

**Exploring the Teaching Practices of Educators
Working in Inclusive Instructional Settings with
Students with Learning Disabilities**

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(ABSTRACT)

Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 set higher standards for the education of students with disabilities. In addition, to the original purposes of the law that ensured a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE), amendments mandated that students with disabilities be included in state accountability and assessment systems, moving educators from an age of accessibility to an age of accountability. This legislation also ensured that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate, which has influenced educators toward including more students with disabilities in the general education environment.

With the increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities (LD) educated in the general education environment, educators face the challenge of providing these students opportunities to access the general curriculum, while ensuring that they receive FAPE. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the teaching practices of special and general educators in the planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and caring of students with LD in inclusive instructional settings to examine how they are aligning their practices to ensure FAPE for these students.

Data were collected through a qualitative design, using focus group methodology. A total of 3 special educator and 3 general educator focus groups were conducted for data collection. Major findings that emerged included (a) the absence of common planning time, (b) the use of whole group instruction rather specialized instruction, (c) the unshared responsibility of classroom management, (d) the limited time dedicated to monitoring the learning and academic progress of students with LD, (e) the controversy surrounding adjusting instruction for students with LD, and (f) the importance of teachers showing students with LD that they care about them and their success. Data revealed that the practices of special and general educators align only in the areas of classroom management, particularly in providing classroom routines, and caring. In all other areas, not only do their practices not align, emphasis placed on each area varies within and between special and general educator focus groups.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men – the balance-wheel of the social machinery. Horace Mann (1796-1859)

Educational standards create a framework, not a strait jacket (Reeves, 2001). They provide a map for where curriculum and instruction should go, identifying what teachers must teach and students should know (McDonnell, McLaughlin, & Morison, 1997). Although the goal is for all students to reach these standards, the path for each student to reach these should not be the same. Standards do not have to lead to standardization. In fact, with the diversity of students found in today's classrooms, standardization of classroom practices is impossible if the needs of all students are to be met.

With the reauthorization of the IDEA in 1997, it was mandated that students with disabilities be included in state accountability and assessment systems. This mandate was recently reinforced when President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Such legislation has influenced the inclusion of many more students with disabilities in the general education environment to the maximum extent appropriate. Thus, not only are students with disabilities expected to meet the same state standards as their peers without disabilities, general educators are playing a much larger part in the direct education of this population because of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education environment.

With the growing numbers of students with disabilities being included in the general education classroom and the pressure of state standards, teaching has increasingly become more complex. However, the role of the general educator has probably changed most dramatically.

These teachers now share the responsibility with the special educators for ensuring that students with disabilities are progressing towards these standards, as well as addressing issues posed by their disabilities. These general educators are responsible for providing the accommodations and modifications needed to help students with disabilities access the general curriculum. They are also accountable for providing instruction focused on individual need, instruction that is “carefully planned, intensive, urgent, relentless, and goal-directed” (Zigmond, 2001, p. 10)-- instruction that many general educators ignore as they continue to deliver daily lessons geared to the class as a whole, with little to no use of strategies that promote the academic achievement of students with disabilities (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; deBettencourt, 1999; Vaughn & Schumm, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Since the report, *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983 by the National Commission of Excellence in Education, a wave of reform has moved through our nation’s schools. Students with disabilities, however, have traditionally been excluded from the majority of educational reform initiatives. Their needs were often ignored when policymakers and educators developed new standards and requirements for teaching and learning (Kochlar, West, & Taymans, 2000). This oversight, unfortunately, only reinforced the notion that historically most students with disabilities were not held to the same standards as their peers and that teachers were not accountable for educating them to the same level (Thurlow, House, Scott, & Ysseldyke, 2000). Thus, students with disabilities served no part in the accountability and assessment systems of our schools.

The dominant catalyst leading to the inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability and assessment systems is federal legislation. During the last decade, several

federal initiatives have been instituted that support standards-based reforms and the accessibility to them by students with disabilities (McDonnell et al., 1997). The general significance of all these laws, is to “promote excellence and equity” in the education of all students (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

After the report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), it was apparent to the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) that the United States would have to improve the quality of education delivered to our youth to meet the current and future demands of our society and to remain competitive among the other nations of the world (NEGP, 1999). Therefore, during the 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit, a coalition of state governors concerned about the ailing state of America’s public schools proposed a set of National Education Goals that were adopted to improve America’s educational performance. These educational goals became the foundation of Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which was signed into law by President Clinton on March 31, 1994.

The third National Education Goal is devoted to student achievement and citizenship. Although the goal does not directly address students with disabilities, “all students” is distinctively defined as such to include students with disabilities (20 U.S.C. § 5802(a)(1)). More specifically, the goal states the following:

By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter..., and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation’s modern economy. (20 U.S.C § 5812(3)(A))

In adopting this goal, the NEGP initiated the push to “set more rigorous academic standards and design more challenging assessments” (NEGP, 1999, p. 3). In turn, when it

became part of *Goals 2000*, it became part of one of the first few federal initiatives to support standards-based reform and the integration of students with disabilities in such practices (McDonnell et al., 1997).

However, the 1997 Amendments of the IDEA are “the most prescriptive of the laws with respect to the role of assessment of results as part of the education of students with disabilities” (Shriner, 2000, p. 233). With the recent revisions, there is a demand for the accountability of students with disabilities, including not only a focus on results of education but also the inclusion of data regarding this population in public reports (Ysseldyke et al., 1998). More specifically, the IDEA mandates that states establish performance goals for students with disabilities that are consistent with those for students without disabilities (20 U.S.C § 1412(a)(16)(A)), which assist in aligning special education policy with other federal initiatives such as *Goals 2000*.

Educational indicators must also be created in order to assess the progress of this population towards these goals (20 U.S.C § 1412(a)(16)(B)). Additionally, students with disabilities are required to be included in state and district assessment programs to the greatest extent appropriate (20 U.S.C § 1412(a)(17)(A)). The results of the assessments of these students must be reported in the same manner as those of students without disabilities (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(17)(B)). This law made it clear that the future of special education would be focused on teaching and learning and better student outcomes. In addition, these new legal provisions, “signal a clear presumption that students with disabilities should have access to the general curriculum and to the same opportunity to learn challenging and important content that is offered to all other students irrespective of the setting” (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 9).

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law NCLB, which also mandates increased accountability for all students. It states the following:

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. (20 U.S.C. § 6301)

One way in which this purpose can be accomplished is by “meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our nation’s highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance” (20 U.S.C § 6301(1)).

Who is taking responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities have the opportunity to meet state standards now that they are mandated to be included in state accountability and assessment systems? Who is ensuring that the educational needs of students with disabilities are being met, as well? According to the *23rd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), during the 1998-1999 school year, 2,628,322 students with disabilities between ages 6 and 21 received the majority of their instruction during the school day in general education classrooms. Approximately half of these students (1,269,777) were students with learning disabilities (LD). Therefore, a great deal of the responsibility for educating these students falls on general educators. What are general educators doing in conjunction with special educators to ensure the success of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?

