Additionally, this chapter will address the general data gathering methods employed, assumptions, and rationale and significance. Finally, definitions of terms used in the study will be presented.

Background of the Study

Traditionally, students with disabilities have been served in a resource room setting. The teacher is licensed in special education, but not necessarily licensed in a specific secondary

content area. In Arkansas, there are highly qualified special education teachers. This simply means the teacher has a specific number of course hours in the content area being taught. However, this is not the same licensure or level of expertise required for a general education teacher to provide instruction to a non-disabled student seeking credit toward meeting graduation requirements. A general classroom provides a rich, rigorous learning environment whereas, traditionally, in the resource classroom setting, curriculum is broken into smaller pieces and provided at a slower pace (Weiss, 2002).

Accountability mandates, responses to changes in legislation, trends in providing the least restrictive environment, and general education curriculum access to students with disabilities have led schools to promote co-teaching as a means to effectively meet these demands (Cook & Friend, 1995). A model in which two licensed teachers provide instruction to a classroom with students who are disabled and non-disabled is termed co-teaching. One teacher is licensed in the content area and one is licensed in special education. The teachers work together to provide instruction and support to all students. Socially and academically, co-teaching has been found to benefit both disabled and non-disabled students (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007).

As time has passed, it is becoming apparent that the federal acts for special education and the elementary and secondary law are aligning to create expectations of higher levels of achievement for all students. Exposure to the rigor and challenge of the general education curriculum is the only way to academically prepare mildly disabled students to rise to these expectations as well as demonstrate success on mandated assessments. With these higher expectations and greater levels of preparation, disabled students will have options and opportunities beyond high school. Co-teaching, as an instruction model, has a wealth of research

and practice documenting its effectiveness as an instructional strategy for students with disabilities (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1997).

As seen in many change instances, there is resistance to deviate from past practice. Special education teachers resist change because they have long been established as the disabled students' protector. General education teachers resist change because they fear inclusion of disabled students will slow their delivery of curriculum. While teachers are sometimes reluctant to abandon the most known or traditional way to serve students with disabilities, research studies in high schools who had multiple service delivery options, co-teaching was selected to be the most favorable. Students participating in co-teaching classes showed improvement in high stakes testing over a period of four years (Idol, 2006).

The intent of this study is not to consider whether co-teaching is the most appropriate model to provide a beneficial service to students with disabilities, rather it is to explore the leadership role in transitioning to co-teaching. Many studies indicated the need of administrative support in the co-teaching model; however, nothing specific was identified as necessary for this transition process. A definition of "administrative support" was not offered or examined in the studies. Indeed, while a meta-analysis of co-teaching mentioned the pivotal role of the building leader in co-teaching studies multiple times, it never explored the role of the leader (Murawski & Swanson, 2001).

Determining the roles of leadership in transitioning an urban high school from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities is a key factor in predicting the sustainability and effectiveness of the program. The lack of principal support has been cited as the primary reason why change to co-teaching was not effective (Idol, 2006). When it is considered that the co-teaching model is inevitable for the

educational setting, it becomes obvious that it is necessary to more closely examine the role of the leader in transitioning to a co-teaching model in secondary schools. Furthermore, it is important for the leader to understand all aspects not only of co-teaching as a model, but also, how the transition process involved in moving from a traditional model of service delivery to a co-teaching model of service delivery for students with disabilities can impact both the implementation and the fidelity of the instructional model.

Statement of the Problem

There is little research indicating the role of the school leader in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model in the secondary school setting. The leader not only manages the school but also provides a vision and direction for school members to follow during the change process. A leader seeks to find relevant experiences of others in the same situation to gather knowledge to apply their own context. Consequently, examining the role of the leader through this study is pivotal to fully understand transitioning as seen through the experiences of others.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine urban secondary educational leaders of their role in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. It is anticipated that a skill set exists that must be possessed by teachers to become effective co-teachers, that leaders must exhibit key elements in themselves or their educational culture to transition to a co-teaching service delivery model, and that there are potential barriers or obstacles to co-teaching implementation in the secondary school.

Research Questions

Consequently, the three research questions guiding this study follow:

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?
3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

Research Design Overview

The researcher, with the approval of the University of Arkansas' Institutional Review Board, explored the experiences of 35 participants who were involved in the transition from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model to serve students with disabilities in an urban high school. This qualitative research employed a phenomenological case study as the exploration vehicle. An urban high school in the southern geographical area of the United States was the location of the study.

Adult participants were interviewed for approximately 45-60 minutes. Participants consisted of special education teachers, general education teachers, building administration, and district administration. Consent was obtained from each participant with a pseudonym provided to protect the identity of the individual. The interview, using a digital recording device, was conducted off campus during the summer when school was not in session. Openness of participants was ensured through assurance statements and confidentiality agreements. The interview questions were semi-structured and designed to allow participants to expand on their experiences of preparation, support, implementation, and perceptions of co-teaching as a delivery model to provide service to students with disabilities.

Data were collected from student participants using an open response survey through a 12th grade co-teaching English class. For students under the age of 18, consent was obtained from the parent or guardian. All parents were notified of the purpose of the study and the participation was purely voluntary. The school counselor explained the research study, distributed, and collected the open response questionnaire in a class period.

Additional data were collected through Teachscape's Classroom Walk Through (CWT) co-teaching classroom application survey instrument. This instrument allowed the researcher to collect data in the following co-teaching practices used by teachers: one teach/one support, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, unable to identify a format, or none (only one teacher present). These data were used in conjunction with collected data from interviews to support perceptual data gathered.

The researcher employed two cycles of coding with collected data. First, descriptive coding, or topic coding, was used in the initial analysis of data. The researcher then used focused coding, with the ATLAS.ti version 7 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis, CAQDAS, program to organize the data, establishing a hierarchy of codes and domains (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). The researcher then engaged in further synthesis of data. The researcher identified themes or categories that emerged from coding process to arrive at findings guided by the research questions of the study. Finally, to ensure the integrity of research data, a second person reviewed collected data and an assurance letters signed by participants.

Assumptions

Based on the researcher's educational experience and background, there are some assumptions made regarding this study. The researcher believes the leadership role is pivotal in

creating and accepting change within a school culture. A school leader provides expectations and standards for the staff and students. The relationship of trust, faith, and commitment from the leader to the staff is important to the willingness to accept that change is necessary in terms of educational services to students. The leader must walk stakeholders through the process of implementing the change in educational services.

Another assumption is the co-teaching model to provide services to students with disabilities is an effective model for this site. Exposure to the rigor and challenge of the general education curriculum is the only way to prepare mildly disabled students to demonstrate success on mandated assessments and offer the opportunity for education beyond high school.

Finally, the phenomenological case study is concentrated at a single site. The assumption is the experiences of participants in a single site's transformation may be generalized to future readers. The scope of the research is intended to examine this phenomenon in this secondary education setting.

The Researcher

At the time of conducting this study, the researcher is employed as a building principal in the secondary urban school. The researcher has knowledge of the urban secondary school with an emphasis in leadership and special education. Since the researcher is working in this capacity, there is an understanding of the complexities of the relationships among faculty, students, community, and school culture. The researcher is cognizant of the potential for subjectivity or bias and has taken measures to minimize the possibility.

The researcher has worked in the role of assistant principal and currently serves as the principal of the site location in the phenomenological case study. In the role of assistant principal, the researcher was a direct supervisor of many of the participants. As building

principal, the researcher is solely responsible for the building, faculty, and students. Another assistant principal currently oversees special education. While measures were taken to limit fears that could be associated with interviewing with the building leader, it must be noted this potential exists.

In addition, the researcher's educational background is in special education and leadership as well as teaching and learning. The researcher has held teaching positions in a variety of service delivery models for students with disabilities. These positions include a self-contained classroom, resource classroom, co-teaching classroom, indirect services coordinator, 504 Coordinator, Director of Assessment and Accountability, District Special Education Coordinator, and junior high assistant principal. These educational experiences provide an unique insight to special education services to students as well as typical responses to staff implementing services to students with disabilities.

Conceptual Framework

These professional and personal roles including that of a parent led to the conceptual framework of this phenomenological case study. Both work and personal experiences resulted in the researcher's readings of literature, initially for reasons related to professional growth and personal interest, which then expanded to seeking a deeper understanding of what the transition process entails when moving from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. Literature related to the effectiveness of co-teaching as well as personal educational advancement in Educational Leadership led the researcher's desire to further understand the leadership role in establishing an effective, sustainable co-teaching model in a school setting. Together these experiences and search for understanding formed the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework and

its interrelatedness to the methods, research questions, validity, and goal of this study are further illustrated in the *Figure 1* on page 31.

Rationale and Significance

Rationale for this phenomenological case study is based on the lack of relevant research regarding the role of the school leader in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. The researcher recognizes the pivotal role of the school leader in the transitioning process within a school culture. Therefore, additional research is necessary to add to information available to school leaders considering a transition of service delivery models in a high school.

While there is not a readily available, research based way to instruct school leaders on transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities in a secondary school, the significance of this study will add to the research and literature available to school leaders contemplating such a transition. This phenomenological case study will provide a deeper understanding of experiences that may be generalized to other similar secondary educational settings. A case study can often help inform the research problem, thereby clarifying and expanding consideration of a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In addition, the research will provide a practical application for school leaders to delineate skills that must be present in the staff to be effective co-teachers, actions the leader must consider or do to effectively transition, and barriers or obstacles, which may exist that, inhibit co-teaching.

Definition of Key Terms

Co-Teaching Model of Service Delivery - This term is used to describe two licensed teachers instructing a classroom. One teacher is licensed in a content area such as secondary English, secondary math, secondary science, or secondary social studies. The second teacher is licensed in special education. There is approximately two-thirds of the class that are not identified as having a disability and one-third of the students identified as having a disability.

Traditional Service Delivery Model - This term is used to describe a resource room setting where the class size is no larger than eight disabled students. The teacher is licensed in special education while highly qualified in math, English, science, or social studies.

Students with disabilities - This term describes a student who has undergone an educational evaluation as outlined by state law and meets a criterion defined by the Arkansas Department of Education to be eligible for services in special education.

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) – This term describes a software package that sorts and manages transcribed data. The interpretation of the organized data is left to the researcher.

Classroom Walk Throughs (CWT) - This term describes a survey instrument used to observe a co-teaching classroom. There are a series of questions the researcher used during an observation of co-teaching classes. Data were used to compare experiences of the participants with those of the researcher.

Stakeholders - This term is used to describe individuals who have an interest in the school. Community members, parents, students, teachers, district leaders, and building leaders are school stakeholders.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

In special education, the term inclusion is used for a variety of purposes. Inclusion is used to describe the provision of services in education for students with disabilities in the same classroom as non-disabled students. At times, some educators use the term interchangeably to describe co-teaching. In reality, there are different models used to achieve the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. An integrated model is a single teacher who is dually licensed in special education and a specific content area. The teacher is supported with a paraprofessional and has a maximum of 24 students in a class. The classroom has no more than one-third of the students who are disabled. The co-teaching model is another popular model used in educational settings. Like the integrated model, the co-teaching class is made up of no more than one-third disabled students. However, in co-teaching, two teachers are assigned to a classroom to teach students. One teacher is a licensed in special education, while the other teacher is licensed in a secondary education content area.

Co-teaching has been established as a model of providing special education services that may result in higher student achievement in core content areas for all students. Furthermore, co-teaching is a model, which also has shown a reduction of referrals (Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998). Benefits have been identified for both students with and without disabilities in co-teaching classrooms. These positive outcomes include cooperation, social interaction, achievement, and attention (Salend, Johansen, Mumper, Chase, Pike, & Dorney, 1997). These benefits are not restricted to students. Both special education and general education teacher have seen benefits in co-teaching. Special education teachers have experienced a greater level of content knowledge. General education teachers have seen

improved classroom management and a greater understanding of how to adapt curriculum for diverse learners (Austin, 2001).

Unfortunately, there are schools that continue to use a separate classroom to education mildly disabled students. This tradition is called a resource room service delivery model. The teacher is a licensed in special education. The class size has a maximum of eight students. There are some resource classes that have ten students with a paraprofessional for support. The special education teacher is responsible for providing educational services in reading, written expression, and math. In high schools, resource science and social studies are also courses offered to disabled students. Curriculum is broken into smaller pieces and provided at a slower pace (Weiss, 2002).

As accountability increases, mandates are created for highly qualified teachers, and high levels of achievement for all students are expected, educators look for ways to keep special education students in the general education classroom. Exposure to the rigor and challenge of general education curriculum is the only way to academically prepare mildly disabled students to demonstrate success on mandated assessments and have the opportunity to choose education beyond high school.

Preparation for change within any organization can be difficult. While many stakeholders in education agree inclusionary settings for students with disabilities often results in positive academic and social outcomes for all students, actually transitioning to an effective co-teaching service delivery model can be quite difficult. There are many reasons that can make this transition difficult for the organization. Special education teachers resist change because they have long been established as the disabled students' protector. The fear of less support for identified students is a concern for special education teachers (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). This

belief only leads to low expectations for students. Special educators also fear the content of secondary courses themselves. They may not be experts or even had difficulty learning some of the higher-level math, science, and English when they were in high school. Ultimately, co-teaching takes special educators out of their comfort zone (Lester & Evans, 2009). Many special education teachers also believe that the inclusion of disabled students will mean generating more paperwork and holding additional conferences due to failing grades of their students (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

Determining the role of leadership in transitioning an urban high school from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities is a key factor in predicting the sustainability and effectiveness of the program. The teachers leaders often recruited to participate may not have the skills necessary to accept or effectively implement the co-teaching model. The questions which guide the quest of what a school leader can do to ensure a smooth transition to co-teaching within an urban high school include:

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?
3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

Research Strategy

Research studies found to review and address these questions were selected by using a specific set of criteria. Ebsco, ERIC, ProQuest, and the Google search engine were used to locate relevant studies. *Co-teaching* is used interchangeably with other educational terms, such as *inclusion* and *mainstreaming*, related to special education. To ensure studies related to the

research questions were found, the ERIC thesaurus was used to identify tags that were synonymous with co-teaching and leadership. This resulted in the utilization of *inclusion*, *mainstreaming*, *principals*, *administrators*, *assistant principals*, and *instructional leadership* as tag descriptors. There were 208 articles identified using these descriptors. The researcher then narrowed the results by selecting those related to high schools, North America, and school personnel as participants. There were 20 studies found using the above criteria. However, of these 20 there is only one specifically focused on the leadership role in transitioning to co-teaching in urban secondary schools. This single study considered the leadership of new parochial schools in Ontario, Canada rather than urban public secondary schools. Of the 20 studies, the majority was in a single geographical area. Research studies conducted in foreign countries outside of the United States and Canada were eliminated due to the differences in education legislation and teacher training. In some studies, demographics were not diverse in the schools or districts where data were collected. In other studies, there was a short period of time in which data were collected. Many studies focused on elementary and secondary schools rather than only secondary. The secondary schools included middle schools and junior highs with high schools. Two studies used teachers with less than six years of teaching experience and focused on teacher preparation in teaching collaborative and with students with disabilities. Furthermore, many of the studies conducted multiple interviews and observations. The responses were transcribed and coded. Themes or categories were then developed from the data.

These studies chosen were published within the last ten years and used data equally as recent. This timeframe was chosen because the vast majority of studies prior to this focused on whether co-teaching was an effective method of educating students with disabilities. Current studies can be found on topics like what makes a program effective, characteristics of effective

partnerships, transitioning, and sustainability. Since educators often use various terms to describe the same topic, the researcher contacted University of Arkansas Education Librarian, Reference and Collection Management, Elizabeth McKee to ensure that search terms used were sufficiently inclusive to garner all research available.

Research was further narrowed to topics involving teacher perception, leadership, shared leadership, co-teaching, and students with disabilities. From there, research was selected with subjects within the secondary school setting. While there are some studies that include both elementary and secondary school settings, research findings used in the literature review were specific to secondary schools. The quality of the research study was determined by rationale, correlation significance, and limitations. Preference of research articles was given to studies conducted using subjects or data from an urban high school with a diverse student population.

Description and Interpretation

The analysis of located literature was undertaken by the researcher by first organizing the literature findings in a lit table to ascertain those studies most applicable to the research questions. These research questions were then used to select which studies to present in this literature review. Furthermore, the findings were interpreted through the lens of the research questions.