Need for the Study

A review of the research literature related to the teaching practices of special and general educators working in inclusive instructional settings resulted in findings that focused specifically on planning (Schumm et al., 1995; Schumm & Vaughn, 1992; Vaughn & Schumm, 1994),

instruction (Ellet, 1993; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991), classroom management (Smith, 1983), progress monitoring (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Hamlett, 1989; Deno, Fuchs, Marston, & Shin, 2001), clinical assistance (Menlove, 1999; Nevin, Semmel, & McCann, 1983; Pugach, 1982), and caregiving (McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993; Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997). However, none of these research studies examined comprehensively at all of the above instructional elements, which according to Duke (1987) comprise a “vision of teaching excellence” (p. 67). Most of the research studies investigated the perceptions and willingness of general educators to do what is necessary to meet the needs of students with LD in inclusive instructional settings. Many of the researchers noted above excluded special educators as participants in their studies and, therefore, excluded their involvement in the inclusion model.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching practices of special and general educators working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD to examine how they are aligning their practices to ensure FAPE for these students. Duke (1987) suggested in reference to his vision of teaching excellence that teacher skill and judgment in six key teaching situations are necessary for student success. Therefore, this study will investigate teaching practices used by special and general educators in the planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and caring for students with LD in inclusive instructional settings at the middle school level.

Research Questions

The overall research question that was explored was this: How do teachers working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD characterize their teaching practices? Supporting questions included: (a) How do special educators describe their teaching practices?

(b) How do general educators describe their teaching practices? and (c) How are the teaching practices of general and special educators similar and different in inclusive instructional settings?

Conceptual Framework

“To say that no one approach to teaching is invariably the best is not to justify every teacher simply doing whatever he or she wants” (Duke, 1987, p. 66). Duke emphasized there must be a vision of teaching that outlines what teachers must do to promote student learning, that denotes what specific data must be collected to make decisions about instructional improvement, and that assists in recognizing how students benefit from instruction. These elements of teaching have become particularly important with the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom because the responsibility for the education of this population no longer solely rests on special educators. Duke’s vision of teaching excellence consists of six central teaching situations that he identified as “crucial to student achievement and development” (p. 66): (a) planning, (b) instruction, (c) classroom management, (d) progress monitoring, (e) clinical assistance, and (g) care-giving.

Duke’s (1987) vision integrated key features from Adler’s threefold vision of teaching, Purkey’s vision of invitational teaching, Hunter’s clinical teaching, Bloom’s teaching for mastery, and direct instruction theory. Duke’s intention was “not to create an ‘ultimate’ vision of teaching, but to identify common situations in which teacher skill and judgment appear to be crucial to student achievement and development” (p. 66).

Duke’s (1987) vision of teaching excellence may not specify whether it is for general educators, special educators, or all teachers; however, it is a vision about the continuous improvement of instruction. It is a vision important for all teachers of today’s diverse classrooms where all students are expected to meet specific educational standards. Duke’s vision

encompasses six situations, which are necessary to promote student academic achievement. He described a vision as “a sense of the planning that precedes instruction and of the outcomes when that instruction proves effective” and as a “complex image of what a classroom looks like when students are learning” (p. 57). Although Duke’s vision does not acknowledge special educators, his vision supports what general and special educators must focus on to create a conducive learning environment where student success is the primary product of the interaction of his six situations. The conceptual framework in Figure 1 displays how the alignment of practices of both general and special educators reflected in Duke’s six teaching situations affect the outcomes of students with LD in inclusive instructional settings.

According to Duke’s (1987) vision, the six situations are defined as followed:

1. Planning is the starting point. Planning focuses on the instruction of specific objectives, helping to frame daily lessons. Duke specifically stated that, when planning, teachers should take into consideration the backgrounds and the abilities of all students in the classroom. Thus, individual planning is necessary.
2. Instruction is the actual delivery of content material based on state and district objectives. Whether teaching content material for the first time, reteaching previously learned material, or reviewing material, communicating expectations is extremely important. In addition, teachers should model positive attitudes about learning and use a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of a diverse group of students.
3. Classroom management is necessary to maintain an environment conducive to learning. Classroom management encompasses time management, the development

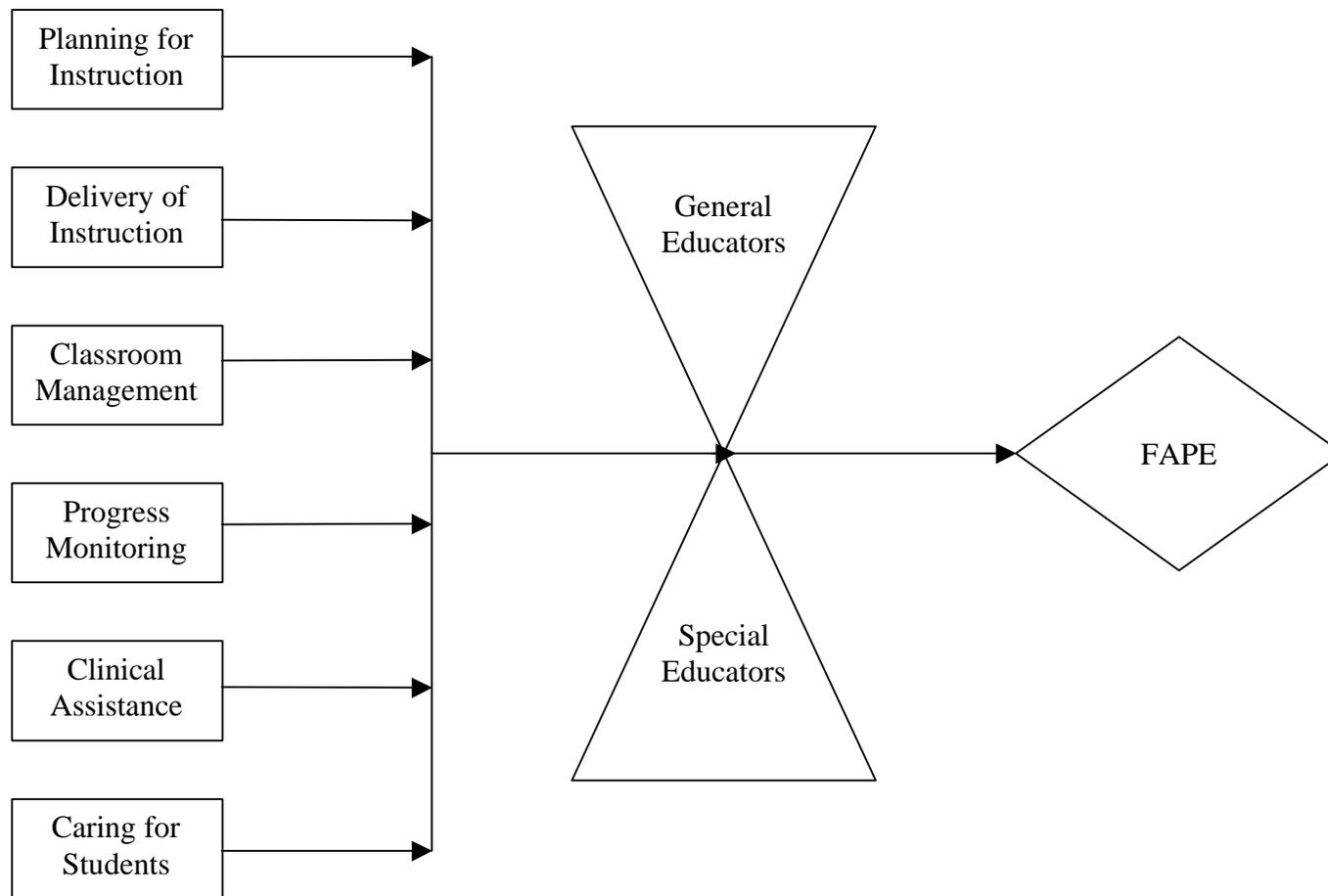


Figure 1. Conceptual framework displaying how the alignment of practices reflected in Duke’s six teaching situations affect the outcomes of students with LD in the inclusive instructional setting. Adapted from *School Leadership and Instructional Improvement* by D. L. Duke, 1987, p. 68.

of rules and consequences for inappropriate behavior, and also the monitoring of resources needed for students to benefit from daily instruction.

4. Progress monitoring involves frequent teacher checks through questioning during lessons, class work, homework, and tests to ensure student understanding of objectives. Also, students should receive prompt and meaningful feedback.
5. Clinical assistance “necessitates dealing with the needs of an individual rather than a group” (p. 69). This includes referral for special education services as well as the general educators’ abilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in their individualized education program (IEP). For the purpose of this study, it will also include the involvement of general educators in the development and implementation of IEPs.
6. Caring for students involves recognition and reinforcement for students who work hard. Another aspect of caring is respecting student differences and encouraging students to do so, too.

With the increasing number of students with disabilities receiving their specialized educational program in the general education classroom, general educators are increasingly responsible for providing instruction to students with disabilities. Therefore, these six central teaching situations are critical for not only special educators but for general educators, as well, if students with disabilities are to be successful in the general education classroom.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this study. Listed below are the specific definitions for these terms as they apply to this particular study.

Accommodations are defined as modifications of instructional delivery that assist in meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities without altering the content (King-Sears, 1997).

Adaptations are defined as modifications to the methods of instructional delivery that assist in meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities by altering the content (King-Sears, 1997).

Collaborative inclusion is when special educators serve as consultants to general educators, collaborating with them in planning and implementing instructional accommodations and adaptations in the general education environment (Hallanhan, Kauffman, & Lloyd, 1999).

FAPE is ensured through special education and related services that are at no cost to the parent, that meet state standards, that are provided at an appropriate school, and that are provided in accordance with the student's IEP (20 U.S.C. § 1401(8)).

IDEA is a special education law with the purpose to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living” (20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1)(A)). In addition, it ensures that the rights of students with disabilities and their parents are protected (20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1)(C)) and that parents and educators are provided the tools needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities (20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(3)).

IEPs are “a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section” (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)). The rest of the section identifies major components of the IEP, which according to Bateman and Linden (1998), include the following for all students with disabilities: present levels of

performance, measurable goals and objectives, assessment status, nonparticipation with nondisabled students, all needed services fully described, and progress reporting.

Inclusion refers to the placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms with peers without disabilities with appropriate programming (Yell, 1998).

LRE refers to the level of services that is most appropriate for the student while providing integration with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate (Bos & Vaughn, 1998).

Special education is defined as “specifically designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability” (20 U.S.C. § 1401(25)).

Students with specific learning disabilities have the following:

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, or do mathematical equations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps or mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage. (20 U.S.C. §1401(a)(15)).

Overview of Methodology

The qualitative methodology used in this study was focus groups. Data collection procedures consisted of 3 focus groups of general educators and 3 focus groups of special educators, with an ideal group size of 5 participants. Duke’s six teaching situations guided the questions asked of participants during the focus groups. At the beginning of each focus group,

the group was issued a 5-item questionnaire, consisting of questions dealing with the critical components of special education, to complete together. In addition, at the conclusion of each focus group the participants identified key concepts of the discussion with the assistant moderator.

Delimitations/Limitations

The data gathered for this study represent both middle school special and general educators working with students with LD in inclusive instructional settings in one urban school district. This limits the generalizability of the results of this study to samples other than those with similar characteristics of this study. Therefore, detailed descriptions that characterize this district are provided in Chapter 3.

Another limitation of the study is that the eligibility parameters used by child study teams to find students eligible for special education and related services under the specific learning disabilities category for this district may vary from other districts because of state and local interpretation of IDEA. Thus, a detailed description of these eligibility parameters are also provided in Chapter 3.

Significance of the Study

The term learning disability was used for the first time in 1963 by Samuel Kirk (Houck, 1984; Kirk, 1981). The Children with Learning Disabilities Act (PL 91-230) passed in 1969 initiated the acceptance of this category of exceptional learners (Kirk, 1981; Kirk & Chalfant, 1984) and laid the groundwork for the inclusion of the category in the landmark legislation, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, which was renamed to the IDEA in 1990.

The ultimate goal of EAHCA/IDEA is to ensure that all students with disabilities are provided FAPE. Specifically, the purpose outlined by the 1997 Amendments of the IDEA is to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living” (20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1)(A)), as well as “to assess, and ensure the effectiveness, efforts to educate children with disabilities” (20 U.S.C § 1400(d)(4)).

FAPE is ensured for students with disabilities through the following:

Special education and related services that (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (B) meet the standards of the state educational agency; (C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved; and (D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under [this Act]. (20 U.S.C. § 1401(8))

Special education is defined as “specifically designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability” (20 U.S.C. § 1401(25)). FAPE has been further explained as “instruction reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit, developed in a manner procedurally consistent with the law, and designed for the unique educational needs of the child” (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999, p. 95).

Another major provision of the EAHCA/IDEA that affected the education of students with LD was the LRE mandate. Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, and Leal (1995) defined this term as “a rule requiring schools to educate students with disabilities with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate” (p. 53). This mandate was further emphasized by Madeline Will, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S.

Department of Education, in a controversial keynote address at the Wingspread Conference on “The Education of Special Needs Students: Research Findings and Implications for Policy and Practice” held in Racine, Wisconsin in 1985. Will stated that the current educational “pull-out” approach used with students with disabilities was not effective. She claimed that the needs of these students could be better met if they were in the general education environment instead of segregated from the overall school population.

Today students with LD continue to comprise the most prevalent disability among students age 6 through age 21. In 1998–99, 5,683,707 students with disabilities were served under Part B of the IDEA. Of these, 2,871,966 (50.5%) were identified as having learning disabilities. Additionally, the majority of these students received most of their education in the general education environment (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

With the influx of students with disabilities served in the general education environment for most of their instruction, there is a greater demand for general educators to possess the knowledge and skills to provide a dynamic learning environment to a very diverse group of students (Christenson, Ysseldyke, & Thurlow, 1989; deBettencourt, 1999). This challenge is even more complex with the push of standards-based reform and educational accountability.

High quality academic standards and systems that support such standards are currently the focus of education (McDonnell et al., 1997; Nolet & Mclaughlin, 2000). Recent federal legislation has supported standards-based reform and the inclusion of students with disabilities in such initiatives. Thus, students with LD must be exposed to high quality instruction and expectations to have the opportunity to meet the same state standards as students without disabilities. Both general and special educators are now pressured to change their instructional

practices and other aspects of the educational process to meet the needs of students with disabilities under such conditions (McDonnell, et al., 1997).

Therefore, along with FAPE and the LRE, validated instructional practices that make it possible to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities and provide them with the opportunities to access high quality academic standards are necessary. “This trio of FAPE, LRE, and validated practices has been called by some ‘the holy trinity’ of special education law” (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999, p. ix). As more students with disabilities return to general education classrooms, it is important that general and special educators use teaching practices that will provide students with LD opportunities to access the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate while ensuring that these students also receive FAPE.

Organization of the Study

This study explored the teaching practices of general and special educators working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD with respect to the six teaching situations in Duke’s vision of teaching excellence: planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and caring. In Chapter 2, the review of literature begins with the history of the term learning disability, provides a philosophy for inclusion, and, finally, focuses on professional commentary and research studies that address Duke’s six teaching situations. Chapter 3 includes the methodology, which was used to complete the study, beginning with a description of the setting, participant identification, data collection procedures, and the analysis of focus group data. Chapter 4 reports and discusses the results, and Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the conclusions, implications and recommendations for practice, and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with background information on the birth of the term learning disability and the definition of students with LD in federal legislation. In addition, it addresses the elements essential to consider in the inclusive instruction of students with LD in the general education classroom. Lastly, various studies supporting Duke's (1987) six teaching situations are reviewed, emphasizing the need for the presence of each one to promote student achievement.