Research question one (Leadership Considerations). What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities? Relatively little research is focused on transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model in urban high schools (Rice, 2006). Since most high schools are traditional in nature, it is difficult to create a change or shift in a belief system. The building leader plays a significant role in the transformation (Leech &

Fulton, 2008). The principal is the liaison between district administration and building level faculty. This person is also the motivator, encourager, navigator, and the negotiator (Leone, Warnimont, & Zimmerman, 2009). The principal must evaluate the current climate and culture of the building prior to plan for the change process. A collaborative culture allows the organization to move forward and improve instruction (Kohm & Nance, 2009).

In addition, the leader must enable others by delegating responsibilities. Teachers have the ability to provide leadership in the right context (Billingsley, 2007). This creates ownership in the transition. The principal should have a clear sense of what the vision of the co-teaching program will look like in the building. This vision is defined with well-developed goals (Leech & Fulton, 2008). The leader must also participate in all aspects of the transition to co-teaching. This shows support and allows the principal to anticipate barriers or obstacles as well as having an opportunity to see positive changes occurring. This also supports the necessity for the principal to shift from a solely managerial function to that of an instructional leader of the school (Bronson & Dentith, 2011).

Principals can foster the culture needed to promote collaboration among teachers that can make a smoother transition to a co-teaching service delivery model, thereby increasing the effectiveness of teachers. This change begins with the principal paying careful attention to the information flow both officially and unofficially throughout the organization (Kohm & Nance, 2009). Both types of information should reinforce the other.

The leader must begin the transformation with dialogue by modeling good communication for productive meeting between teachers and administration (Leech & Fulton, 2008). This is bringing in the groups of teachers together and having a clear agenda. The

meetings should have an outcome of clear goals and actions that are realistic and specific to ensure an effective transition (Kohm & Nance, 2009).

Discussion groups that do not have clear agendas do not have clear outcomes. This leads to the discussion becoming a complaint session or allows negativity to dominate rather than willing participants to express fruitful contributions. This can slow the transformation process and create frustration for the leader (Rice, 2006).

A leader can create small discussion groups that allow teachers to focus on improving instruction with the idea of co-planning. Collaboration can be fostered through shared leadership. While beginning shared leadership, the principal must be selective in choosing the right people to participate (Leech & Fulton, 2008). In selecting people to participate, consideration should be given to include content teachers, special education teachers, assistant principals, instructional specialists, and special education administrators. The role the leader has is to bridge information and people (Boscardin, 2005). The teacher leaders will share the information to reinforce the official information that guides the transformation at the building level (Rice, 2006).

A leader should also plan the transition with an evaluative tool or model to guide the program's direction. A plan should be developed with the end vision in mind. The Intensive Onsite Technical Assistance Model was shown to be an effective means of creating an inclusive change in 13 secondary schools, specifically six high schools. The model was evaluated by using a checklist and the Program Quality Measurement Tool (Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2004). The key part of this study was the tools used to measure the success of the model. This is an example of how evaluation and reflection are critical components of a transition. The leader

must consider how the co-teaching movement will be measured and monitored to align with goals.

The leader's role in transitioning to co-teaching is one of commitment. If the leader is working so hard to plan for the transition, consideration should be given to research on sustainability. There are three factors the principal must consider: leadership change, teacher turnover, and policy changes. Part of the leader's role is planning for these possibilities or realities. The leader must consider how the transition will sustain should changes in teacher, leadership or policy occur. These conclusions were drawn from Sindelar, Shearer, Yendel-Hoppey, and Liebert in their 2006 study of sustainability of inclusive school reform. The researchers studied a southern Florida middle school for four years. The authors conducted 111 interviews with teachers and administrators. Each interview lasted between 30 to 50 minutes. Researchers, who were not a part of the interviews or transcription, coded the data. The coded data were then triangulated by additional researchers who had not been engaged in any part of the study (Sindelar, Shearer, Yendel-Hoppey, and Liebert, 2006).

Ryan in his 2010 case study identified that principal turnover is a factor which can impede systemic change toward a culture of commitment of co-teaching. This change in leadership created barriers to the process of staff buy-in and trust of the school leader. Therefore the leadership provides a pivotal role in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model in multiple respects (Ryan, 2010).

Research question two (Staff Skills). What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers? When looking at transitioning a secondary school to a co-teaching service delivery model, the leader must consider what skills must be present in participants to ensure a smooth transition. This enables the leader to plan for professional development, consider what fears

teachers may have when asking them to alter their beliefs or philosophy of education, and pairing of special educators with general educators. The present skill set a teacher brings to the planning table will depend on their teacher preparation program, classroom experiences, and previous professional development opportunities (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

When beginning secondary special education teachers are placed into co-teaching classes, they often don't perceive co-teaching or using a variety of grouping to be an important skill for what they do in the classroom. Secondary general education teachers view pacing and timing of instructional lessons as least important skills they need in the classroom. However, secondary special education teachers perceive important skills to be implementing accommodations, adapting course content, and problem solving interventions. While secondary general education teachers see communicating with parents, being sensitive to diversity, and co-planning as important skills (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009). The interesting point is that these skills are vital to an effective co-teaching program. The importance of skills in these teachers must be aligned with the school's mission of transitioning to a different service delivery model.

After a study of teachers' perceptions of what they are prepared for in terms of collaboration, secondary general education teachers felt most prepared in being sensitive to diversity and using effective communication skills. Secondary special education teachers felt best prepared for providing individual instruction, adapting content, implementing accommodations. Secondary general education teachers felt least prepared in using various grouping models, individualizing evaluations, and co-teaching. Secondary special education teachers felt least prepared to using various grouping models, designing assessment, and promoting access to the general curriculum (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

Lack of support of other teachers and confidence in their own instructional skills were reasons as why teachers did not favor inclusion (Jung, 2007). This confidence is a needed skill to be an effective co-teacher. In addition if common collaborative time is provided, meaningful planning may not actually take place. A structured model to give teachers skills necessary or a model to follow will provide direction to teachers lacking in this area. If teachers lack the skills appropriate to problem solving and collaboration, they will not be effective in co-planning, discussing philosophical differences, or working together professionally (Carter, Prater, Jackson, & Marchant, 2009).

Teachers tend to think of the needs of the class in terms of the whole class instead of individuals within the whole (Paterson, 2007). Considering this in terms of planning effectively in co-teaching, teachers must have the skills to plan instruction together for individuals that make the whole rather than the other way around. Instructional choices have been shown to be made based on a whole group rather than the individuals that make the group. This skill is harder to reinforce for secondary teachers when a secondary teacher sees 150 students per day versus an elementary teacher who serves 28 each day. Novice teachers have less apparent skills to determine instructional level knowledge about individual students than their more experienced counterparts (Paterson, 2007).

Another skill that teachers should have to be an effective co-teacher is holding high expectations for learning. While the Woolfson, Grant, and Campbell (2007) study included elementary teachers specifically, the results may be generalized to represent secondary teachers as well. The study showed that special education teachers have more positive expectations for learners with disabilities than general education teachers. The results also indicated special education teachers believe identified students are not stable in their learning, meaning they are

not destined to continue throughout their school career at that specific level of learning (Woolfson, Grant, & Campbell, 2007).

Experienced secondary teachers were found to be proficient in making curricular and instructional decisions; however less experienced secondary teachers were found to need additional preparation (Idol, 2006). Professional decision making skills are necessary for co-teaching. Each teacher in the team should feel competent in the partner's ability to make curricular and instructional decisions if they are to have equal or shared accountability in the classroom. Any change that engages a teacher's learning will likely increase their involvement and reduce their anxiety and anger emotion that takes the focus away from school improvement and progress (Hargreaves, 2004).

Research question three (Barriers or Obstacles). What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching? There are obstacles in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. Professional development is needed for teachers to acquire the skills necessary to accept and implement the changes. Teachers need to have an understanding of different models of co-teaching. This training allows teachers to recognize and adjust the lesson delivery dependent on the learning objective. Teachers should be knowledgeable about attributes of consulting teacher, cooperative teacher, team teaching, and instructional assistants (Idol, 2006). Professional development must also be provided to secondary special education teachers in the content area in which they will teach (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

Another obstacle to transitioning is teacher perception and attitude. Faculty must realize co-teaching is not a program or fad, but a permanent, supported commitment of change. This must be embedded into the teachers' belief system. Many experienced teachers initially feel this

is yet another idea that will eventually pass. When co-teaching is transitioned as a more self-driven process, teachers experience a positive attitude and perception (Hargreaves, 2004).

Common planning time for co-teachers is an obstacle that leaders must take into account (Bouck, 2007). It is also a necessity for effective collaboration (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Principals must be creative in the master schedule or provide adequate time for the teachers to look at planning lessons together. This would be done with hiring subs and giving teachers work time to plan together. This common planning time can also be used as time to reflect with partners. This lack of opportunity to reflect is an obstacle in itself (Billingsley, 2007).

A lack of collaboration influences the relationship thus affecting the fidelity of co-teaching. General education teachers count on the special education teacher to be able to articulate disabilities of students and the impact on skill acquisition. Partners must be comfortable in reflective conversations with each other (Rice, Drame, Owen, & Frattura, 2007). Teachers must have well developed skills in how to collaborate. Many beginning teachers feel they have not been well prepared to work collaboratively with each other (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009)

Relationships between teachers and their willingness to get along to move forward in teaching together is an obstacle. Teachers showed a positive response to self-chosen partners (Bouck, 2007). Co-teaching requires compatibility and communication between partners. Some teachers recommend selecting their own partner. Teachers must be able to discuss conflicts and resolve differences immediately. This leads to a co-teaching relationship being much like a marriage (Keefe & Moore, 2004). There must be mutual professional respect, common goals for learning, two way communication, and trust (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009). Teachers have different styles of teaching. This can be difficult to overcome (Wilson &

Michaels, 2006). While a leader may not be a matchmaker, there should a process to determine which two staff members would be suited to each other.

A final barrier to transitioning to an effective co-teaching service delivery model is lack of administration support. This hindrance has been cited in multiple studies through the literature review as a concern among general and special education teachers. An appearance of minimal support lends negativity to teacher attitude and perception. Teachers genuinely want to do what is best for the students they serve. However, without the support of their direct supervisor, they will never receive the affirmation of what they are doing professionally matters to their professional leader.

Concluding Remarks

This literature review provides a thorough examination of recent research studies related to transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model in an urban secondary school. Research studies that were reviewed included topics of the following: co-teaching, leadership, shared leadership, collaboration, culture, inclusion, teacher perceptions, sustainability, teacher preparation, and secondary education. Each of the studies included in this review collected data or had results relating to the research questions that guided this paper.

As a leader considers what leadership role is played to transition to an effective co-teaching program, he or she must look at the skills teacher participants demonstrate. Perhaps teachers need support developing the skills needed to collaborate, accommodate students with disabilities, and, ultimately, co-teach with another professional. Once teachers have the skills necessary, the leader will have removed one barrier to transitioning to co-teaching. Having these skills will reduce some anxiety and frustration for teachers. It will also allow them to understand and participate in the development for an action plan for co-teaching within the high school.

This review of literature demonstrates a need for further research in the following: co-teaching in urban high schools, barriers to transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model, the leader's role in transition to co-teaching service delivery model, what teacher needs must be met to transition to a co-teaching service delivery model, the impact of effective transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery on sustainability in urban high schools, the effect of leadership on transitioning and sustainability of co-teaching in urban high schools, and long term outcomes of co-teaching on high schools under state direction status due to lack of school improvement.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine urban secondary educational leaders in their role in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. This phenomenological case study includes investigating a skill set which must be present in teachers to become co-teachers, provide leaders with key elements that must be present in them or their educational culture to transition to co-teaching, and to identify possible barriers to co-teaching implementation in the secondary school setting. Prior investigation into conditions needed for successful co-teaching identify administrative support as necessary; however, there is no attempt to explore the specifics of this administrative support or its role in the transition process even though the building leader sets the direction of the school culture and instruction (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). The stakeholders must have confidence in the leader's knowledge. They must also trust that the leader's decisions are fair, ethical, and in the best interest in the education of the students. Therefore, it is important for the leader to understand all aspects not only of co-teaching as a model, but also, how transitioning from a traditional model of service delivery to a co-teaching model of service delivery for students with disabilities can impact implementation and fidelity of the instructional model.

Qualitative research methods provide an avenue to answer these research questions. Since the transitioning from one service delivery to a different service delivery model is a shift in philosophy and beliefs, it is something which participants experience, a phenomenon. This phenomenological case study will look at the rich data collected through this single urban secondary school site from interviews and observations.

Phenomenology is from a German philosophy that focuses on meaning derived from a person's life experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The purpose of phenomenological research is to interpret and reflect the life experiences of participants in relation to a specific identified problem. A phenomenological researcher will often conduct in depth, concentrated interviews on the specific phenomenon of transitioning to co-teaching (Slavin, 2007). Questions are constructed as open response so the person can thoroughly explain particular, specific life experiences. The responses from multiple interviews create data, which can be studied, and themes can be identified. This study examines the experiences of teachers, leaders, and students as they have transitioned from resource service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model (Creswell, 2007).

The research studies found by the researcher that address co-teaching as a service delivery model were mainly focused in an elementary school setting. There was also research available on pre service teaching programs for teachers in educating students with disabilities. While there are more plentiful articles about leadership in the secondary school, less than three research studies were located that specifically addressed how educational leaders transition to a co-teaching service delivery model in the secondary educational setting within in the United States.

Secondary schools are departmentalized, traditionally have limited collaboration, and special education is the final destination for many students with disabilities. The very best special education teacher in a high school resource classroom setting cannot duplicate the learning opportunities that take place in a general high school classroom. If schools truly want the highest achievement for all students with the hope of providing skills so that students leave high school with choices and opportunities, school leaders must identify how to transition to a

service delivery model which will place disabled students in a classroom with high expectations and a rigorous curriculum. Co-teaching offers both teachers and students opportunities for maximum growth by combining teaching strengths and techniques to enhance the learning environment for all students (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001). This study seeks answers to support educational leaders in their endeavor to transition to a co-teaching service delivery model.

This chapter is organized beginning with a description of the research sample for the proposed study. Following the sample description will be a discussion of the information needed for the study. The research design and data collections will be reviewed as well as the data analysis. Ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and limitations, respectively will be the following sections of this chapter. The summary will conclude the chapter.

Research Questions

The three research questions guiding this study follow.

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?
3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

Research Design

The researcher's experiences as an administrator, teacher, and parent in tandem with readings of articles and studies surrounding co-teaching formed the conceptual framework, discussed in Chapter 1, that led to the research questions and ultimately, the design of this phenomenological case study (see *Figure 1* on page 31). The role of instructional leader in the transition process from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery

model for serving special education students was identified as a focus of interest for the researcher. Following the review of literature concerning the leadership role in transitioning a school from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model, participants were selected from UHS. Additionally, questions arose concerning skills needed by teachers for effective transition and barriers and obstacles inhibiting the transition to co-teaching. These three topics became the guiding research questions for this study.

The research questions directed the selection of appropriate methods to find answers to achieve the researcher's goal of informing secondary leaders by adding to the available literature. Methods used included observations, interviews, and open response questionnaires. Multiple observations, using a classroom walk through (CWT) co-teaching survey tool, were conducted in the co-teaching classrooms at UHS. In depth interviews were conducted with the participants. Open response questionnaires were given to senior students in a co-teaching class. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using first and second coding methods. All of the components of this research design are illustrated in *Figure 1*.

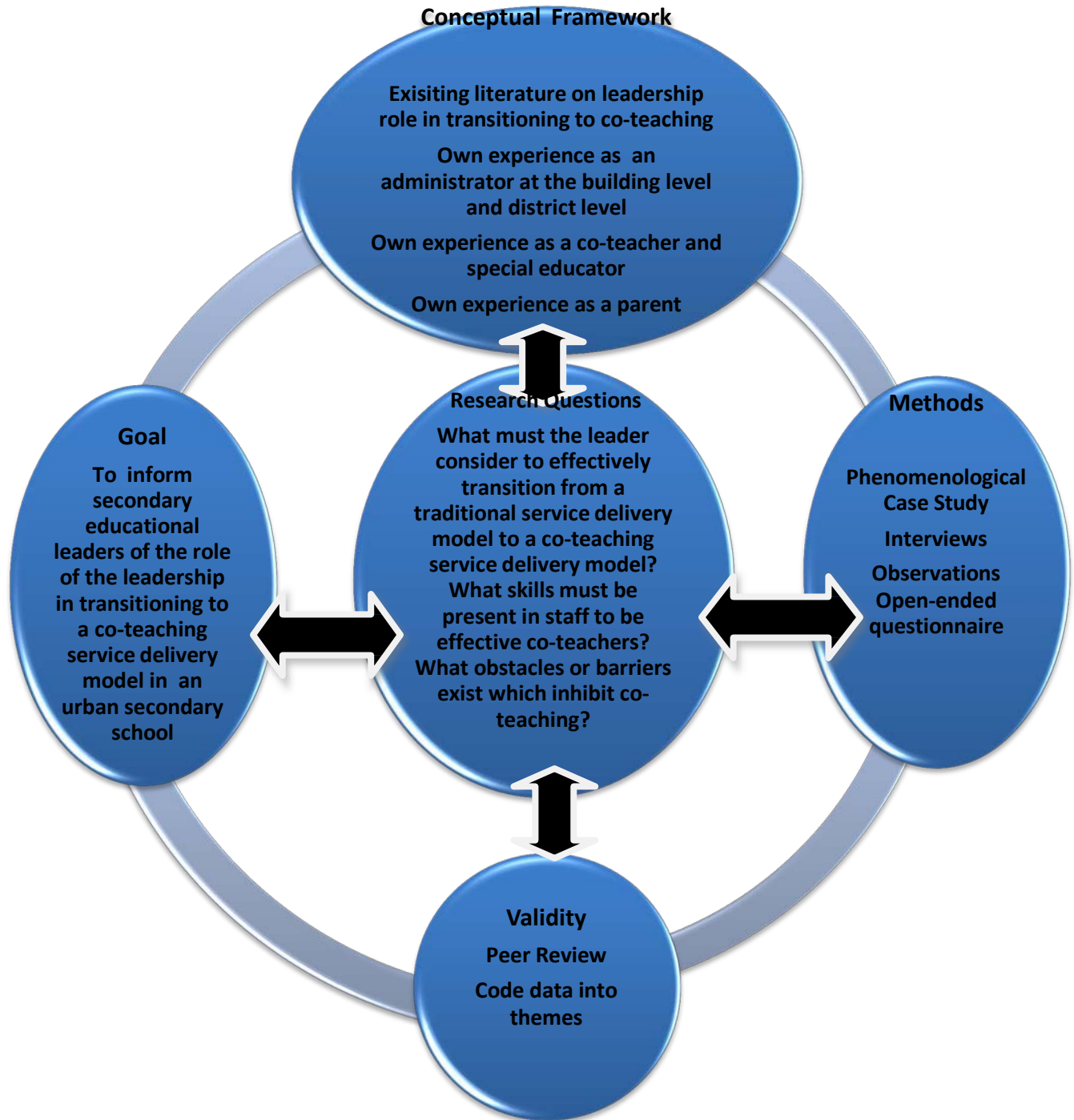


Figure 1. Concept map displays how the conceptual framework, goal, methods, and validity of this phenomenological case study arise from and inform the guiding research questions.

Research Sample. Criteria sampling has been chosen as the sampling strategy to select participants in the future proposal of a study regarding the leadership role in the transition of a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model to serve students with disabilities in an urban secondary school. Criterion sampling identifies participants who have shared a common experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This study sample involves participants who have transitioned from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model. Because this study takes place at a single high school and examines a specific experience of participants, it is therefore a bounded system; the Phenomenological Case Study approach was utilized (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology studies the meaning of a specific experience shared by participants. Explanation of phenomena are the province of case studies, which use a single instance to intensely examine and create a larger understanding of a specific experience. For the purpose of this study, a single site was selected to allow a particular focus on the participants' experience of transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities, thereby providing answers to the research questions which guide this research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Research Setting. The chosen site for the study is Urban High School (UHS), formerly The City High School in the southern geographical region of the United States. This high school was chosen because it is a very traditional high school. It became UHS in 1961 when The City Public Schools opened a second high school. UHS is a traditional high school in many ways. The structure of the building is over 80 years old. The courses and approaches to instructional delivery have been in place for many years.

Special education is another traditional component of this high school. Special education services have customarily been provided through resource or self-contained classrooms instead

of co-teaching classes in a lesser restrictive environment. Resource classes and self-contained classes are courses which have a teacher licensed in special education, but not necessarily in the content area where they are teaching. The resource classes have a maximum class load of eight students per section. Self-contained classes have a paraprofessional and a class load of 15 students per section. Co-teaching classes offer two licensed teachers with a class load of 28. One teacher is licensed in the content area and one teacher is licensed in special education. At UHS, no more than one-third of the students identified as disabled are assigned to co-teaching classrooms.

Urban High School is currently labeled as a Year Seven - school in need of improvement. The designation has produced a heightened sense of urgency to improve student performance. Part of improving student performance at UHS is to include all learners in rigorous, general education classes. The purpose of this study is to examine urban secondary educational leaders of their role in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model.

As earlier discussed, criterion sampling will be used in the proposed study. The sample participants will have to meet the criteria of working with or in an urban high school, specifically UHS, which is transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model approach to serving students with disabilities. In addition, participants in the study must be associated with the service delivery models for students with disabilities. Furthermore, participants will be individuals who were involved with UHS for more than a single school year. The possible participants will include personnel, parents, and students associated with providing or receiving special education services. For example, district special education administrators, district secondary schools administrators, building level administrators, disabled students in the co-teaching classes, non-disabled students in co-teaching classes, general

education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents would be participants in the proposed study. There is a determined criterion for sample participants in the case study. For example, the site of the study is a specific level in a secondary educational setting and participants must be associated in receiving or providing services to disabled students (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Information Needed. A variety of information is needed to answer the guiding research questions and to meet the goal of informing secondary educational leaders of the role of leadership in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model in an urban secondary school. Demographic data were used to assist the reader in visualizing the site for the study as well as understanding the participants. Interview and survey data were needed to determine what skills must be present in staff for an effective co-teaching situation. Also, data were used to determine what leadership must provide to promote a smooth transition from resource classes to co-teaching classes for students with disabilities. Furthermore, the data collected were used to identify both internal and external barriers or obstacles that inhibit co-teaching.

Data Management

This phenomenological case study was conducted from July 2012 to December 2012. During the summer prior to teachers returning to contract, the researcher conducted interviews. The participant to the researcher conducted these interviews at an off campus setting to minimize any hesitation during the interview. The Institutional Review Board granted approval for the study in the Spring of 2012. After approval, seniors in co-teaching classrooms completed open response questionnaires. If the senior was under the age of 18, parent permission was obtained. The school counselor distributed these questionnaires. The school counselor conducted this process to eliminate any fear from students because the researcher is the school principal.

All data collected were maintained on USB flash drives with a copy on a secure computer hard drive located in a locked office in the home of the researcher. The flash drives and audio recorder with taped interviews were secured in a locked fireproof safe in the researcher's home. The paper questionnaires completed by students were kept confidential and secure in a locked file cabinet in the locked office in the home of the researcher.

Data Collection Methods. Methods used to collect data were through intensive interviews of participants and observations of the co-teaching classrooms. Interviewing allowed participants to reveal their experiences of transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities at UHS. Through the analysis of the interview data, themes or patterns emerged as the researcher constructed a narrative description (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The open response survey was selected for students to alleviate any fear that could be associated with interviewing with the students' principal.

The guiding research questions of the study were utilized as a foundation for the development of interview questions. For each research question, there are four, directly related interview questions. These questions are open-ended, semi-structured which allowed the researcher to enable the participant to elaborate and reflect on responses (Appendix C). For students, the school counselor administered an open response survey in a 12th grade English co-teaching class (Appendix D). Students were asked to participate, but not mandated. For adults, the interview had appropriate flow and pace that ended in a normal conversation pattern. This flow was ensured through a pilot of the interview protocol conducted with the Director of Secondary Education for the district (Charmaz, 2006).

After receiving permission from The City Public Schools Superintendent, the researcher explained the purpose for the study to building level administrators (Appendix B). The participants at the UHS site were interviewed separately outside of the regular school session at an off campus site selected by the participants. Each interview was estimated to be 45-60 minutes in length. The interview times varied depending on the participant's experience and position as a stakeholder in the delivery model that serves students with disabilities. Even though there was a prior relationship between the researcher and the participant, the researcher created an interview environment where the participant feels safe to communicate honestly without any repercussions. The interviews with adults took place in the summer when school is not in session. The researcher presented assurance statements and confidentiality agreements to each participant prior to the interview (Garton & Copeland, 2010). Interview Questions were listed in Table 1 that follows:

Table 1

Interview Questions for School Personnel

 Questions for School Personnel

1. Tell me about yourself professionally.
 - 1.1 How long have you worked in the district?
 - 1.2 How long have you worked at this school?
 - 1.3 How many total years have you worked in education?
 - 1.4 How long have you worked in a secondary setting?
 - 1.5 Have you ever worked in an elementary setting?
 - 1.6 How long have you been in a co-teaching position?
 - 1.7 Have you ever served students in a resource setting?
 - 1.8 If so, how many years were you in this setting?
 - 1.9 What degrees and licensure areas have you obtained? When did you receive them?
 2. Describe a positive co-teaching partnership.
 3. Describe the general education teacher's part in the co-teaching partnership.
 4. Describe the special education teacher's part in the co-teaching partnership.
 5. Describe the supports or resources the school leader provides or should provide to the co-teaching partnerships.
 6. How are conflicts resolved between co-teaching partners?
 7. How does the school leader impact the co-teaching partnership? Classes?
 8. Tell me about your experience of great challenges of co-teaching partnerships? Classes?
 9. As resource classes decrease and co-teaching classes increase, describe the challenges the school may face. Teachers? Students?
 10. Tell me about your opinion on how a school leader can facilitate a transition from resource classes to co-teaching classes.
 11. Tell me about barriers or obstacles which exist in the school to inhibit a transitions from resource classes to co-teaching classes.
 12. How can the school leader promote a transition to co-teaching as a service delivery model with regard to:
 - 12.1 Professional Development?
 - 12.2 Student learning (accountability)?
 - 12.3 Mentoring?
 - 12.4 Evaluation?
 13. Is there anything you would like to share about transitioning from a traditional resource service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model in the secondary setting?
-

The letter outlined the expectations of the participant. Assurances were given that consent may be withdrawn at anytime. For students under the age of 18, the school counselor administered an open response questionnaire (Appendix A). Minimal demographic information was requested; however, students were not required to give personal, identifiable information. Open response questions in the questionnaire are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Open Response Student Questionnaire

Questions for Students

1. When your principal is in your co-teaching class, what is your principal doing?
 2. Have you ever had a class with two teachers before?
 3. Name some things you like about having two teachers in a class.
 4. Name some things you do not like about having two teachers in a class.
 5. How do your teachers work together to teach you?
-

Data relating to collaboration and co-teaching formats were collected using the Teachscape Classroom Walk Through (CWT) survey co-teaching tool iPad/iPhone application within the co-teaching classrooms at UHS. The CWT iPad/iPhone application has a Co-Teaching survey tool has four domains: Focus on Curriculum, Evidence of Collaboration, Co-teaching Instructional Formats, and Instructional Practices. For the purposes of this phenomenological case study, Evidence of Collaboration and Co-teaching Instructional Formats were the two domains used to minimize subjectivity from the researcher (Appendix B). Under each domain, there are specific survey questions with indicators. The Evidence of Collaboration domain has seven items that require a yes, no, or unable to determine response, thereby

minimizing researcher subjectivity. The Co-teaching Instructional Formats domain of the survey required the identification of the co-teaching practice used by teachers. There were seven possible choices of practices: one teach/one support, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, unable to identify format, or none (only one teacher present). The first five choices were considered as evidence of co-teaching. The last two choices indicated that co-teaching is not evident.

This survey tool allowed the researcher to support and compare perceptual data collected from classrooms to data from participants. The researcher conducted 28 CWTs within the co-teaching classrooms. The researcher used the iPad/iPhone applications while in classrooms. These data were uploaded through a Wi-Fi connection upon entry via the application. The Teachscape CWT software then allowed the researcher to pull a computer-generated report with data collected from surveyed co-teaching classrooms. It is up to the researcher to interpret the data presented. The data pulled from these domains of the survey tool were used to combine with interview data to the answer research questions related to skills present in staff to be effective co-teachers. Collected survey data also assisted in answering the research question related to obstacles or barriers that inhibit co-teaching.

Data Analysis. Once data were collected through interviews of selected participants and surveys were completed in co-teaching classrooms, analysis and synthesis of data were implemented. Interview data were transcribed verbatim by an external source to prepare for coding. Data from CWT were pulled from the Teachscape website for further coding.

Descriptive coding is a process sometimes referred to as “Topic Coding.” The researcher used this basic method to comb through data identifying common topics. The primary purpose of selecting this method was to assist the researcher in determining what was heard in the

interviews (Saldana, 2009). This method was applied to the transcribed data from interviews and survey tool for the first cycle of coding. This coding method assisted the researcher in identifying basic labels or codes to support possible emerging themes or categories in data.

For the second cycle of coding the collected data, the researcher employed focused coding. Focused coding lends itself to the development of themes or categories from the collected data. The researcher compared and developed categories further among codes derived from the interview data analysis from the first cycle of coding. This method was effective in the development of barriers or obstacles that inhibit co-teaching as well as skills that need to be present in staff. The ATLAS.ti version 7 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) program was used to organize the transcribed data as a tool by the researcher (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). This program assisted with coding and to establish a hierarchy of codes and domains. The researcher provided the analysis from the results (Saldana, 2009).

The data from CWT was already set up into categories. Specific items in the co-teaching classroom survey tool that were evident were appropriately coded for use in this study. For the purposes of this study, the researcher conducted all CWTs using the co-teaching survey (Appendix B).

After the ATLAS.ti version 7 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) software program was applied to the transcribed data, the researcher reviewed the codes applied to the interview data (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). Then the researcher considered which codes had been placed under which domains. The researcher reviewed the organized data analysis and memos for code definitions to ensure the codes were applied appropriately.

Triangulation. Although triangulation was first used with quantitative research, it has also found purpose with qualitative research (Shank, 2006). This process strengthens credibility by taking multiple sources and substantiating the findings through comparison. This process was used with interviews, questionnaires, and the collected CWT data.

Ethical Considerations

The examination of the leadership role in transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model to provide services to students with disabilities in an urban high school has a few ethical considerations which must be identified by the researcher prior to the proposal of the study. These include the educational background, professional experiences of the researcher, power relations between participants and researcher, and the need for confidentiality of participant responses.

First, the educational background of the researcher should be revealed to bring credibility to the data collected from observations and interviews. The researcher has a Master of Science in Education (MSE) in Special Education. While completing studies in for the MSE, much consideration was given to co-teaching as an appropriate inclusionary practice and the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. Furthermore, the researcher has completed the degree of Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership. The researcher was able to study effective leadership at both the building and district levels of public K-12 education. This consideration has been identified because it may create subjectivity for the researcher in terms of preferring inclusionary practices or leadership practices.

Secondly, the professional work experiences of the researcher and their possible impact on the data collection should be considered in the development of the proposal for the study. There is a continuum of placements to provide services for students with disabilities in the public

school setting. As a special education teacher, I served students with disabilities in all public school settings on the continuum from indirect services and co-teaching to self contained and homebound services. I also worked in all levels of public school, from elementary to secondary. This is important to bring to light because these experiences may create an understanding of some of the responses during the interviewing process where elaboration will be prompted from the participant to have a complete response and complete understanding to ensure rich data collection.

In addition to classroom experiences, the researcher has also served in leadership roles at the building and district levels. The professional experiences are mentioned because they have also shaped the educational beliefs of the researcher as Coordinator for Special Programs, the researcher has experiences in working with co-teachers and building level leaders. This position required supervision of the implementation of services to students with disabilities. Compliance of due process for students with disabilities was also a responsibility. As Assistant Principal in a junior high as well as a high school, the researcher also has building level experiences with secondary co-teaching programs that had been in existence prior to the researcher entering the position.

These considerations have specifically been mentioned because I may have an internal conflict with what I believe should be occurring with co-teaching or what the participant's belief system is lacking to be successful with transitioning to co-teaching (Bott, 2010). To minimize subjectivity with the data, the researcher recorded interview sessions, carefully followed the interview questions, and asked each participant to elaborate. In addition, the researcher purposefully omitted any mannerisms that may lead the participant to believe their response was understood, agreed, or disagreed. This allowed the researcher to have an open mindedness with

each participant. Finally, a second reviewer of collected data was applied. This reviewer considered the data and conclusions from all participants included in the study.