To accomplish this review of literature, computerized database searches of PSYCHINFO, ERIC, and Dissertation Abstracts International were conducted. Search terms included, but were not limited to, special education, learning disabilities, inclusion, teaching practices, instruction, planning, classroom management, progress-monitoring, curriculum-based measurement, individualized education programs, and caring. These searches were generally limited to the time period after the enactment of EAHCA in 1975. References located in texts, book chapters, journal articles, and dissertations obtained from these computerized database searches also led to the identification of additional sources.

Background of the Problem

In 1963, Samuel Kirk used the term learning disability for the first time while speaking to a group of parents and professionals about a group of children, referred by such terms as perceptually handicapped, minimally brain damaged and brain injured, at a national meeting sponsored by the Fund for Perceptually Handicapped Children (Houck, 1984; Kirk, 1981). Kirk stated that these other terms had little educational significance. He further explained that this group of children should be referred to by an educational term that describes their basic problem, which is learning through conventional measures (Gallagher, 1998; Kirk & Chalfant, 1984). Kirk defined his term as followed:

A learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subjects resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors. (Kirk, 1962, p. 263)

Public Law 88-164 was passed by Congress in 1963, initializing the Division of Handicapped Children in the U.S. Office of Education (Kirk, 1981). Although students with LD were not included in the definition of students with disabilities under this Division, research and training in the field of LD was supported by the federal government as early as 1964.

With the encouragement of Samuel Kirk as head of the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children and the pressure of advocacy groups such as the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon and Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas introduced the Children with Learning Disabilities Act (PL 91-230), which was enacted by Congress in 1969 (Gallagher, 1998; Houck, 1984; Kirk, 1981; Kirk & Chelfant, 1984).

According to Houck, this act “(a) legitimized the concept of specific learning disabilities, (b) adopted the definition which had been developed by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children, and (c) provided federal funding for state programs for children and youth exhibiting such disabilities” (p. 5). As a result, many states began to provide services to this newly defined group of exceptional learners that had for years been ignored (Kirk, 1981; Kirk & Chalfant, 1984).

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the EAHCA (PL 94-142). Yell (1998) refers to this law as “the most significant increase in the role of the federal government to date” (p. 62). This landmark legislation mandated that all schools across the nation provide services to all students

with disabilities who require specialized instruction, including the recently recognized students with LD. This law also adopted the definition of LD formulated by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children in 1968 (Kirk, 1981). The definition, after being modified slightly, read as followed:

The term children with specific learning disabilities means those children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Such disorders include conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mentally retardation, of emotional disturbances, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage. (20 U.S.C. § 1401(a)(15))

According to Salend (1990), the major provisions of the EAHCA that significantly affected the education of students with LD, were these:

1. All children with disabilities, regardless of the nature and severity of their handicap, must be provided a free and appropriate education.
2. Each child with a disability will have an individualized education plan that is based on and tailored to address the child's unique learning needs.
3. Children with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment with their nonhandicapped peers, to the maximum extent appropriate.
4. Students with disabilities must have access to all areas of school participation.

5. Children with disabilities and their families are guaranteed rights with respect to nondiscriminatory tests, confidentiality, and due process. (p. 15)

Regular Education Initiative

Although not necessarily part of the inclusion movement, “the biggest push for changes in the delivery of special education services may have come in 1986 in a keynote address by Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, Madeline Will” (Appalachian Educational Laboratory, 1996, p. 8). Her call for general and special educators to share the responsibility for educating students with disabilities was based on research by Reynolds and Wang (1983) that indicated a lack of success for students served in special education programs. She claimed in her speech that the “pull-out” approach used to educate students with educational problems was failing to meet the needs of these students (Will, 1986). Such an approach placed the responsibility of educating students with disabilities on the special educators in special programs. Special programs not only removed students with disabilities from the general education environment, they also did not coordinate their instruction with that going on in the general curriculum. She further stressed that school administrators must combine special and general education resources to meet the needs of an increasing number of students failing through conventional educational methods. Will insisted that the needs of these students with disabilities could be met through coordinated educational services in general school settings. Her claims, however, were controversial and not widely supported by research (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994).

Other supporters of the REI advocated for the restructuring of the educational system to eliminate the existing dual system which emphasized that there are two types of students in our schools, special ones and general ones (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

Additionally, Stainback and Stainback pointed out that a dual system establishes “artificial barriers among educators that promote competition and alienation” (p.107). Under one unified system as the one proposed by Will, it was hoped that the unique educational needs of all students would be recognized and accommodated in the general education environment. There would not be a separate environment where students with disabilities would not receive an education equal to that given to students without disabilities (Gartner & Lipsky). Stainback and Stainback further claimed that merging special and general education would “help ensure that all students not only receive an appropriate education, but that they receive it as an inherent right and not as a ‘special’ provision” (p. 104).

Opponents question whether the restructuring or reorganization as suggested by Will (1986) and Reynolds, Wang, and Walberg (1987) could be sensitive to the individual differences of students with disabilities and not threaten the services they must have to meet their educational needs (Keogh, 1988). Kauffman (1989) suggested by not doing this, REI advocates rejected the basic assumptions that form the foundation of special education services. They consist of the following:

1. Some students are very different from most in ways that are specific regarding education, and special education--not the usual or typical education--is required to meet their needs. In the context of public education, these students should be identified as *exceptional*. Excluding gifted and talented students, exceptional students are handicapped.
2. Not all teachers are equipped to teach all students. Special expertise is required by teachers of exceptional students because such students present particularly difficult instructional problems. Most teachers are neither equipped by training nor able in the

- context of their usual class size to ensure an equal opportunity for handicapped students. Special services will be compromised or lost unless both funding and students are specifically targeted.
3. Students who need special education, as well as the corresponding funds and personnel that are required, must be clearly identified to ensure that they receive appropriate services. Special services will be compromised or lost unless both funding and students are specifically targeted.
 4. Education outside the regular education classroom is sometimes required for some part of the school day to meet some students' needs. Removal of an exceptional student from the regular classroom may be required to (a) provide more intensive, individualized instruction, (b) provide instruction in skills already mastered or not needed by nonhandicapped students in the regular class, or (c) ensure the appropriate education of other students in the regular classroom.
 5. The options of special education outside the regular classroom, and special provisions within the regular classroom, are required to ensure equal educational opportunity for exceptional students. The most important equity issue is the quality of instruction, not the place of instruction. (p. 258-259)

Kauffman argued that the general education classroom is not necessarily the best placement for all students if they are receiving the quality of instruction necessary to meet their needs in another setting.

Inclusion

According to Rogers (1993), inclusion is “the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend” (p.

1). She further added that inclusion “involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with other students)” (p. 1). Such a definition supports what the IDEA provides as the LRE mandate:

To the maximum extent appropriate handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other core facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes and with the use of supplementary aid and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (U.S.C. § 1412(a)(5)(A))

This, however, does not mean that all students with disabilities should be fully included in the general education environment. A continuum of services must be available, providing alternative environments to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. Only after the development of the IEP that addresses the unique needs of each individual with a disability can a placement decision be made. The LRE decision is made on a case-by-case basis.

Along with the LRE, “another component of the 1997 Amendments which supports the ‘philosophy of inclusion’ is the required explanation needed if a child will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular education classroom” (Huefner, 2000, p. 190). Thus, if a more restrictive environment is being proposed that will limit or eliminate such participation, then a justification of such placement must be provided before such a decision is made.

Inclusion is a service delivery model that emphasizes the collaborative efforts and shared responsibility between special and general educators. Inclusion is a collaborative relationship

that is difficult for many teachers because “in regular education, the system dictates the curriculum; in special education, the child dictates the curriculum” (Lieberman, 1985, p. 514). However, successful inclusion is achieved only when both equity and excellence are reached for all students.

Federal law mandates placement practices, stressing that students with LD be educated in the LRE. For students with LD, the LRE is often the general education classroom. Two studies investigated the placement practices for students with LD from 1978 to 1989 (McLeskey & Pacchiano, 1994) and from 1988 to 1995 (McLeskey, Henry, Axelrod, 1999) using data from *Annual Reports to Congress on the Implementation of P.L. 94-142* prepared by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Programs. Data represent all 50 states and the District of Columbia. States report annually services provided to students with disabilities.

McLeskey and Pacchiano (1994) focused on the placement practices for students with LD because federal reports “often do not differentiate students with mild or severe disabilities when categorizing students with emotional disabilities and mental retardation” (p. 509). In addition, students with severe manifestations of the above disabilities are often educated outside the typical school setting. On the other hand, McLeskey and Pacchiano found that most students with LD (98.5% during 1989-90) were educated in typical school settings. Thus, only a minimal number of students with LD are educated outside the typical school setting.

Data for McLeskey and Pacchiano’s (1994) study were taken from the Department of Education’s *Annual Reports to Congress* from 1978 to 1989. They found over this 11-year period that the majority of students with LD were educated in one of the three following settings: regular class, resource room, or separate class. Regular class includes those students with disabilities who receive special education and related services for less than 21% of the school

day, resource room includes students with disabilities who receive special education and related services for 21 to 60% of the school day, and separate class includes students with disabilities who receive special education and related services for more than 60% of the school day (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). However, data prior to 1984-85 did not separate data for students with LD into these three settings. Data were reported for regular class and separate classroom only. Thus, data used in McLeskey and Pacchiano's study combined for regular class and resource class.

Cumulative placement rates (CPR) recommended by Danielson and Bellamy (1989) were used to accommodate for the change in identification rates over the 11-year period of their study. The CPR was computed by dividing the number of students with LD served in a particular setting by the total school age population. This number was then multiplied by 1 million. "The CPR provides a statistic that is comparable to the incidence of students with learning disabilities who are served in a particular education setting, while controlling for changes in the overall student population over time" (McLeskey & Pacchiano, 1994, p. 511).

CPRs were reported for separate class settings and for combined regular class and resource settings. Data for the combined regular class and resource settings collected during this investigation was "strongly influenced by the rising identification rates for these students" (McLeskey & Pacchiano, 1994, p. 511), making it more difficult to interpret the data. However, McLeskey and Pacchiano noted that data for the separate classes were more easily interpreted because of the limited number of students with LD placed in more restrictive settings than separate classes.

Results of the study revealed that the CPR for both separate and regular/resource settings had significantly increased over the 11-year time frame of the study. From 1978 to 1989, there

was a 90% increase in the number of students with LD served in separate classes. This increase was also portrayed in the proportion of students with LD served in separate-class settings compared to the overall number of students with LD. The proportion increased from 17.3% to 21.7% over the 11 years, resulting in an increase of 4.4%. Results also indicated a 43% increase in the number of students with LD served in regular/resource classes compared to the overall number of students with LD, but the proportion of all students with learning disabilities placed in regular/resource setting decreased approximately 4.3% from 81.1% to 76.8% over the 11 years.

McLeskey et al. (1999) continued this investigation of the placement trends of students with LD by examining Department of Education's *Annual Reports to Congress* from 1988-89 to 1994-95. They looked at four placement settings for students with LD. These included general education class, resource room, separate class, and separate school. In these *Annual Reports to Congress*, the placement setting, separate school, includes students with disabilities that receive special education and related services in separate day schools and residential facilities for more than 50% of the school day or those in homebound/hospital environments. McLeskey et al. (1999) also used a similar CPR index to "simplify interpretation of the data" (p. 57) presented in their study. The CPR was computed by dividing the number of students with LD served in a particular setting by the total school age population. This number, however, was then multiplied by 1000. The CPR in this study indicated "the number of students in a typical school of 1000 students who would be labeled with a learning disability and placed in a given placement setting" (p. 57).

Results revealed a dramatic increase in the CPR for students with LD educated in general education classrooms for 80% or more of the school day. The CPR increased 151% from 1988-89 to 1994-95, which represented an increase of 600,000 students. The CPR for students with LD

served in resource rooms for 21% to 60% of the school day decreased by 18% (140,000 students), and the CPR for students with LD served in separate school settings decreased by 31% (7000 students). The results also revealed that the CPR for students with LD placed in separate classes increased by 4%, which represented 42,000 students.

McLeskey et al. (1999) also published the CPRs for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The CPRs for Virginia were as follows: 18 for general education classrooms, 27 for resource rooms, and 12 for separate classes. According to McLeskey et al., the national average for placement rates in general education classrooms was 22; therefore, in comparison to many of the other states, Virginia served fewer students with LD in the general education classroom. As portrayed by the above CPRs, Virginia served the majority of students with LD in resource rooms.

McLeskey and Pacchiano's (1994) study revealed that students with LD were educated in more restrictive settings. In fact, the number of these students educated in separate classes doubled during the time frame of their study. There has been an increase in the number of students with LD educated in the regular/resource setting, too; however, the authors noted that this was a result of increasing numbers of students identified as having LD not because of a change in placement practices. On the other hand, McLeskey et al. (1999) found that there was a major increase in the number of students with LD educated in the general education classroom, as well as a reduction in the number educated in resource rooms and separate settings. The results of their investigation indicated a significant trend of educating students with LD in the general education environment.

With this increase of students with LD served in inclusive settings, there, unfortunately, have been reports of a decrease in individualized programming (Espin, Deno, & Albayrak-

Kaymack, 1998; Zigmond & Baker, 1995). Espin et al. argued that “special education in inclusive programs is, by design, no longer special” (p. 245). However, inclusion should look different for each student. It should be individualized just as all other aspects of special education. Being educated in the general education classroom does not excuse teachers from providing students with LD opportunities to access the general curriculum, as well as FAPE, through specifically designed instruction.

Research Findings

In Duke’s vision of teaching excellence, he stressed six critical teaching situations necessary for student success: (a) planning, (b) instruction, (c) classroom management, (d) progress monitoring, (e) clinical assistance, and (f) care-giving. His vision provides a guide that encompasses key teaching elements needed to conquer the complexity of today’s classroom. “Without a vision, we can only make arbitrary guesses about how to meet the needs of students” (Duke, 1987, p. 66). However, in the age of accountability, there is no room for arbitrary guesses. Additionally, with a majority of students with LD being educated in the general education environment, general and special educators must ensure that these students are provided FAPE and access to the general curriculum, shifting “the focus of education from physical access toward educational performance” (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 2).