Next, the site of the study for observations was at the school where the researcher currently is the building level principal. Teacher participants for the interviews are on staff at UHS. While there are assistant principals who directly supervise and evaluate Special Education, Math, English, and Science, the building principal is ultimately responsible for all staff members and students. In addition, it should be noted that positive relationships exist between the researcher and the participants. Because education and life experiences shape and impact the development of a person, it is important to identify and recognize the possible impact on the data collection. Simply, the researcher is the supervisor to all of the participants. There is level of power that exists in some of the relationships between the researcher and the participants from the high school site. The researcher established a high level of trust with participants to alleviate the possible perception among participants that the interview could be evaluative.

A questionnaire was used for student data. The questions were open-ended. A school counselor in the student's classroom administered this questionnaire. This procedure was used to lower the reluctance or hesitation of students to be honest or feel coerced. These things in themselves are ethical considerations.

Finally, the possible impact for ethical consideration is the comfort level of the participant during the interview. An assurance form was provided to establish the purpose of the interview to be data collection. This form also established the level of confidentiality for the participant. The interview for participants was conducted at their choice of the coffee shop at the park or public library. The interview was conducted in the researcher's office or on the UHS

campus. This would not have been conducive to high comfort levels for most teachers and parents.

Because of past experiences, it could be perceived that the researcher may have an understanding of some of the beliefs or statements from teachers and administrators. To address these concerns, there are protections that have been set up to eliminate or reduce the appearance of subjectivity. These include a second person to review collected data and an assurance letter signed by participants (Appendix A).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The findings from this study will allow other educational leaders to consider obstacles or barriers which inhibit co-teaching, recognize skills which must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers, and be cognizant of things a leader must provide to transition to a co-teaching service deliver model. Other educational leaders may be able to utilize the findings from this study to develop their own plan of action when considering a service delivery model change. This study is from a single site but certainly applicable in some way to other schools throughout the nation.

The researcher maintained credibility through the triangulation of data and revealing all possible ethical considerations or bias. Using peer review to achieve dependability and guard against researcher bias, three practicing administrators in a local school district, two of whom are doctorate level and one of whom is a doctoral candidate, reviewed data findings and coding of data.

Limitations

The limitations in sample participants are similar to the limitations of a case study. First, as discussed in Chapter One, it is a single site study. Therefore, participants were

associated with UHS or The City Public Schools. While this could be considered a limitation because it is a single site rather than multiple sites, having a single site allows more focus to the particular experience of participants. However, the findings may inform educational leaders who are considering a transition of traditional service delivery models to co-teaching service delivery models for serving students with disabilities.

Another limitation is that the researcher is currently the principal at UHS. As the assistant principal, the researcher previously supervised the special education department. The researcher is not responsible for evaluations of special education personnel. While the principal is ultimately responsible for the education of all students at the building, an assistant principal oversees the implementation of services for students with disabilities at UHS.

Summary

This study used a criterion sampling process to identify individuals who were selected to participate in the interviews. Demographic information was collected from participants. Each individual was asked open-ended questions in order to gain rich data. Data were gathered through the CWT application. All collected data went through two coding processes to seek answers to the research questions. While limitations have been discussed and ethical considerations have been revealed, findings from this study add to the available literature for educational leaders as they proceed with transitioning their schools to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. Chapter Four details participant characteristics, data management, and themes or categories.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine urban secondary educational leaders in their role in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. The traditional service delivery model for students with disabilities has been used to meet requirements of federal legislation. Co-teaching is a service delivery model that has become an avenue for schools to provide educational services through the least restrictive environment while meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities and federal legislative requirements. Consequently, the goal of this study was to inform secondary educational leaders of the transition from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model through adding to the available literature. This goal was achieved by providing answers to the following research questions:

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?
3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

There were six findings that emerged:

1. Participants indicated the leader must communicate co-teaching expectations, collaborate with co-teachers, and provide a common vision of the co-teaching implementation for the school.

2. Participants indicated the leader must consider the scheduled assignment of teachers to co-teaching positions and a common collaboration period for co-teaching partnerships.
3. All school personnel participants (100%) expressed the need for the leader to provide quality professional development.
4. A majority (eight of nine) of school personnel participants indicated content knowledge and varied teaching techniques are necessary for co-teachers to be effective.
5. A majority (eight of nine) of school personnel participants indicated co-teachers must feel ownership and have a clear understanding of teacher roles to be effective co-teachers.
6. All school personnel indicated compatibility and teacher buy-in as necessary for co-teaching.

This chapter includes a description of study participants, data management, themes and categories used, and a summary of data. The participants included both school personnel and students from a co-teaching classroom. A questionnaire was administered to students, while semi-structured questions in an interview format were used for school personnel. A discussion of the process used to develop themes and categories will detail commonalities, patterns, and findings.

Description of Participants

The participants for this phenomenological case study were selected by using criteria sampling as the sampling strategy. Criterion sampling identifies participants who have shared a common experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Participants in this phenomenological case study included school administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, and students. There were nine school personnel participants: two administrators, three general

education teachers, and four special education teachers. The description of the participants is shown below in Table 3. The participation of the school personnel consisted of digitally recorded interviews in a location off campus while Urban High School (UHS) was closed for the summer.

Table 3

Description of School Personnel Participants

Gender	Race	Administrators	General Educators	Special Educators
Female	Black	0	0	1
Female	White	0	3	2
Male	Black	1	0	0
Male	White	1	0	1

School personnel participating in the study provided the researcher with their years of professional work in education as well as the educational settings of that experience. This information is detailed in Table 4. Participants had a variety of years of service in education. The majority of participants had over 20 years of experience in an education setting. Conversely, the majority of the participants had less than 20 years at Urban High School (UHS).

Table 4

Description of School Personnel Participants: Years of Experience

Years	Education Experience	Secondary Education Experience	UHS Experience
0 - 10	1	1	5
11 - 19	2	3	3
20 - 29	3	4	1
Over 30	3	1	0

Student participants enrolled in a senior level co-teaching English classroom were administered a questionnaire by the school counselor. The researcher discarded incomplete questionnaires. A determination of incomplete was made if a questionnaire had more than two

unanswered responses. Of the 22 participants, 19 reported prior enrollment in a co-teaching course and three reported having no prior experience in a co-teaching course. Nineteen student participants reported having a single co-teaching class in the semester. There were three participants who reported having more than two co-teaching classes in their schedule. All 22 participants were classified as seniors at UHS.

Data Management

The data collection began with written consent from the Superintendent of Schools for approval to conduct the phenomenological case study at UHS. Consent forms were also obtained from school personnel participating in the interviews. Students who were 18 years of age signed their consent forms while students under the age of 18 had signed parental consent to participate. All parents of student participants were notified of the study and its purpose through a letter from the researcher.

The interview data from school personnel were obtained and documented in a digitally recorded interview process. The digital recordings were sent electronically to an external source for transcription. A transcriptionist with instructions to transcribe verbatim with utterances and pauses transcribed the interviews. The transcribed interviews were then sent to the researcher via email. Once transcribed interviews were printed, the researcher engaged in descriptive coding to identify topics within the interview responses. When all transcribed data had been reviewed using descriptive coding analysis, the transcribed data were loaded as primary documents to ATLAS.ti version 7 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis, CAQDAS, software for purposes of coding organization (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]).

Student responses from the questionnaires were transferred to a single typed document before undergoing descriptive coding to identify emerging topics. After the descriptive coding,

each transcribed interview was loaded as a primary document into ATLAS.ti software for focused coding (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). This software was utilized by the researcher to assist in the construction of a hierarchy or families of codes created by the researcher identified through the descriptive coding of data.

Descriptive coding was used with student responses and school personnel transcribed interview data. The data were read multiple times with codes assigned to participant responses. When a code was assigned, a definition with characteristics was documented. The definitions and characteristics given to codes were reviewed and revised. The researcher then combined like codes to eliminate redundancy in the focused coding phase of the second coding cycle.

For the second cycle of coding, the codes and data were entered into ATLAS.ti for organizational purposes to apply codes to the transcribed data and student response data. The primary documents were assigned a family in ATLAS.ti by the researcher (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). The families were labeled general education teachers, administrators, special education teachers, and students. The data from participants were sorted under one of these families depending on the position of the participant.

The codes were assigned to each response by the researcher through ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti, version 7 [Computer software]). Using the software, the researcher created a table to view the code frequency in each family and the combined totals of the school personnel data. The researcher created a separate table to view the frequency of codes for student response data.

In preliminary analysis, there were codes with similarities. The participant responses with similar codes were reviewed to determine if the appropriate code had been assigned. Adjustments were made to the code assignment and like codes were merged. This process was documented as seen in Appendix E.

Audit trail notations were used for participants in this case study. Certified special education teachers were identified as SPED followed by a numerical code 0100, 0300, 0400, or 0600. Certified general education teachers were identified as GNED followed by a numerical code of 0200, 0800, or 1000. Administrators were identified as ADMIN followed by a numerical code of 0700 or 0900. Direct quotes from these participants are included in this chapter and are identified by these codes. Table 5 provides a visual summary of these codes used for audit trail notation.

Table 5

Audit Trail Notations

Notation	Participants	Codes
SPED	Certified Special Education Teacher	0100
GNED	Certified General Education Teacher	0200
SPED	Certified Special Education Teacher	0300
SPED	Certified Special Education Teacher	0400
SPED	Certified Special Education Teacher	0600
ADMIN	Certified Educational Administrator	0700
GNED	Certified General Education Teacher	0800
ADMIN	Certified Educational Administrator	0900
GNED	Certified General Education Teacher	1000
STDNT	Student	1101
STDNT	Student	1102
STDNT	Student	1103
STDNT	Student	1103
STDNT	Student	1105
STDNT	Student	1106
STDNT	Student	1107
STDNT	Student	1108
STDNT	Student	1109
STDNT	Student	1110
STDNT	Student	1111
STDNT	Student	1112
STDNT	Student	1113
STDNT	Student	1114
STDNT	Student	1115
STDNT	Student	1116

STDNT	Student	1117
STDNT	Student	1118
STDNT	Student	1119
STDNT	Student	1120
STDNT	Student	1121
STDNT	Student	1122

Themes and Categories

Through consideration of the existing codes, shared themes and categories were identified. The categories from school personnel transcribed interview and student response data were expectations, professional development, and scheduling. The Teachscape Classroom Walk Through (CWT) data were used in the two domains of collaboration and instructional format. The CWT data were used to validate the student response and school personnel data findings through the triangulation of data.

The categories were identified as requisites, scheduling, and professional development along with the themes and codes that emerged under the respective categories. These themes were further organized by the researcher into those specific to the instructional leader and those specific to teachers. While this delineation is not absolute for each category title, there was an analytical necessity for clearly defined definitions under which each theme was placed.

It is helpful to consider the themes in light of the research questions that guided this phenomenological case study. Consequently, the categories and themes were further organized by situating them under the relevant research question. The relevance of the findings is not limited to a single research question, for aspects of the findings were discovered to inform multiple questions. This relation is displayed in the following matrix of Table 6. The research questions for this study and referred to in this matrix are listed below:

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?
3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

The findings that emerged from the data are listed below. These are used in the matrix displayed with Table 6.

1. Participants indicated the leader must communicate co-teaching expectations, collaborate with co-teachers, and provide a common vision of the co-teaching implementation for the school.
2. Participants indicated the leader must consider the scheduled assignment of teachers to co-teaching positions and a common collaboration period for co-teaching partnerships.
3. All school personnel participants (100%) expressed the need for the leader to provide quality professional development.
4. A majority (eight of nine) of school personnel participants indicated content knowledge and varied teaching techniques are necessary for co-teachers to be effective.
5. A majority (eight of nine) of school personnel participants indicated co-teachers must feel ownership and have a clear understanding of teacher roles to be effective co-teachers.
6. All school personnel indicated compatibility and teacher buy in as necessary for co-teaching.

Table 6

Relationships of Findings to Research Questions Matrix

	Findings					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research Question 1	X	X	X		X	X
Research Question 2				X	X	X
Research Question 3	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Responses				X		
CWT Survey Data				X	X	

Finding 1: Participants indicated the leader must communicate co-teaching expectations, collaborate with co-teachers, and provide a common vision for the co-teaching implementation in the school.

The majority of school personnel participants (8 of 9 [88%]) articulated the vital importance of understanding the expectations for implementation of the co-teaching model as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. Indeed, the theme of Expectations emerged from codes assigned to responses that identified the danger of uncertainty regarding requirements for co-teachers or for a co-teaching classroom. In relating a failed attempt at co-teaching, one participant noted teachers "...didn't know what was expected of them. The administration had never told them [teachers] what to do whatsoever...that let them [teachers] know their [teachers] expectations for the classroom" (GNED 0200). This illustrates the leader's pivotal role in clearly communicating expectations to teachers in a successful implementation process. Ambiguity in terms of the leader's expectations inhibits implementation and creates roadblocks.

With eight out of nine (88%) school personnel participants citing the leader's central role in setting expectations for co-teaching, the finding is that the school leader cultivates expectations through continuous involvement and communication with teachers. One school personnel participant expressed this to the researcher by saying:

The leader is a huge impact because if they are involved and they know what's going on in the classroom, ...the co-teaching job [is] so much easier. This year I know what to expect...We need to know their [students] past test scores, we need to know what we are expected to get them to, my job...a leader could guide us in that direction. (SPED 0400)

Another school participant expanded this sentiment by addressing school culture and building relationships:

There's a positive atmosphere and environment. There's a relationship built within the system of the school. The students see it, the teachers see it, as well as the leaders. It's up to the leader...to get them [teachers] to understand the change process. Having staff understand it's not about us, it's about the student...this is where we are going and you [leader] give them that information...(ADMIN 0700)

The value of clear expectations was also noted to be equally important in special education and general education departments. One school participant explained this to the researcher in the follow response:

Establish that it [co-teaching] is an expectation for special education and general education departments alike...to let teachers know the expectation is not to go in and fail. The expectation is have the co-teaching team go in and own the learning process...(ADMIN 0900)

The interview subjects acknowledged that these expectations are reinforced through the school leader's active and ongoing collaboration with teachers. Participants explained the need to feel they were not in this co-teaching endeavor alone. Additionally, this active and ongoing collaboration with the school leader was identified as both a reminder and clarification of the school's vision for co-teaching and their role in the larger picture for implementation. One school personnel participant stated this as follows:

Having your staff to understand it's not about us, it's about the student. Everything that we're doing is about the student, helping the student to be successful, helping the student learn better, helping them [teachers] to assess better, helping them [students] to be productive citizens in society... [mentoring for teachers] is very important. You mentor them. You meet with them once a month. You let them know that you're there. You provide the materials. You provide the understanding and you provide the knowledge. The mentoring, it's very important. (ADMIN 0700)

Half of the participants (five out of nine [55%]) discussed the common vision or mission for co-teaching within the school. It should be noted that both administrators participating in the phenomenological case study were among the five out of nine; however, it remains that three were teachers. These individuals identified the establishment of a common vision as a requisite for successful implementation of the co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. One participant specifically identified a common vision as a support:

[The leader] providing those kinds of supports that we need. I think maybe by reinforcing the idea that both of those teachers are actually professionals and are teachers, and that they're in there for a purpose, and a common purpose, and reminding those teachers along the way. (SPED 0300)

Finding 2: All nine school personnel participants (100%) indicated the leader must consider the scheduling of teachers in co-teaching positions and a common collaboration period for these co-teaching partnerships.

The participants stated that the placement of personnel in co-teaching positions is an important consideration for the school leader. The complexity of this decision making in scheduling was noted as participants described variables that must be taken into account when scheduling staff:

You [leader] make sure the class sizes are appropriate for the students as well as the co-teaching team. You [leader], first of all, consider experience. Second of all, understanding [teachers] working with two individuals in the classroom. You [leader] consider the situation that you [leader] are putting them [teachers] in the classroom. You [leader] try to meet with them [teachers] and see what their background knowledge is to try to get them [teachers] in a situation or a classroom that best fits their needs. You [leader] have to look at the numbers of kids that you have that need resource or inclusion. (ADMIN 0700)

Similarly, one teacher elaborated on the importance of teacher assignment by describing her previous involvement with co-teaching, “My experience is to get the person, the right person placed in the right subject areas” (GNED 0200). Another who noted that when conflict occurred associated with poor placement decisions, the leader should consider “changing personnel. After you [leader] identify the issue, then you [leader] either train or rearrange” (GNED 1000).