Both general and special educators face a tremendous challenge with the increasing number of students with LD served in the general education environment. General and special educators must also meet the unique needs of students with LD through a continuum of services and supports that involve various levels of changes to content, performance expectations, sequence and timelines, and instruction to ensure that students with LD are provided opportunities to access the general curriculum and meet state standards (Nolet & McLaughlin,

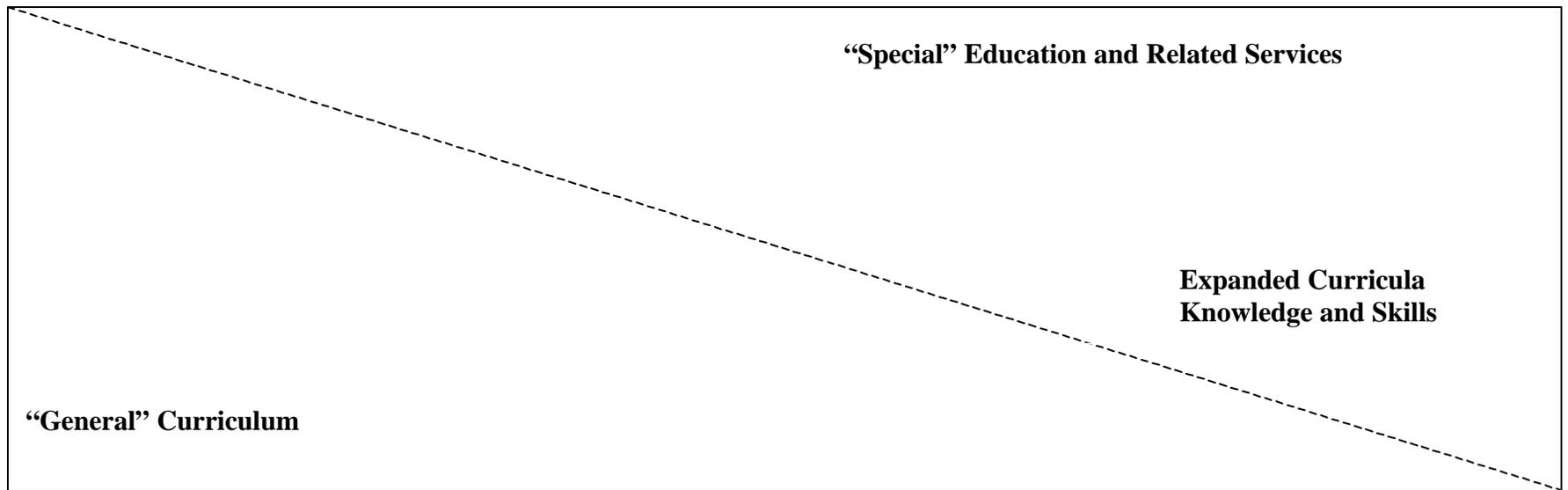
2000). Figure 2 illustrates the relationship of special education and the general curriculum and how students have a greater or lesser need for accommodations and modifications depending on where they are on this continuum. At one end of the continuum are students who participate in general curriculum, and at the other end are students who participate in an alternate curriculum that is separate and functional in nature. In between these two extremes are students that participate in the general curriculum with various degrees of accommodations and modifications determined by the needs of the students. Permission to reproduce this figure can be found in Appendix A.

Duke's (1987) vision of teaching excellence provides a guide to ensure that students with LD receive the six critical elements in their educational experience. This guide provides students with LD opportunities to access the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate, while receiving what they are guaranteed by law, FAPE.

Descriptions of the studies included in this section also appear in a matrix format in Appendix B. The matrix summarizes the following elements: (a) author and year of publication; (b) purpose of the study; (c) methodology and sample used; and (d) results of each study. Studies are also grouped according to Duke's six teaching situations.

Planning

The successful inclusion of students with LD in general education classrooms takes planning and collaboration among all those involved in the process. Planning is an essential part of implementing inclusive education in today's classroom because of the "broadening range of students needs" (Schumm et al., 1995, p. 335). Planning must involve more than whole group instruction that teaches to the "middle." It must now incorporate how the individual needs of



No Accommodations or Modifications	Accommodations	Modifications	Alternate
<p><i>No changes to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content • performance expectations • sequence and timelines • instruction 	<p><i>No changes to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content • performance expectations <p><i>Changes to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sequence and timelines • instruction 	<p><i>Changes some or all of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content areas • performance expectations • sequence and timelines • instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized curriculum goals • Separate functional curriculum

Figure 2. Special education and the general curriculum. From *Assessing the General Curriculum: Including Students with Disabilities in Standards-Based Reform* by V. Nolet and M. McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13. Copyright 2000 by Corwin Press, Inc.

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students with disabilities will be met in the general education classroom.

Schumm, Vaughn and other associates completed a series of studies examining the planning and adaptations that general educators make for students with disabilities included in the general education environment. The latter two studies (Schumm et al., 1995; Vaughn & Schumm, 1994) looked specifically at the planning general educators did for students with LD, whereas the earlier one (Schumm & Vaughn, 1992) investigated the planning for all students with disabilities educated in the general education environment. The framework for these studies was the Flow of Planning Process Model adopted from Yinger's study (as cited in Schumm & Vaughn, 1992), which includes three types of planning. These three types consist of the following:

Preplanning, what occurs before teaching the lesson; interactive planning, the types of ongoing changes made while teaching as the teacher responds to the students she or he is teaching; and postplanning, the types of activities and/or thinking that occur after the lesson and that relate to how elements of the lesson will be continued or expanded.

(Schumm & Vaughn, 1992, p. 82)

The first study in this series (Schumm & Vaughn, 1992) was conducted to examine the general educator's perception of planning for students with disabilities included in the general education environment. Schumm and Vaughn defined students with disabilities as "exceptional children (learning disabled, hearing and visually impaired, behavior disordered, physically handicapped, and speech impaired) who may receive special education services . . . but are integrated into general education classes for part or all of the school day" (p. 84). The population of general educators came from grades 1 through 12 from a large southeastern school district. The 39 schools chosen for this study represented the racial composition of the school district

within a range of 15% (46% Hispanic, 33% Black, and 22% White). The schools consisted of 22 elementary, 10 middle, and 7 high schools.

Data for this study were gathered using an author constructed survey instrument. The goal of the authors was to create a short instrument that covered all components of the planning model. It consisted of five categories: demographics, feelings about planning, facilitators and barriers to planning, information sources, and planning practices. A team of four researchers independently created potential items for each category from the review of literature and discussions with professionals in the education field. About 25 teachers were also asked to respond to open-ended questions about the five categories of the survey instrument to address content validity. Finally, items were validated by a selected group using a checklist to evaluate “clarity, brevity, and appropriateness, as well as freedom from ambiguity, social desirability, and potential inferences of bias” (Schumm & Vaughn, 1992, p. 85). The internal consistency of the survey instrument was also measured, yielding reliability coefficients of .93 for feelings about planning, .93 for facilitators and planning, .88 for information sources, and .98 for planning practices. To further refine the instrument and data-collection procedures, both pre-testing and pilot testing were also conducted.

The return rate of the survey was 52 % (n = 775). Items of the survey were measured using a Likert scale. Mean ratings and standard deviations were calculated for each of the categories and individual items. Although data obtained from Likert scales are considered ordinal in nature (Huck, 2000), the authors treated the data as interval data when they chose to calculate mean ratings and standard deviations. According to some social scientists, using ordinal data to conduct statistical measures such as mean and standard deviation is inappropriate, producing biased estimates (Harwell & Gatti, 2001). Others share the view that “assuming data

are interval when in fact they are ordinal are so small in most cases that the gain in statistical elegance and power justifies any distortion produced by the more pretentious measurement assumption” (Anderson, Basilevsky, & Hum, 1983, p. 247). Furthermore, Likert scales are commonly used with interval procedures in social sciences (Binder, 1984; Velleman & Wilkinson, 1993) because many of the variables of interest in this field are interval in nature (Borgatta & Bohrnstedt, 1980). Borgatta and Bohrnstedt argue that “most of the central constructs in the social sciences are conceptualized as continuous . . . and if the variables are continuous, they must also by definition be interval” (p. 154).

Overall results reported by Schumm and Vaughn (1992) revealed that 69% of those teachers surveyed in their study taught at least one student with a disability. Middle school teachers had a mean average of 6.91 ($SD = 7.4$) students with disabilities in their class, which was higher than both elementary classes ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 7.4$) and high school classes ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 7.01$). Overall, teachers responded that they spent a mean of 7.03 hours ($SD = 5.05$) planning for general education students and 1.29 hours ($SD = 2.00$) for students with disabilities. Four subscales were evaluated (feelings about planning, barriers/facilitators to planning, information sources, and planning practices) by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the overall subscale as well as the mean and standard deviation of each item. The strength and weakness of the item was determined by identifying subscale items that were one standard deviation above and below the subscale mean.

The first subscale addressed feelings about planning. This seven item subscale used the following 4-point Likert scale: 1 = positive; 2 = some-what positive; 3 = some-what negative; 4 = negative. The mean average was 1.88 ($SD = .08$). Teachers were positive about attending workshops to learn strategies for working with students with disabilities ($M = 1.80$); however,

teachers were not positive about the preparation of daily assignments and the modification of assignments and tests ($M = 1.96$).

The second subscale, facilitators and barriers, consisted of 22 items. Using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = barrier, 2 = somewhat of a barrier; 3 = somewhat of a facilitator; 4 = facilitator), the mean average measure 3.22 ($SD = .27$). Teachers identified special educators and school-based curriculum resource teachers as facilitators ($M = 3.49$), emphasizing communication. Barriers included physical environment, access to materials, and accountability and budgeting factors ($M = 2.95$).

The 11 items on the third subscale, information sources, had a mean average of 2.58 ($SD = .37$) on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = very frequently, 2 = frequently, 3 = rarely, 4 = never). The two items reflecting frequent use were information from other teachers and the student ($M = 2.21$), whereas the IEP and information from other agencies represented those used less often ($M = 2.95$).

The last subscale, planning practices, consisted of 17 items used to measure preplanning, interactive planning, and post planning. The 4-point Likert scale used was the same as the one used for information source. The mean average of these items was 2.35 ($SD = .27$). The items, which represented interactive planning, such as modifications of assignments while the student is in progress of completing it, ranked the highest ($M = 2.08$). Those used less often ($M = 2.62$) included making daily and long range plans for students with disabilities, as well as constructing tests.

Schumm and Vaughn (1992) found that general educators were willing to make adaptations for students with disabilities, but this was usually in response to student progress. They termed such planning as interactive planning. Teachers of this study reported that they did

not preplan specifically for students with disabilities. They planned for whole group instruction. “Middle school and high school teachers in particular seemed to frequently hold the expectation that, when students are mainstreamed, they should be prepared to handle the classroom curriculum” (p. 94).

Interestingly Schumm and Vaughn (1992) found that although general educators reported that they had adequate planning time and felt that both daily and long-range planning were necessary to promote the success of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, they spent little time planning for this population. The authors contributed this to the general educators lack of training in working with students with learning disabilities.

Vaughn and Schumm’s follow-up study in 1994 examined middle school teachers’ planning for students with learning disabilities in a case study design. Participants involved included three middle school teachers - one science and two social studies teachers. Vaughn and Schumm again used the Flow of Planning Process Model to examine the preplanning, interactive planning, and postplanning of the teachers. Data were collected over a year using the Classroom Climate Scale, teacher interview, and teaching episodes (written lesson plans, think alouds, stimulated recalling, semistructured interview, and focus group interview). Data reduction using both microlevel and macrolevel analyses were used to identify themes. “Microlevel analyses focused on each piece of data collected from each of the data sources for each teacher. Macroanalyses focused on the data set as a whole for each teacher and then for all three teachers” (p. 55). It exposed the following three guiding principles: content coverage versus knowledge acquisition, classroom management and student interest, and planning for whole-class instruction.

Planning for all three teachers was influenced by expectations of the state in covering outlined objectives. “If students do not get it, or get it quickly, they felt that their only alternative was to move on” (Vaughn & Schumm, 1994, p. 158). There was little talk from the teachers about if the students were actually learning the material. The three teachers stressed that class activities were chosen based on whether student behavior could be maintained during the activity. However, they did emphasize the importance of choosing activities that were motivating and interesting. Only one of the teachers expressed that she was most interested in meeting the needs of her students as a whole and adjusted instruction to do so. She, however, did not specify meeting individual needs. Particularly at the middle school level, “teachers do not feel that it is in the students’ best interest for the teachers to plan to meet their special learning needs” (p.159).

As a result, Vaughn and Schumm (1994) concluded that it is unlikely that accommodations and adaptations will be made for students with LD in the general education classroom. Thus, they stressed that outside support services are necessary to ensure the success of students with LD in the general education classroom. The biggest hurdle, though, reported by Vaughn and Schumm that opposes what special education is all about is “the age-old issue of meeting the needs of the group as a whole without teaching to the middle” (p. 160).

Although the above conclusions were made based on data obtained from only three participants, it is important for the reader to remember that this study is only one in part of a series of investigations conducted by Schumm, Vaughn , and other associates. Thus, standing alone, the findings may not seem credible, but as a part of an exemplary series of studies using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine how general educators plan for and make accommodations for students with LD in their classrooms, the above findings are worth reporting.

Another study conducted by Schumm et al. in 1995 found similar results regarding the three types of planning for students with LD. However, in this particular study, Schumm et al. described the following criteria that had to be met by students with LD to qualify for special education services: “discrepancy of at least one standard deviation between a standard score on an intelligence test and an academic score in reading, evidence of a processing deficit, and exclusionary criteria to ensure that the learning difficulty was not due to other conditions (p. 390). However, as in the other two studies, there is no description of the range of academic abilities of students with LD served by the teachers in this study.

Schumm et al. (1995) found through interviews, classroom observations, teacher reflections, and surveys that general educators do not create individualized written plans for students with LD. Preplanning at the middle school level represented whole group instruction, emphasizing content coverage mandated by the district and state. Students with LD were required to learn the same content and complete the same work as their peers without disabilities. There were few adjustments to methods, materials, or student assessment at the secondary level. IEPs were also not used as part of the planning process. For interactive planning, it was found that teachers checked more frequently for on-task behavior, completion of assignments, and following directions than for understanding of the content. At the secondary level, if students did not understand, then the teachers felt it was the students’ responsibility to seek help from the teacher before and after school. This form of checking was used to make instructional adjustments for the entire class not for individuals. Lastly, postplanning involved the whole class if it occurred at all. Because of the accountability to cover content objectives during designated times, the teachers felt the need to move on regardless of whether students understood the content material.

This series of studies completed by Schumm, Vaughn, and colleagues revealed that general educators, even those identified as being effective in working with students with LD, do not plan specifically for these students. Teachers do plan activities to engage all students in the learning process, and some of these activities involve a support system of some sort for students with LD. Unfortunately, “in preparing students with LD for inclusion, the special education teacher should prepare students for the reality that as the student progresses through the grade levels, teachers may be less inclined to assume responsibility for accommodating their individual differences” (Schumm et al., 1995, p. 349). At the secondary level, the expectations of the general educators, as reported by the secondary teachers in this study, are that students with LD educated in the inclusive instructional setting will keep up with their general education peers. It is “their role to prepare all students for the ‘real world’” (Schumm et al., 1995, p. 350). According to these teachers, meeting individual needs of students with LD does not necessarily do this.

Instruction

“The development of educational innovations that maximize the chances of learning success for students with unique learning needs has been the hallmark of special education: it is essentially what makes special education ‘special’” (Walberg & Wang, 1987, p.113). With inclusion, the responsibility of special education has extended itself beyond the special education classroom into today’s general education classroom. Thus, there is a demand of general educators to provide differentiated and individualized instruction through the use of a wide variety of instructional strategies tailored to meet the diverse educational needs of students with disabilities (deBettencourt, 1999). This is a challenging task considering that students with disabilities need more than the typical routine instructional adaptations made for any student

(Scott et al., 1998). As pointed out by Scott et al., there is also a great need for substantial and specialized adaptations to address the diversity of cognitive abilities, learning styles, and behavior patterns exhibited by students with disabilities.