One participant noted that staff placement should be deliberate and purposeful for student success. Co-teaching should not be an avenue to strengthen a teacher with weak instructional skills. The participant stated, “Our school leader tries to match peers that will work together. If

there is a teacher that is extremely weak, you don't say, "Okay, there's an extremely weak teacher. Let's make this a co-teaching classroom" (SPED 0600).

Participants also pointed to the value of common collaboration for co-teaching teams. They noted this regular time enhanced the team by allowing dedicated time to plan, discuss student learning, and build relationships. This feeling was conveyed by a participant who asserted that common collaboration was "one of the best supports that I've received is the actual planning period we share. We're able to spend an hour everyday to talk about the lesson, talk about upcoming lessons, whatever we need to do. That's been one of the newest things that's been very beneficial" (SPED 0400). Every teacher participant echoed the value of common collaboration.

Finding 3: All school personnel participants (100%) expressed the need for the leader to provide quality professional development regarding co-teaching.

Every school personnel participant (100%) described professional development as a requisite for effective co-teaching implementation. The co-teaching professional development experiences detailed by school personnel participants offered a platform to learn how to work together, acquire instructional techniques, and build self-efficacy:

The co-teacher is trained to be prepared to co-teach. We've had the co-teaching training [now], but I went many years without training...it was an awkward situation. I didn't have the training. I didn't know. The training, co-teaching training, was very good. I think that's real important. I don't think we could have a better opportunity for co-teaching training as far as the training we've had. (GNED 0200)

It was noted by school personnel participants that professional development opportunities were most helpful when they were numerous and ongoing. Specifically school personnel participants

identified best practices and varied techniques as necessary to be effective in a co-teaching classroom. One school personnel participant noted:

We've had a lot of in-service to provide us with different strategies. Providing in-service, providing those [professional development] kinds of supports. I think just provide professional development that helps us with those different strategies. Something that's actually helped a lot of general ed [education] teachers accept more readily, co-teachers in the classrooms. (SPED 0300)

Professional development opportunities were also credited with assisting with vital team building between co-teachers, the orchestration of different areas of expertise, and strategies for combining strengths. Additionally, school personnel participants appreciated the provision of the professional development opportunities during teacher-contracted time. This was explained to the researcher as such:

We received some incredible training outside of the classroom on contract time. That helped us not only work together as a team, but helped us work with students, how to deal with our differing knowledge, and how to dovetail them in the classroom so students can acquire knowledge. (GNED 0800)

Without such professional development, one school personnel participant pointed out that for some schools this could be a barrier to effective implementation of the co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. Interestingly, this included not only lack of professional development offerings, but also a failure to devote time for such training. It was felt that this ultimately was a detriment to students:

Globally, if everyone's not trained, it will hurt the kids. I say a barrier or obstacle in some schools may be limited time to train and limited resources. That's made the difference in year one and year two for me. (GNED 1000)

The school leader's role in providing professional development was acknowledged by two participants. One of whom explained that the leader, through professional development, is able to build knowledge of, and engagement with, co-teaching: "You [leader] get people engaged in PD (professional development) to find out what co-teaching is. [A leader can promote co-teaching through] a real commitment to professional development with regard to time and money" (ADMIN 0900).

Finding 4: A majority (eight of nine [88%]) of school personnel participants indicated content knowledge and varied teaching techniques are necessary for co-teachers to be effective.

Content knowledge was reflected in the majority (eight out of nine [88%]) of the participants as necessary for co-teaching to be effective. School personnel participants expressed that a lack of content knowledge led to discomfort in co-teaching or intimidation in the partnership. This was clearly expressed by the following school personnel participant:

The most important part is that they [special education teachers] have a knowledge of the subject. The teacher felt uncomfortable in that subject area because they did not have the knowledge base for that subject. The right person placed in the right subject areas. I think mathematics is probably the most intimidating subject for most people. It's just so important that you have a teacher [special education teacher] that's not intimidated by mathematics and so they are okay in being in that subject area. Mine [conflict] mainly

has been the teacher [special education teacher] has been intimidated by the subject.

(GNED 0200)

Other school personnel participants acknowledged the general education teacher brings the wealth of content knowledge to the partnership. The special education teacher who does not have the background in a specific course must be willing to learn from the general education partner. This is revealed in one school personnel participant's statement, "The general education teacher is the expert in that field [content]...she needs to work with me [special education teacher] to help me understand what she needs her students to learn" (SPED 0400). Another school personnel participant further expressed this unique partnership of content knowledge between co-teachers:

The gen ed [general education] teacher brings his knowledge of the subject area, because you cannot assume that your co-teacher is specialized in that subject area. [The special education teacher has] some expertise in the classroom, but sometimes you [general education teacher] could gain really valuable information from either partner [co-teachers] on that classroom experience and how to deal with students. Much to my surprise, I must admit, that being a co-teacher has made me a better teacher overall.

(GNED 0800)

Varied techniques are a part of the skill set the teacher brings to the co-teaching classroom. GNED 0200 described the instructional benefit to students with, "If they [co-teachers] are doing some of the things we learned in co-teaching [professional development] such as station or parallel teaching that gives a student an opportunity to have different ways of having the materials presented to them." One school personnel participant framed this skill set for co-teachers:

You [special education teacher] work with individual students, not just special ed [education] students, but all of the students who may struggle, who may not grasp a concept. You take those students and you [do] maybe a mini lesson with them, pull them in, and get them back on track. The best challenges that I've seen in this past year were: learning things from the teacher [co-teacher], getting to see different types of teachers, you get to see their [techniques] the way they teach and their ideas. (SPED 0400)

Furthermore, the educational preparation of general education versus special education teachers is one that has clear differences. School personnel participants emphasized a marked dissimilarity exists between the focus of special education teacher degree programs and general education teacher degree programs. The school personnel participant felt special education teachers were better trained to help students access the content whereas the general education teachers were trained in the actual content. A school personnel participant articulated this opinion with the following statement:

The general education teacher is the one that has the knowledge of the classroom, because that is what their background. That is what their degree is. The co-teacher does is take that information and breaks it down for those that are having difficulty putting that together and I think that's what the special ed [education] teacher knows how to do is take the information and break it down. (SPED 0600)

An administrative school personnel participant echoed this general sentiment while expanding on it by maintaining that a general education teacher's role is to safe guard the integrity of the content being delivered:

[The] general ed [education] teacher's part is to help you [special education teacher] (a) become familiar with the content area that you're in and (b) to make sure that the

instructional process is a smooth transition. It would be good if you continue to try different models, see what works best in your classroom situation. (ADMIN 0700)

Finding 5: A majority (eight of nine [88%]) of school personnel participants indicated co-teachers must feel ownership and have a clear understanding of teacher roles to be effective co-teachers.

The majority of school personnel participants cited ownership as a necessary requirement for co-teaching. The effect of this sense of belonging was recognized in terms of the solidarity it creates. One school personnel participant noted, “They (co-teachers) are a part of the community [learning community]” (SPED 0600). However, this should not be taken to mean that general education and special education teachers bring the same skill set or knowledge base to the equation; instead, it is the very differences that come to be celebrated in a co-teaching partnership. Each teacher in such a partnership offers a unique part of a whole. GNED 0800 commented, “You may not bring exactly the same skills, but you’re definitely equal in a real, in a decent, working co-teaching relationship.” Another school personnel participant shared this ownership as follows:

They’re willing to take on responsibilities of co-teaching to actually, to be a teacher in the classroom. If the co-teacher wasn’t the kind of person to just jump in and say, ‘Hey, I’m here. I’ll do whatever you ask. I want to be involved in teaching students.’ And you knew they wanted to do that, and then we worked well together. But, if that person didn’t say that and they just sat in the back of the classroom, then it’s like, well, am I their boss? Would they resent it if I go back there and say, ‘You need to help the students’? Do I have the right to do that? They were like one of the students, basically. One thing that the teacher and co-teacher need to establish upfront the very first day is that we are co-

teachers. It's not she's the main teacher and she's just the helper, that they're both respected as both as teachers fully. To make sure that both of their names on the board and both of their names are on the doorway when you go in. You know, both of their names...on the test or whatever, so that they [students] will respect both teachers equally. I think that's important for the students. The students seem pretty comfortable having two teachers in the room. I don't see that that's ever been a problem. I just always say the first day of school, 'You're really lucky. You get two math teachers in the same room. So, there's really no excuse not to have your questions answered. So, you have two of us. Ask questions. It's a great opportunity to have both of us in there.' I haven't really seen that it's a problem with the students. I have a very good situation right now where I have a teacher who knows the subject, who is willing to work as hard equally, and so I think she feels as responsible for the classroom and what's taught and how it's taught as much as I do. (GNED 0200)

School personnel participants pointed out that in order for the partnership to reach it's full potential each teacher must possess an openness toward co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. Additionally, teachers must relinquish some measure of control in favor of a collaborative instructional environment. One administrative school personnel participant opined:

It has to be a sharing attitude. It has to be an attitude of shared planning. An attitude of specifically helping identified students but being accessible to all students and sharing their teaching abilities all across the room. And again, it's an attitude of shared instruction. If we just put them [students] in a class with two teachers, it will fail and

everyone will go back to the fact we didn't have resource. When in fact it only failed because we didn't have co-teaching. (ADMIN 0900)

This shared responsibility extends to the evaluation of co-teachers. Another school administrative participant maintained that such action ensured that the perception of partnership would be continued:

You evaluate both. I mean if you are in a co-teaching situation, when you go in and do an evaluation, you continue to tell them, "Hey, you're a team. You're one." So when you evaluate individuals, but you compare them and put them together as one. (ADMIN 0700)

Finding 6: All school personnel participants (100%) indicated compatibility and teacher buy-in as necessary for co-teaching.

It was not surprising that every school personnel participant mentioned compatibility, in some fashion. It could be a natural conclusion that people who spend seven periods a day together in the same room would find it rewarding if they enjoyed working with their partner. One school personnel participant illustrated this compatibility with the following comment:

It [co-teaching] is a cooperation between two teachers. And the main thing is that you have to look at the resource [special education] students and the regular students as one student. You cannot separate them. And you have to work together, and you have to be compatible. Must be compatible. Other teachers buying into the co-teacher, aspect. You have to be able...both teachers must be able to get along with each other. You must be able to work together with each other. And if he's [co-teacher] absent, I can carry off the class. I was placed with a great teacher that knows history, and he knows it. And I like

that we can sit down and we use each other's strengths. I know what his strengths are; he knows what my strengths are. (SPED 0100)

If the compatibility is absent between co-teachers, this service delivery model for students with disabilities is compromised. School personnel participants noted that compatibility issues could negatively impact collaboration, strategy implementation, motivation, sense of belonging, and self-efficacy beliefs. One school personnel participant described a co-teaching experience as:

I have had some fantastic experiences. But, I have had some experiences that weren't so good. I've been in regular classes with regular ed [education] teachers who didn't want me to be a part of any of the delivery of the curriculum. Basically, I felt like I was an intrusion. I have been with teachers who at times I felt like would rather I just sit and be quiet and not be a part of anything. And again, I have been with general ed [education] teachers who at times have treated me in a manner that I would think would be someone who's below them, beneath them and has not taken advantage of my gifts, my experience, my abilities to work with those kids who have learning issues. Then I have been with fantastic teachers. I've been with teachers who actually ask my opinions. I've been with teachers in the English department who knew I was not strong in the subject matter but still treated me with tremendous respect, conveyed that to the students, and who actually asked my advice, help, and treated me just like I was their absolute equal, and it was very good when we did that. The kids responded to them. But I think, unfortunately, sometimes in a co-teaching situation, I think a special ed [education] teacher is looked on even by students as being a teacher's aide. I think teachers and students can read the teachers' attitudes toward one another and they pick up on that from

the regular ed [education] teacher. But hasn't happened much, but it has happened.

(SPED 0300)

Trust, or the absence of trust, is crucial to compatibility among co-teachers. The teachers must be able to honestly communicate in order to build a relationship conducive to a true partnership. The alternative is a dysfunction that results in the negative and ineffectual learning environment that short circuits achievement. One school personnel participant detailed this dynamic:

You have to trust each other. You have to know that we're both professionals, we both know what we're doing in each content and you have to trust our ability to do what we're supposed to do in the classroom. Another thing is to be open and honest with each other. The most important is to keep the kids first and it doesn't matter if our personalities clash or whatever doesn't work. We just need to remember that the kids come first, and that worked for me last year. We also, you know, if something doesn't go right, you don't stop in the middle of the class. That's what planning period is for. You talk about it after the class, how you can fix it, what you can do better next time. A negative one [co-teaching relationship] would be where the regular ed [education] teacher feels like you're invading their space. And I realize that this is their strong point. They know what they're doing in the classroom but my job is not to go in and take their place...I feel like when they are intimidated, when they don't want a co-teacher in there, it's not going to work because they don't want to share responsibility within the classroom. You're kind of in the way. You're not benefitting the students at all and not a lot of communication is going on. No planning goes on. The problem is when a co-teacher walks into the classroom and has no idea what the teacher is going to teach that day. I'm not sure how I can help and it's kind of like keeping secrets from each other. It's pretty difficult. So,

that's a negative experience I have had. It's not being seen as an equal. I know it's kind of hard to do, but match personalities up that work well together. Sometimes a personality clash can just destroy a classroom and the students see that more than anything. So, it's better if you [leader] can match us up and let us have time to talk and get to know each other. As far as teachers go, that's teacher learning to work with other teachers are the biggest challenges they [co-teachers] would face. It's just how to learn to work with another teacher. They already know how to deal with students. That's not a problem. (SPED 0400)

Compatibility would be teachers working in harmony. However, this is not always possible with every partnership. As GNED 1000 commented, "...some teachers are just not built to relinquish that control in the classroom. You're going to have some teachers that just cannot mesh with another authority figure in the room. Some people...are not designed that way." School personnel participants indicated that the school leader must recognize the complexity of compatibility in the creation of a successful co-teaching partnership. If teachers cannot work together, the consequences are dire. The extremities to which this can go was addressed by one school personnel participant:

That for me what I think is where they're going in the same direction and they both know, it's been clear to them through their planning time, through their discussion, what do they want? What's the end result that they want and they both may go at it a different way, but as long as that one concept is, okay, what do you want them to get out of this lesson is very clear to both of them so they convey that to their students. I think our school leader tries to match peers that will work together. I think there have been some bad experiences with co-teaching here at school with years ago where they had to split

the teachers back up. Once they tried this. I think knowing that it was not going back [to resource classes], I think that made everyone just say, 'Okay, we're going to make this work.' I think they had two strong personalities in here and the teacher went in and started to run the show and the other was going, 'Wait a minute. That's not the way it's supposed to be.' They were really good friends before then and after this, it was so bad, they had to reschedule everybody and they disbanded by semester. I think everybody has to be open-minded to all of this. (SPED 0600)

Creating compatible co-teaching partnerships is not solely the responsibility of the two teachers involved. School personnel participants outlined the role of the school leader in facilitating and nurturing effective co-teaching partnerships. This includes thoughtful pairings, serious consideration of conflicts, and respect for the professionals involved; it is, in short, comprehensive knowledge of staff. These factors in arranging a partnership were enumerated by one school personnel participant:

A positive partnership, kind of like a good marriage, you wake up happy to go to work in the morning, and you feel like you've accomplished something at the end of the day. You are happy to know you're getting the same partner the next year and you know that if anything goes wrong...that you can rely on that other person to help get through whatever it may be. Sometimes it's simply that you have an extremely resistant person in the pairing. And when that happens, you either need to change the pairing or have a serious conflict with the person who's being resistant. I think it's critical. I think that is the school leader doesn't (a) take it seriously, (b) respect both people in the partnership equally, and (c) provide the right kind of training and leadership, that it's not going to work. Because let's face it, in most cases you're putting two alphas in the same room,

and when that happens, there's almost always going to be a problem. So you've really got to have good guidance to make sure there isn't an issue. My first year in the district was my first exposure to co-teaching. Even though I had had students of varying abilities, students with IEPs [individual education plans] and gifted students in my class for 25 years, I had never had a co-teacher...when I was told I would have a co-teacher was 'What the blank-blank-blank do you mean?' I am a competent teacher. Thank goodness that I did not say that and apparently did not let my co-teacher know that, because he was absolutely the greatest gift that the district could've given me my first year...But, I think one of the biggest problems you're [leader] going to have as an administrator is dealing with professionals, the teachers themselves, because there is a lot of resistance. (GNED 0800)

Matching teachers by personalities and subject areas brings teachers with similarities together. This is a basis for beginning to form compatible co-teaching partnerships in an instance noted a school personnel participant:

I think they've [leaders] gone to great lengths to try to match people up as far as personalities and subject areas. And so we have gone along ways because when we first started doing co-teaching a long time ago, we didn't have any of that. (GNED 0200)

When compatibility and teacher buy-in has been achieved, a vision of people working together where it is not obvious which teacher is general education or special education can be seen in a classroom. A team of two people working collaboratively together where neither feels as though they are giving up a status or taking a lower rank among faculty can be a challenge. A school personnel participant paints a picture of co-teachers and teacher buy-in:

A positive co-teaching partnership is a setting in which you really cannot delineate who, for lack of a better word, who the main teacher is. You have two certified or highly qualified [people] teaching together...just a picture of teamwork is the true co-teaching partnership. The greatest challenge is turf...I think that the 'giving up my class' and giving another teacher space, giving another teacher work station and creating a collaborative attitude within a classroom setting and giving up the stage a little to another is hard. In a real co-teaching environment, nobody is giving up anything. They are actually gaining. But, if you could get that part established and understood, I think you could overcome that. But, that is probably one of the biggest challenges. (ADMIN 0900)

The teacher buy-in must be achieved throughout the school environment. While some teachers may be hesitant, professional development and seeing the co-teaching model support students with disabilities will diminish their reluctance and increase total teacher buy-in regarding co-teaching. One administrative school personnel participant described the experience:

You have to get those first kids in there and try to convince them [teachers] that it's okay to be mainstreamed going out. The graduation rate is of course is affected. Your teachers, of course they're affected because they're not ready for the change or don't want the change or don't think that the change will work. So you [leader] have to have total buy-in in your school environment. You have a few gen ed [general education] teachers that may be a little reluctant in the beginning, but once they get a year under their belt, you provide them [co-teachers] with the PD [professional development], I think the barriers...disappear. (ADMIN 0700)

Student Questionnaire Responses. Senior students were distributed an open response questionnaire by their school counselor. Students who were 18 years old signed consent forms. Students who were under 18 years old had consent forms signed by parents. The participation was optional for all students. Incomplete questionnaires were discarded and not considered in data collection.

Student participants identified one benefit as having more teachers help in the co-teaching classrooms. “Having a greater opportunity to have one on one with a teacher. Getting help faster. If something is hard to understand, one of the teachers could help and not slow the class down” (STDNT 1101). This sentiment was further expressed by STDNT 1102, “Having two teachers is more helpful than having one teacher, because you don’t have to wait as long for help as you would with one teacher.” In addition, STDNT 1104 concurred, “They get to you faster and one might explain something better to you than the other one does.” In a classroom with many students, STDNT 1108 says, “You can always get help if one of the other teachers is busy with another student.” The feeling of not being alone in learning was expressed by STDNT 1110, “There is always somebody to help you and give you an individual explanation on a lesson.”

Student participants also indicated there are varied techniques in the co-teaching classrooms. The use of different techniques was expressed by STDNT 1120, “One person teaches a way and the other a different.” Co-teachers use multiple methods to reach all students. This was demonstrated with a response from STDNT 1102, “They each take a side of the room to start teaching, and then they switch to the other side to teach. It helps me, because we see two POVs (points of view) and helps a lot.” Another student participant, STDNT 1110, explained, “One teacher teaches as a whole group while other explains. Each one goes around to make sure

we understand.” Co-teachers work together in using various techniques to teach students as was demonstrated with a response from STDNT 1116, “They ask each other’s opinion on a subject and they use each other’s technique.” Another technique co-teachers often use is parallel teaching. The room is split into two sections. Each teacher teaches a section of the class. This was demonstrated in the response from STDNT 1111, “They split the class in half and teach us a certain thing while the other teacher teaches another thing.” Finally, as simply stated by STDNT 1121, with two teachers, there are “two ways of explaining things”.

Of these two prominent ideas articulated from student participants, the varied techniques responses corroborate finding four from school personnel participants. Finding four identifies the importance of varied techniques in effective co-teaching. School personnel participants detailed how having two teachers in a classroom presents curriculum to students in alternative methods versus a traditional instructional delivery. Students as well as school personnel noticed this marked difference in co-teaching classrooms.

Teachscape CWT Survey Response Data. Data relating to collaboration and co-teaching formats were collected using the Teachscape Classroom Walk Through (CWT) survey co-teaching tool iPad/iPhone application within the co-teaching classrooms at UHS. This phenomenological case study used the Evidence of Collaboration and Co-teaching Instructional Formats domains for data discussed in these findings (Appendix B). The Evidence of Collaboration domain had seven items that required a yes, no, or unable to determine response. The seven items are: joint ownership of classroom space and responsibilities is evident, easy flow between teachers during instruction indicates both teachers were involved in co-planning lesson, each teacher contributes to the instruction so that it appears significantly different from that in on a one-teacher classroom, teachers vary roles in a classroom so identification of special

educator and general educator not obvious, students with and without disabilities seek and receive assistance from both teachers, students with and with disabilities are all engaged in meaningful tasks and identification of students with disabilities not obvious, and consistent appropriate behavior management strategies are used by both teachers. The Co-teaching Instructional Formats domain of the survey required the identification of the co-teaching practice used by teachers. There were seven possible choices of practices: one teach/one support, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, unable to identify format, or none (only one teacher present). The first five choices were considered as evidence of co-teaching while the last two were considered an indication that co-teaching is not evident.

This survey tool allowed the researcher to support and compare perceptual data collected from classrooms to data from participants. The researcher conducted 28 CWTs within the co-teaching classrooms. Survey data were used in triangulation of data. Data from surveys were compared with coded student questionnaire data and coded school personnel participant interview data. This process strengthened the findings from data.

Data collected from Teachscape's Classroom Walk Through (CWT) in Evidence of Collaboration domain are displayed in Table 7. These domain items collected data supported findings five. Ownership was seen in 27 surveys conducted with the CWT survey tool. Instruction flowing between the two teachers was evidenced as well. Teachers shared roles within the classroom. All students received support from both teachers. Students with and without disabilities engaged in meaningful tasks. These survey data findings are further supported from student questionnaire responses and school personnel participant interview data. Table 7 displays specific item survey response data.

Table 7

CWT Survey Evidence of Collaboration Domain

Evidence of Collaboration Domain Items	Survey Responses		
	Yes	No	Unable to determine
Joint ownership of classroom space and responsibilities is evident	27	1	0
Easy flow between teachers during instruction indicates both teachers were involved in co-planning lesson	19	4	5
Each teacher contributes to the instruction so that it appears significantly different from that in a one-teacher classroom	19	4	5
Teachers vary roles in classroom so identification of special educator and general educator not obvious	25	0	3
Students with and without disabilities seek and receive assistance from both teachers	27	0	1
Students with and without disabilities are all engage in meaningful tasks and identification of students with disabilities not obvious	27	0	1
Consistent appropriate behavior management strategies are used by both teachers	21	1	5

There are seven formats available to select in the Teachscape CWT survey tool. In 28 of 28 (100%) CWT surveys reflected co-teachers used different co-teaching formats. This strongly confirms finding four regarding varied techniques being necessary for co-teaching effectiveness. Data collected indicated 14-one-teach/one support models, two-parallel teaching, four-alternative teaching, four-team teaching, one-unable to identify format, and three-only one teacher present.

The CWT survey data collected on Co-teaching Instructional Formats from co-teaching classrooms is presented in *Figure 2*.

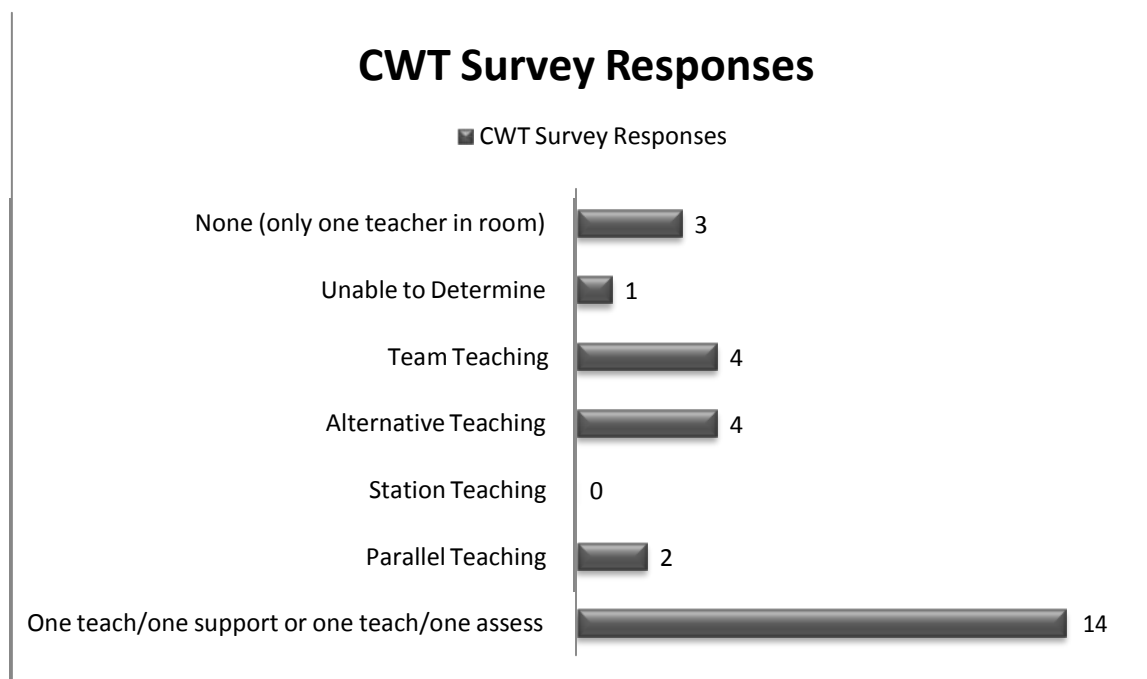


Figure 2. CWT survey data co-teaching instructional formats are displayed with the model name and frequency surveyed.

Summary of Data

This chapter presented the summary of findings from the analysis of collected data. Findings were presented in the organization of categories and themes. In addition, data from student response questionnaires and Teachscape CWT survey data were presented. The student response questionnaire and CWT data were used in the triangulation of data analysis. The researcher took the coded data from the school personnel and compared it with the coded data from the student responses and the survey reports from the Teachscape Classroom Walk Through (CWT) data. This was done to validate and strengthen data findings.

As characteristic in qualitative research, a large number of quotations from participants were included in this chapter. By using the direct responses from participants, the researcher desired to demonstrate the validity of the findings by describing experience utilizing the words of the participants.

The first finding was participants indicated the leader must communicate co-teaching expectations, collaborate with co-teachers, and provide a common vision of the co-teaching implementation for the school. Participants expressed their need to understand the expectations for themselves in regards for co-teaching. In discussing the importance, participants relayed the guidance they depended on for direction from the leader for co-teaching. They talked about previous experiences in which they were unsure what to do, and they attributed that to a lack of direction.

This second finding was participants indicated the leader must consider the scheduled assignment of teachers to co-teaching positions and a common collaboration period for co-teaching partnerships. Participants discussed the need for a common collaboration period to discuss lesson planning and student learning as well as relationship building. Also, it was noted by another participant that the leader should be purposeful and deliberate in the placement of staff in co-teaching positions.

The third finding was all school personnel participants (100%) expressed the need for the leader to provide quality professional development. Participants discussed professional development as an important piece of co-teaching. Each participant commented on the role of professional development in the process of developing co-teaching as an instructional delivery model.

The fourth finding was a majority (eight of nine [88%]) of school personnel participants indicated content knowledge and varied teaching techniques are necessary for co-teachers to be effective. This finding was corroborated by both the student questionnaire response and CWT survey data. Students cited co-teachers described teachers teaching in multiple ways to reach students. Students also described teachers sharing different points of views during lessons. Furthermore, student participants discussed co-teachers splitting the class into sections and each teaching. School personnel participants explained the importance of presenting lessons in various ways so students may access curriculum. In addition, CWT surveys captured multiple co-teaching formats being used in co-teaching classrooms.

The fifth finding was a majority (eight of nine [88%]) of school personnel participants indicated co-teachers must feel ownership and have a clear understanding of teacher roles to be effective co-teachers. This finding was corroborated with data from CWT survey data, specifically in the Evidence of Collaboration domain. In this item, 27 of 28 responses showed joint ownership of classroom space and responsibilities as evident. School personnel participants noted a sense of belonging to the learning community as necessary to co-teaching. Another also made mention of both teachers bringing skills to unite to a whole skill set. In addition, another participant described relinquishing control to enable sharing collaboratively. Moreover, a participant explained that ownership and co-teaching is not achieved by simply placing two teachers together in the same classroom. To ensure the necessary ownership, a school personnel participant stated that the evaluation should be of both teachers as individuals and as a team.

The sixth finding was all school personnel (100%) indicated compatibility and teacher buy-in as necessary for co-teaching. One school personnel participant characterized a compatible co-teaching partnership as a good marriage. Other school personnel participants

shared this feeling in other ways. Another school personnel participant provided trust and honesty as labels for a compatible co-teaching partnership. Co-teachers must be able to communicate with each other and know each other's strengths. Otherwise, as a school personnel participant explained that students could quickly read the attitude of one teacher toward the other teacher. It becomes a detriment to the student-learning environment. Additionally, a school participant acknowledged that compatibility couldn't lie solely on the shoulders of the two co-teachers. The school leader has a responsibility in ensuring the co-teachers have reached compatibility. Furthermore, the school culture must support co-teaching efforts with total buy-in of co-teaching as a viable instructional model for students with disabilities.

Student questionnaire responses corroborated finding four and supported school personnel interview data. Students discussed having more teachers help in a variety of ways. Additionally, students revealed that co-teaching classrooms utilize varied techniques in delivering instruction.

Teachscape's CWT survey data further corroborated these finding four and five. Survey responses showed ownership within co-teaching classrooms. Multiple co-teaching formats were also revealed in the data. This was shown in both student questionnaire responses and school personnel data.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of urban secondary educational leaders in transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model. This phenomenological case study sought to explore the phenomenon of the leadership role in an urban school secondary school transitioning from a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities. It was hoped that this phenomenological case study would add to available literature for educational leaders as they seek information to inform their decision making should they choose to transition to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This qualitative study collected data from semi-structured interview questions with nine school personnel participants, an open response questionnaire with 22 students in co-teaching classes, and 28 Teachscape Classroom Walk Through surveys from co-teaching classrooms. Data were collected from a one secondary high school setting making this a single site phenomenological case study. The data were coded using a two cycle coding process of descriptive and focused coding and analyzed into themes and categories as explicated in chapter two. This study was based on the following research questions:

1. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?
2. What skills must be present in teachers to be effective co-teachers?

3. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

These three research questions were largely resolved with the findings presented in chapter four. The prevailing, or underlying idea, running through the findings was that the school leader is tied, to varying levels, to all aspects in the transition of the co-teaching model as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. This simply means that ultimately the school leader is responsible for the time that is allocated for professional development, the commitment to the development of the vision, the establishment of support for stakeholders, the cultivation of the school culture, the management of personnel, and the allocation of funds. This is a balance that must be achieved by the school leader. For without balance, an instant obstacle or barrier is created. Thus, the transition to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities becomes difficult if the school leader is not attentive or leaves issues unaddressed.

This chapter analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes the findings. The chapter is organized by the following categories:

1. Requisites to be considered or done by the school leader for a successful transition to the co-teaching service delivery model. (*Research Questions 1, 2, and 3*)
2. Scheduling components in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. (*Research Questions 1, 2, and 3*)
3. Professional development of co-teachers in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. (*Research Questions 1, 2, and 3*)

The analytic categories emerged from the responses provided by participants in the school personnel interviews and student questionnaires. As codes were assigned to the participant responses as detailed in chapter four, the researcher engaged in analysis of coded data. It was during this multi-step coding process that themes and categories became apparent. The analytic categories arose from these patterned themes. Connections to the research questions of this phenomenological case study were made by the researcher during the analysis and interpretation of the self-reported experiences of participants.

The findings from chapter four were presented in a readable narrative by organizing data collected from school personnel and student participants as well as CWT surveys. Interpretative insight into these findings is presented in this chapter. As presented with the matrix in Table 7 in chapter four, the categories overlap in answering the research questions. Thus, the complexity of transitioning to a co-teaching service delivery model becomes apparent. When people, time and money are dependent on each other to make a whole, one without the other creates an instant barrier to the process. The analytic categories under which the relevant themes were organized along with the themes themselves is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Distribution of Categories and Themes

Categories	Requisites (Time)	Scheduling (People)	Professional Development (Money)
Themes	Expectations	Staff Assignment	Professional Development
	Common Vision	Common Collaboration	Varied Techniques
	Ownership	Compatibility	Content Knowledge
	Teacher Roles		Teacher Buy-in
	Collaboration - Leader		

Analytic category one. Requisites to be Considered or Done by the School Leader for a Successful Transition to the Co-Teaching Service Delivery Model

The category of requisites arose from themes that emerged from codes that were assigned to participant responses that identified abstract concepts that must to be in place for co-teaching to transition effectively. These themes were then sorted between those that directly communicated the importance of the leader's role in implementation of the co-teaching model and those that were important but did not necessarily mention the school leader's role.

The first research question concerned the necessary considerations or things a school leader must do to effectively transition to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. School personnel participants indicated there must be a common vision for co-teaching, the school leader must set expectations, co-teachers must feel equal ownership of the classroom, co-teachers must understand their individual roles, and the school leader must collaborate with the co-teachers.

A common vision for co-teaching is established by the school leader. This vision should be defined with well-developed goals (Leech & Fulton, 2008). Consequently, the school leader must have a clear sense of what co-teaching will look like in the school and be able to articulate this to stakeholders. SPED 0300 used the term "common purpose" when discussing the need for the school leader to remind co-teachers "along the way" of the school's vision for co-teaching. Having a common vision allows co-teachers to have a road map to provide a continuous direction as the transition to a co-teaching service delivery model occurs. Without this vision, co-teachers would persist with the comfortable status quo of the traditional service delivery model thereby continuing with previous behaviors and models in place for instruction of students with the only change being the two teachers in a single classroom setting.

Expectations for co-teaching as a service delivery model, for co-teaching partnerships, for individual co-teachers, and for student learning within co-teaching classrooms is set by the school leader. Teachers have the ability to provide leadership in the right context (Billingsley, 2007). Although teachers have this ability for leadership, it should be noted that this ability is dependent on context and it is the school leader who must create and define this context. This is particularly true in terms of co-teaching. This is evidenced by one school personnel participant's recollection of a previous co-teaching experience in which "[teachers] didn't know what expected of them. The administration had never told them [teachers] what to do whatsoever" (GNED 0200). This uncertainty when expectations are undefined creates an unsettling environment for co-teachers. Security for co-teachers is achieved when it is clear what their school leader expects from them. This was made apparent through the statement of another school personnel participant: "The leader is a huge impact because if they are involved and they know what's going on in the classroom...the co-teaching job [is] so much easier. This year I know what to expect" (SPED 0400).

While the definitions for coding purposes in the process of separating responses were very different, expectations and ownership are two themes that naturally join in the analytic category. The reason is simply the action or consideration for the school leader is mirrored. The school leader must have an expectation that results in teacher ownership; therefore, the actions the school leader initiates for expectations flows into the actions for ownership. This merging is demonstrated by one school participant, "The expectation is to have the co-teaching team go in and own the learning process" (ADMIN 0900). This ownership is further established through creating dual evaluation opportunities of the co-teaching teams. The school leader is the person who provides the instructional leadership. Therefore when, as explained by ADMIN 0700, "you

evaluate individuals, but you compare them and you put them together as one,” ownership of student learning is shared between both members of the co-teaching team.

The school leader must collaborate with co-teaching teams. This communication offers discussion opportunities to reflect on current practices as well as to identify patterns emerging in curriculum or within partnerships. The purpose of the leader collaborating with co-teachers is to provide a forum for staff support, vision reiteration, expectation reminders, and dual teacher ownership enhancement. A collaborative culture allows the organization to move forward and improve instruction (Kohn & Nance, 2009). This desire for the school leader to be collaborative can be described as “the support and the ability to come and talk to our administrators anytime we want” (GNED 0800). A school leader is the motivator, encourager, navigator, and negotiator (Leone, Warnimont, & Zimmerman, 2009). In this respect, the leader must determine the frequency, structure, and purpose for each collaborative session. As GNED 1000 suggested, “I think the leader could celebrate those [strengths] and point them [strengths] out.” However, collaboration can also be used to purely provide consistent support as explained by ADMIN 0700, “You let them [co-teachers] know that you’re there. You meet with them once a month.” This would allow the leader to listen to teachers and gather progress data.

The second research question sought to determine what skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers. Within this analytic category, ownership is a theme that emerged with a connection between multiple research questions. While ownership is a skill that must be present in co-teachers to be effective, it is also something the leader should consider and ensure exists among staff. If the ownership does not lie within the co-teaching partnerships, the achievement or lack of achievement for student learning among individual co-teaching classrooms belongs to no one, therefore no one will be motivated to improve or sustain the learning. As Hargreaves in

2004, each teacher in the team should feel competent in the partner's ability to make curricular and instructional decisions if they are to have equal or shared accountability in the classroom. This equity must exist between co-teachers to achieve an effective learning environment in this type of service delivery model. GNED 0200 shared, "I have a very good situation right now...I think she feels as responsible for the classroom and what's taught and how it's taught as much as I do."

The third research question sought to identify barriers or obstacles that may exist in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. It would be logical that should the leader fail to consider or fully address the areas discussed above, a barrier or obstacle would be instantly created in the transition process to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities.

Analytic category two. Scheduling Components in Transitioning to Co-Teaching as a Service Delivery Model for Students with Disabilities

The first research question sought to determine what the school leader should consider or do in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. Within this analytic category, it was found that assigning staff to co-teaching positions is a vital consideration for a school leader. This responsibility was confirmed by ADMIN 0700, "[Pairing of teachers] is a big key. Most pairs work out. If the school leader sees there are issues, it is their [school leader] duty to go in and rectify the situation." Co-teaching requires compatibility and communication between partners (Keefe & Moore, 2004).

In the actual assigning of staff, compatibility emerged as a central consideration for school leaders. Having teachers that demonstrate compatible personalities is something for leaders to think about when placing two teachers together. Just because teachers have been

friendly towards each other while on staff, it does not necessarily mean they can work cohesively toward a common goal of educating students to achieve at high levels of learning. As one school personnel participant explained, “If you’ve got good pairings going on, then obviously you’re going to have a lot more benefit to the students,” (GNED 0800).

Having a period for co-teachers to collaborate within the master schedule is also something a school leader should do when effectively transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. The school leader designs the master schedule for the school that includes courses offered plan periods, teacher assignments, lunch periods, and teacher class loads. Building a dedicated common planning period into the master schedule requires creativity in the design; however, the benefits far outweigh the cost in terms of co-teaching partnerships (Billingsley, 2007). SPED 0100 explained, “I like having collaborative times. It is really important when you have the same planning period.” This is a statement that was echoed throughout by school personnel participants. Co-teaching teams must have common dedicated time to co-plan and co-reflect in order to build the relationship necessary for effective partnerships (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Partners must be comfortable in reflective conversations with each other (Rice, Drame, Owen, & Frattura, 2007).

The second research question looked for specific skills teachers need to be effective co-teachers. Collaboration is a skill set that teachers need to be effective co-teachers. While co-teachers may have this dedicated period together, if they do not know how to effectively share information or communicate, they will not be able to plan together, share student achievement, or engage in reflection. This is a skill that must be developed among co-teachers. Many teachers do not feel prepared to work collaboratively with others (Conderman & Johnston-

Rodriguez, 2009). School personnel participant GNED 0800 attributed training outside of the classroom in learning how to “work together as a team”.

The third research question sought to identify barriers or obstacles that exist to inhibit transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. Within this analytic category, if the wrong staff members are assigned to co-teaching or co-teachers are not compatible, a barrier or obstacle arises in the implementation of co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. These barriers can be difficult to overcome (Wilson & Micheals, 2006).

Analytic category three. Professional Development of Co-Teachers in Transitioning to Co-Teaching as a Service Delivery Model for Students with Disabilities

The first research question sought to identify considerations for school leaders or things a school leader must do to effectively transition to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. The school leader should consider professional development for not only co-teachers, but also the entire school faculty. This professional development has a two-fold purpose in creating teacher buy-in within a supportive school culture. The second, separate professional development opportunity for co-teachers needs to explain co-teaching as a model of instructional delivery, demonstrate co-teaching formats, model how co-teaching partnerships collaborate, and share content knowledge for special educators who are not as familiar with their assigned course content standards or frameworks as their general education teacher partners.

School personnel participants mentioned professional development, as something the school leader must provide to teachers. GNED 0200 expressed how the professional development provides a platform to “know what the expectations are for both teachers in the classroom”.

The second research question seeks to identify skills co-teachers need to be effective co-teachers. There are two skills that partners need to be effective co-teachers. The first skill is expertise in varied techniques for instructional delivery. Co-teachers should be knowledgeable about models of co-teaching and choosing an appropriate format for delivering instruction to students (Idol, 2006). Co-teaching formats include: team teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, parallel teaching, and one teach/one support. The decisions regarding which format to use for a particular lesson are in actuality decisions relating to the most effective method of ensuring access to the content for all students. Indeed, GNED 0200 recognized this instructional benefit: "...station or parallel teaching gives a student an opportunity to have different ways of having materials presented to them." Co-teachers must be conversant in these formats for co-teaching to be effective. As SPED 0300 noted, "We have had a lot of in-service [that] provided us with different teaching strategies."

The next skill needed for co-teachers that was identified by this phenomenological case study is content knowledge. Having a general education teacher as a content specialist as well as a special education teacher who possess a clear understanding of the content being taught eliminates fear and barriers to creating lessons, delivering instruction, and supporting students. Professional development in assigned content areas must be provided to secondary special education teachers to increase their content knowledge (Conderman, & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009). GNED 1000 concurred with this stating, "I think not just special ed [education] training for us on how to co-teach, but content knowledge is just as important."

Interestingly, the student questionnaire responses revealed that students repeatedly recognized having more teacher help available in the classroom as a positive experience in the co-teaching classroom. The students also acknowledged having this help did not slow the pace

of the class. One student participant noted, “I can have help without slowing down the class.” While only a single school personnel participant, GNED 0200, noted that she explained to students there was no reason to not have their questions answered because there were two teachers in the classroom, the majority of school personnel participants overlooked this fact that was widely appreciated by students. In fact, a single student recognized it was difficult to get away with misbehavior with multiple teachers in the classroom. While this single student reported this as a negative, it is logical that educators would recognize this as a positive benefit of co-teaching as a service delivery model.

The third research question sought to identify barriers or obstacles that exist to inhibit the transition to co-teaching. Without professional development, school faculty members will not have a clear understanding of co-teaching as an effective service delivery model and co-teachers will not have an understanding of their roles or how to be effective co-teachers. This will create a barrier to the implementation of co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. In addition, teacher buy-in will be minimal, if present at all, since they will not understand how or what the vision for co-teaching is or how that plays into the vision for the school. Yet another barrier occurs when teachers have a feeling of inferiority due to lack of content knowledge in their skill set to which they are bringing to the co-teaching partnership. When this occurs, special education teachers tend to take a subordinate, non-instructional role in the co-teaching partnership.

Summary

Research question one. What must the leader consider or do to effectively transition from a traditional way of providing services to students with disabilities to a co-teaching model of providing services to students with disabilities?

After careful review of available literature and research findings from this phenomenological case study, it becomes apparent that a school leader must consider the common vision, articulate expectations, establish ownership, clarify individual teacher roles, and actively collaborate. The leader must also consider appropriate professional development for faculty and co-teachers. In addition, the leader must devise a master schedule that supports a dedicated common planning period for co-teachers to plan effective instruction. Finally, the school leader must consider a purposeful matching of teachers as co-teachers in teams.

School personnel participants expressed collaboration with the school leader as an important part in the transition of co-teaching as a service delivery model. One school personnel participant, SPED 0100, described the collaboration as a time for the co-teachers and the school leader to communicate so they may “all be on the same page.” Another school personnel participant, ADMIN 0700, noted it was “time to let co-teachers know they are supported” by school leaders. This is likely linked to the administrative support topic mentioned in the literature review and cited in multiple studies as a barrier for schools transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities.

School leaders are responsible for providing professional development for co-teachers. This professional development allows the opportunity for the leader to establish expectations for teachers, clarify teacher roles, and develop ownership in the co-teaching initiative for the school. A continuous professional development plan will give teachers an opportunity to revisit these expectations, refresh skills, and review progress toward the common vision of full implementation of co-teaching.

The master schedule for a secondary school is a careful balance of course requests from students, service needs in special education for disabled students, constraints of existing

available staff and shared staff, and available facilities for required course offerings. This is not to say that the creation of a common plan for co-teachers is impossible. It is a matter of prioritizing constraints, needs of students, and the development of a systematic process of creating a master schedule that will meet the needs of the students and the school. This master schedule is created each year. Secondary schools are notorious for having a set schedule where only the names of teachers change and students' needs must fit within this schedule. For creative master schedule planning, the needs of the students and the school must come before the desires of individual teachers or others.

Finally, the school leader must carefully consider the matching of teachers in co-teaching partnerships. Certainly, one consideration for the school leader when matching teachers would be a teacher's content knowledge and educational background. If at all possible, the leader would not want to place a special education teacher who has experience in reading and college course work heavy in literature with a Geometry teacher for a co-teaching Geometry course. This would be not only place the special education teacher at a disadvantage in establishing equality in the partnership, but it would also create fear. Instead, the leader should inventory the strengths of available special education teachers and begin to match with like content teachers. Secondary to content knowledge would be personalities as a consideration for school leaders. If a teacher, whether general education or special education, presents as overly resistant to co-teaching as a service delivery model, despite professional development efforts, the school leader should consider not using this person as a co-teacher. It could be toxic to the entire culture of change.

Research question two. What skills must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers?

The skills that must be present in staff to be effective co-teachers are a sense of ownership, collaborative skills, varied teaching techniques, and content knowledge. Without these skills, co-teachers may struggle become resistant to change. Therefore attention must be placed in the acquisition and development of these skills to ensure co-teachers are effective.

Ownership is a relation to the possession of the co-teaching classroom. It is a skill because that relation is a learned capacity that the leader can influence. As such, ownership is pivotal to becoming an effective co-teacher for without it, teachers can feel isolated, ill prepared, and lost. When accountability is felt for the learning environment and the students within the learning environment, teachers are willing to make changes that positively impact achievement.

As with any partnership, collaborative skills are essential. Such skills not only ensure productive co-planning occurs, but also the development of a true partnership. If teachers lack the skills appropriate to problem solving and collaborate, they will not be effective in co-planning, discussing philosophical differences, or working together professionally (Carter, Prater, Jackson, & Marchant, 2009). This time is necessary to reflect on student learning data, lesson effectiveness, and appropriate grouping. In addition, this reflection informs future decision-making, resulting in purposeful targeted lesson design and delivery.

Another skill needed for co-teachers to be effective is knowledge of content and varied techniques for the delivery of instruction. The demands of co-teaching are such that different formats are necessary to ensure access to materials presented for all students of diverse learning needs. Differentiated learning needs cannot be accomplished in a strict adherence to a singular instructional delivery format. The traditional delivery format is incompatible to the presence of two teachers in a classroom as it relegates to one to a subordinate position. In addition, co-

teachers must feel secure in the content under study in the classroom to effectively provide instruction. Without the security that comes with content knowledge, teachers often function as instructional assistants rather than as equal partners in the co-teaching environment.

Research question three. What barriers or obstacles exist which inhibit co-teaching?

Review and analysis of the literature and research findings directly relating to research question three revealed that barriers or obstacles exist when the considerations and actions identified as imperative for a school leader transitioning to co-teaching and the skills identified as necessary for successful co-teachers are absent. If a school leader fails to attend to the establishment and communication of a clear vision, the articulation of expectations, the creation of a sense of ownership, the continuous support of co-teaching partnerships, the provision of relevant and targeted professional development, the assignment of faculty, and the dedication of time for common planning, these aspects will become barriers or obstacles that will ultimately inhibit, and possibly derail, the transition while compromising the effectiveness of the co-teaching that occurs. Similarly, the skills identified as necessary for effective co-teachers – a sense of ownership, collaborative skills, varied teaching techniques, and content knowledge-may also become barriers or obstacles if lacking in the teachers assigned to co-teaching partnerships. Consequently, the barrier and obstacles identified, through research and literature review, are the absence of those very characteristics and qualities identifies in answer to research questions one and two.

Revisiting Assumptions

The assumptions discussed in Chapter One may be used to inform the findings of this phenomenological case study. The first assumption made was that the school leader has a

pivotal role in transitioning a school during change. Findings and literature held this assumption to be true.

The next assumption to be revisited is that the findings from this single site phenomenological case study could be generalized to help others wanting to transition to co-teaching in a secondary education setting. Time and utilization of the findings presented in this study by current practitioners will be necessary to prove or disprove this assumption.

Recommendations to School Leaders

A secondary school leader transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities should begin by gathering sufficient data on the available resources within the school. These resources would include available special education teachers, general education teachers, time, and funds to commitment to the initiative. The school leader would also need to have a clear understanding of the student needs of both disabled and non-disabled populations in all courses to be to determine if current staff numbers are adequate to meets demands. Once these concrete type issues have been resolved, the school leader should identify key teachers to support the leader in the development of a common vision and action plan to implement co-teaching for the building. By developing a timeline in the action plan with implementation in phases leading into a full implementation, the school leader can support teachers and increase effective models for teachers to observe as the next phase begins. The school leader should locate a presenter outside the school system conduct professional development for co-teachers. In addition, contracted time should be allocated for professional development to show commitment to the co-teaching initiative. The co-teaching classroom achievements should be shared with entire staff to show importance. Finally, the co-teaching model must be shared with parents and students during meetings as part of reports to the public.

This gives validity and credibility to co-teaching as an instructional model for all students and lets the public know this model of classroom instruction is apart of the school's classrooms in efforts to provide best practices and achieve high levels of learning.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research exploring the impact of school administration turnover on the process of transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities would be recommended. Changes in school leadership would necessarily impact this transition process; however, the extent and quality of this impact has yet to be fully investigated.

Another area for future research concerns sustaining co-teaching as an instructional model. Once the transition has been successfully completed and implementation is in place, maintaining the forward momentum while resisting the pull of regression becomes a concern. Research into the characteristics of efforts that have been successful in sustaining effective co-teaching initiatives would add to the body of literature and assist school as they move from transitioning to maintaining co-teaching as a service delivery for students with disabilities.

A final recommendation for further research is in regard to compatibility between co-teachers. Is it possible to facilitate compatibility? Are there actions that can be taken to develop and nurture compatibility where it does not exist? Since this is such a key indicator of effectiveness in co-teaching teams, research exploring the possibility of cultivating compatibility where it does not naturally occur would bring valuable insight to school leaders.

Conclusion

The building leader plays a significant role in the transformation (Leech & Fulton, 2008). This phenomenological case study has identified skills that co-teachers need to be effective, considerations for the school leader, and the potential for barriers and obstacles to exist to inhibit

co-teaching. However, simply stated, the school leader is ultimately responsible for the school and its functioning. The leader must be cognizant of not only the skills necessary for co-teachers and considerations for a school leader, but also the fact that should an imbalance occur, obstacles or barriers will immediately emerge. This essentially translates to an investment of time, money, and people.

The time must be spent in professional development of teachers, creation of a workable master schedule, consideration of personnel strengths and personalities, continuous provision of support, and the establishment of a clear vision with an action plan. A commitment of financial resources to professional development for teachers, materials needed, and continuous professional development necessary to sustain knowledge and growth is necessary. Finally, the commitment of people in the co-teaching model is an equally important part of transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities.

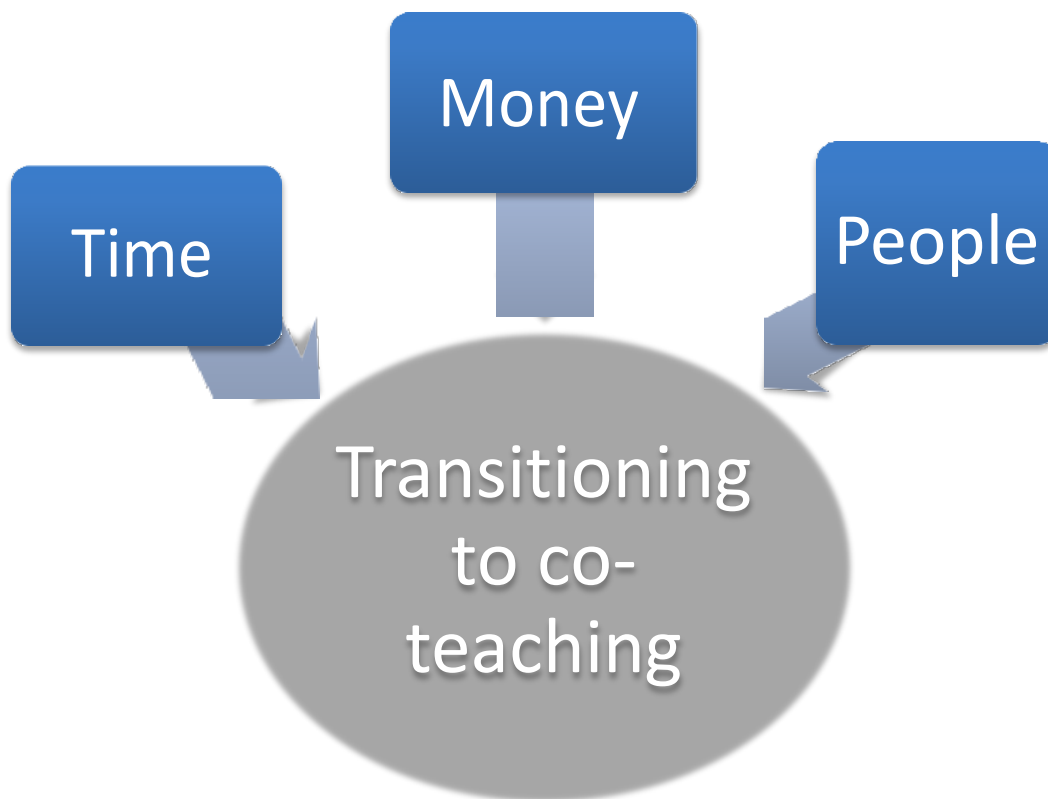


Figure 3. Elements for transitioning to co-teaching are shown to each contribute to a successful transition.

Interestingly enough, the Standards for Advanced Programs in Education Leadership Standards 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 correlate with the findings in the analytical categories (ELCC, 2002). While working with teachers builds relationships, shares decision-making, creates ownership, and promotes teacher buy-in, the school leader is ultimately responsible for not only the direction, but also the stewardship of the school's vision. While this behavior embodies the criteria set for school leaders in Standard 1.0, it also describes the consideration a school leader should have when transitioning to co-teaching as a service model for students with disabilities.

The analytic category two consisting of scheduling connects with Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership 3.0, describing an educational leader who manages the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and

effective learning environment (ELCC, 2002). The master schedule, staff assignments, and collaborative periods are considerations for a school leader in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. The management of these resources in terms of transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities are also criteria for educational leaders.

The analytic category three on professional development connects with Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership standard 2.0. The criteria for a school leader under this standard are that the leader promotes student learning through the instructional programs and professional growth for staff. Varied techniques, extensive professional development, and content knowledge were discussed in analytic category three. The leader must develop a professional growth plan for faculty that is continuous in meeting their needs for delivery instruction to all students.

While these research findings show considerations for the leader and skills needed for the co-teachers to be effective, these considerations that must be taken in to account by the school leader are not a complete mystery to school leadership. The standards and subsequent elements for ELCC Standards 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 give support to the findings from this phenomenological case study that the leader must demonstrate effective leadership in all aspects of the functioning of the school for effective transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities (ELCC, 2002).

Any change disrupts the status quo of an educational site and its stakeholders. The obstacles or barriers that emerge from a transition can derail the attempt to implement co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. The findings of this phenomenological case study offer school leaders an informative roadmap by which to navigate

through these potential obstacles or barriers. The leadership role in transitioning to co-teaching as a service delivery model is critical. The leader must be cognizant of time, money, and the people involved in this process. This phenomenological case study is an addition to the available literature and as such contributes by informing educators of the experiences of school personnel and students as this urban secondary school transitioned to co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities. These experiences and findings should be extrapolated to support other educators as they begin to make this transition.

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APPENDIX A

Assurance Form

I, _____, agree to be a participant in the study conducted by Ginni McDonald. The study is focused on the leadership role in transitioning a traditional service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model for students with disabilities.

By signing this form, I understand the following:

- My participation is completely voluntary.
- I will be interviewed in a one to one setting for approximately 45 – 60 minutes.
- The responses collected from this interview are to be used solely for the purpose of gathering data for a study to complete the requirements of the student researcher's dissertation.
- Pseudonyms will be used in the event that comments, if any, are used within the text of the dissertation. This will protect the identity of the participants.
- For classroom teachers - CWTs will be conducted in co-teaching classrooms.
- I may be contacted for follow up questions.
- I may review the completed paper or transcription of my interview.
- Questions may be asked of the researcher at anytime during the course of the study.

There is no compensation for participation in the study. Any information which has been collected for the purposes of this study will be kept in a secure location.

Should I feel uncomfortable or at any time decide not to continue with participation, I may rescind my consent to participate in the study or interview.

Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Focus on Curriculum

Learning objective(s) is evident to the students (select one)

Evident Not evident unable to determine

Learning objective(s) on target for grade-level standards (select one)

Yes No Unable to determine

Evidence of Collaboration

Joint ownership of classroom space and responsibilities is evident

Yes No Unable to determine

Easy flow between teachers during instruction indicates both teachers were involved in co-planning lesson

Yes No Unable to determine

Each teacher contributes to the instruction so that it appears significantly different from that in a one-teacher classroom

Yes No Unable to determine

Teachers vary roles in classroom so identification of special educator and general educator not obvious

Yes No Unable to determine

Students with and without disabilities seek and receive assistance from both teachers

Yes No Unable to determine

Students with and without disabilities are all engaged in meaningful tasks and identification of students with disabilities not obvious

Yes No Unable to determine

Consistent appropriate behavior management strategies are used by both teachers

Yes No Unable to determine

Co-Teaching Instructional Formats

Co-Teaching formats observed

One Teach/One Support or One Teach/One Assess Parallel Teaching Station Teaching Alternative Teaching Team Teaching Unable to identify format None (only one teacher present)

Instructional Practices

Identify research based instructional strategies (used by teacher)

Identifying similarities and differences Summarizing and note taking Reinforcing effort and providing recognition Homework and practice Nonlinguistic representations Cooperative learning Setting objectives and providing feedback Generating and testing hypotheses Questions, cues, and advance organizers Other Not observed

Identify grouping format

Whole group Individual Pairs Small groups Homogeneous groups Heterogeneous groups

The teacher is responding to specific learning needs through differentiation of:

Content Process Product Learning Environment Unable to determine None

Appendix C

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

Preliminary Script: “This is Ginni McDonald. Today’s date is (day and date). It is (time), and I am here in (location) with (name of interviewee), the (position/title) of (school and district). We will be discussing the transition to co-teaching in an urban secondary setting.

1. Tell me about yourself professionally.

1.1.How long have you worked in (district)? _____

1.2.How long have you worked at (school)? _____

1.3.How many total years do you have in education? _____

1.4.How long have you worked in a secondary setting? _____

1.5.Have you ever worked in an elementary setting? _____

1.6.How long have you been in a co-teaching position? _____

1.7.Have you ever served students in a resource setting? _____

1.8.If so, how many years were you in this setting? _____

1.9.What degrees and licensure areas have you obtained? When did you receive them? Where did you receive them?

2. Describe a positive co-teaching partnership.

3. Describe the general education teacher's part in the co-teaching partnership.

4. Describe the special education teacher's part in the co-teaching partnership.

5. Describe the supports or resources the school leader provides or should provide to the co-teaching partnerships.

6. How are conflicts resolved between co-teaching partners?

7. How does the school leader impact co-teaching partnerships? Classes?

8. Tell me about your experience of great challenges of co-teaching partnerships? Classes?

9. As resource classes decrease and co-teaching classes increase, describe the challenges the school may face. Teachers? Students?

10. Tell me about your opinion how a school leader can facilitate a transition from resource classes to co-teaching classes?

11. Tell me about barriers or obstacles which exist in the school to inhibit a transition from resource classes to co-teaching classes.

12. How can the school leader promote a transition to co-teaching as a service delivery with regard to:

12.1. Professional Development?

12.2. Student learning (accountability)

12.3 Mentoring

12.4 Evaluation

13. Is there anything you would like to share about transitioning from a traditional resource service delivery model to a co-teaching service delivery model in the secondary setting?

APPENDIX D

Participation in answering the following questions is voluntary. These questions are being asked to collect data as part of a graduate student's dissertation work necessary to complete the studies for the Education Leadership doctoral program at the University of Arkansas. This research is an effort to help high school leaders in transitioning to co-teaching models. These are classes with two teachers teaching students. There is no compensation for participating in this study. You will not be required to provide any personal or identifiable information. Thank you for your consideration.

Please provide as much information as possible in answering these questions.

1. Please circle your subject(s) of the class or classes where you currently have two teachers.

English Math Science Social Studies/History

2. Please circle your current grade.

10 11 12

3. When your principal is in your co-teaching classes, what is your principal doing?

4. Have you ever had a class with two teachers before?

5. Name some things you like about having two teachers in a class.

6. Name some things you do not like about having two teachers in a class.

7. How do your teachers work together to teach you?

Appendix E

<i>Developmental Phases of Analytical Framework</i>	<i>Explanation and Descriptions of Resulting Changes to Coding Scheme</i>
<p>(1) Coding scheme version 1: May 2012 After the review of literature, the researcher developed an initial coding framework for the dissertation proposal.</p>	<p>This coding scheme was developed based on the researcher's initial ideas based on the conceptual framework and review of literature for suggested coding systems and data organization for phenomenological and case study research for qualitative studies. A two cycle system of coding was employed. The first cycle of coding used the descriptive coding of data were used with the transcribed interview data. The second cycle of coding used focused coding on data (Saldana, 2009).</p>
<p>(2) Coding scheme version 2: November 2012 Descriptive coding was applied to data.</p>	<p>After the researcher applied descriptive coding to the transcribed interview data and student response data, the definitions for codes assigned to responses were reviewed by the researcher prior to focused coding and ATLAS.ti</p>
<p>November 2012 The documents were loaded to ATLAS.ti so the researcher could apply focused coding to data. The codes were reviewed again for accuracy.</p>	<p>There were 32 codes used with the school personnel interview data derived from the initial descriptive coding process. These codes were applied with the researcher utilizing ATLAS.ti for data organization purposes.</p>
<p>(3) Coding scheme version 3: December 2012 Descriptors are to abstract or to narrow. Codes and the assignments were reviewed.</p>	<p>Upon review of the codes assigned to responses, it appeared some codes were similar or interchangeable in the meaning of the participant's responses. Therefore, "Roles-SPED" was combined with "Roles-GEN" to create "Teacher Roles", "Partnership" and "Cooperation" were combined with "Compatibility", "Collaboration-teachers" and "Common Planning" were combined to create "Common Collaboration", "Adapting Curriculum" was combined with "Varied Techniques" for a single "Varied Techniques" code, and "Teacher Fear" was combined with "Teacher Buy in" for a single "Teacher Buy in" code.</p>
<p>December 2012 The data were reviewed to determine what themes or categories had emerged.</p>	<p>The final code count is 27. It appears there are three categories with themes. Each interview was reviewed to determine what codes were applied to each participant. The codes were then considered in terms of how many of the participants responded with that individual code assignment. The researcher was looking at the frequency of the codes and determined to rule out whether the frequency was higher due to a single participant having more responses for a single code or if the code had added value because more participants had responses including that code. This increased the validity of the findings.</p>