Schumm and Vaughn conducted a study in 1991 that assessed the willingness of general educators to make adaptations for students with disabilities in their classrooms. Specifically, they looked at the extent to which general educators found instructional accommodations desirable and feasible. The authors did not provide a description of the composition of the special education population found in the general education classrooms of the participants in this study. Additionally, the range of academic abilities of the students with disabilities were not defined, making it difficult for the reader to know the severity of the disabilities represented in the population of these students.

Participants of the study were selected from two elementary, two middle, and two high schools in a metropolitan school district. A total of 93 participants were selected from these schools, consisting of 25 elementary teachers, 23 middle school teachers, and 45 high school teachers. All the middle and high school teachers were English teachers. The rationale for this decision was that all students have to take this course each year at the secondary level.

The authors designed the Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (AEI) to assess the desirability and feasibility of making 30 adaptations in the general education classroom. The internal consistency of the instrument was measured using the Cronbach coefficient alpha, yielding reliability coefficients of .97 for the desirability subscale and .95 for the feasibility subscale. In addition, content validity of items was addressed by deriving adaptations from the review of literature and transcripts from the teacher focus groups, which were conducted “to build a reality base for the instrument” (Schumm & Vaughn, 1991, p.20). Items were then

classified into major categories by two independent researchers. Less than 10% of items were classified into different categories by these two researchers. A conference was held with the two researchers to resolve these conflicts.

Teachers were directed to rate each adaptation using a Likert-type scale (1 = low; 7 = high) in terms of desirability and feasibility. Schumm and Vaughn (1991) defined desirability as “how much the teachers would like to implement the adaptation in the classroom” and feasibility as “how practical it would be to actually implement the adaptation” (p. 20). Adaptations considered for this instrument were identified through a review of literature, as well as focus groups with general educators.

Although the data obtained from a Likert-type scale represents ordinal data, the authors chose to treat the data as interval data by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the desirability and feasibility ratings for each item on the instrument. However, the authors did choose some nonparametric statistical procedures typically used with ordinal data, such as the Wilcoxin Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks test and the Kruskal-Wallis test to compare data between ratings and among groups represented in the study. For example, to compare the difference of desirability and feasibility ratings, the Wilcoxin Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks test was conducted for each item. All items were found to be statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Items that were one standard deviation (.30) above the total mean desirability rating (6.35), or items with a mean rating of 6.65 or higher were identified as the most desirable. Those found most desirable included provide reinforcement and encouragement, establish personal relationship with students with disabilities, and involve students with disabilities in whole class activities. Least desirable adaptations were those items one standard deviation (.30) below the total mean desirability rating (6.35) or those with a mean rating of 6.05 or lower. The least

desirable adaptations included long-range plans, adjust physical arrangement of room, adapt regular material, use alternative materials, and adapt scoring/grading criteria.

In addition, the study identified those items found to be the most feasible adaptations and the least feasible adaptations, too. The most feasible adaptations were those one standard deviation (.81) above the total mean feasibility rating (4.84) or those items with a mean feasibility rating of 5.65 or higher. Adaptations considered most feasible included establish routine appropriate for students with disabilities, provide reinforcement and encouragement, establish personal relationships with students with disabilities, establish expectations for students with disabilities, and involve students with disabilities in whole class activities. Least feasible adaptations were those with means one standard deviation (.81) below the overall mean feasibility rating (4.84) or those items with mean feasibility ratings of 4.03 or lower. Such adaptations consisted of communicating with students with disabilities, adapting regular materials, using alternative materials, using computers, and providing individualized instruction.

A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was conducted for each item to compare the desirability and feasibility of adaptations among elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The analysis revealed several significant differences at the .05 level. For example, middle school teachers found it less desirable than high school teachers to communicate with special education teachers ($Z = -2.16, p < .05$) and establish expectations for students with disabilities included in their classroom ($Z = -2.38, p < .05$).

In general, Schumm and Vaughn (1991) concluded that teachers found adaptations more desirable than feasible. “Adaptations that require little individualization in forms of planning, instruction, and altering the environment are viewed by classroom teachers as the most feasible adaptations” (p. 22). The least feasible items on the other hand, included adapting regular

materials and providing individualized instruction, which is what makes special education special.

In 1993, Ellett also conducted a study that examined instructional practices teachers were willing to use to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. These classrooms were defined as a “general education class that includes both students with learning disabilities and students not identified as handicapped” (Ellet, p.58). Ellet further defined these students with LD as students with an average intelligence that participate in a resource specialist program. In the resource specialist program in the Poway Unified School District, high school students with LD have at the most two special education classes and four or more general education classes in a six-class day. The sample of her study included 124 secondary general educators representing all content areas (English, math, social studies, and science) in the Poway Unified School District in San Diego County. The teachers selected to be surveyed had taught at least one class containing students with learning disabilities. Of the 124, 89 teachers completed and returned the questionnaire.

The three-part survey used in this study was created by the researcher. Details of the validity and reliability of the instrument were not provided. Ellet, however, noted the after the development of the survey, she had several high school teachers review it. In addition, the instructional and behavioral interventions represented in the items were derived from the review of literature, specifically a study by Johnson and Pugach (1990).

The first part of the survey addressed demographic and background information. The second part requested teachers to rate, using a 4-point Likert scale, the importance of certain skills and behaviors in the inclusive instructional setting. The third part required participants to

rate, using a 4-point Likert scale, the willingness to implement 35 instructional strategies with students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms.

As with the previous studies, the data obtained from the Likert scale is ordinal in nature (Huck, 2000). The author, treating the data as interval data, calculated both mean ratings and standard deviations for study skills and strategies. Although this is not fully accepted by all researchers, it is common practice in the social sciences (Anderson, Basilevsky, & Hum, 1983; Binder, 1984; Velleman & Wilkinson, 1993).

Results of the first part of the survey revealed that study skills such as follows directions in class ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .48$), comes to class prepared with materials ($M = 3.48$, $SD = .66$), and uses class time wisely ($M = 3.48$, $SD = .61$) were ranked the most important. Behaviors such as treat teachers and peers with courtesy ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .60$) and work cooperatively in students groups ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .64$) were ranked slightly lower.

The second part of the survey addressed the reasonability for general educators to use certain strategies with students with disabilities in their classrooms. The five highest ranking strategies included: encourage and support student's attempts of academic improvement ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .47$), use both auditory and visual modes when presenting new information ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .51$), emphasize the good qualities of the student's behavior ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .52$), clarify behavioral expectations to student ($M = 3.55$, $SD = .50$), and discuss academic problems with student ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .51$). Talking with the special education teachers was found in the moderately reasonable range ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .54$) along with teaching learning strategies ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .59$), and using alternate materials ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .60$). However, strategies which involved the compiling of data about student's academic problems ($M = 2.96$, $SD = .69$) and

behavior problems ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .72$), as well as modifying test-taking procedures ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .77$) were ranked less reasonable.

Strategy data were also factor analyzed using the principle components method with variance rotation. The analysis identified seven factors that accounted for 3.5% of the variance. These factors were: (a) use of supplemental resources, (b) simplify instructions, (c) provide students with support and extra instructional cues, (d) enhance classroom behavior management procedures, (f) facilitate grade improvement, (g) modify learning environment, and (h) teach study skills and provide positive, cooperative learning environments. A repeated measures analysis of variance was then used to compare the participants' responses to the seven factors. The analysis detected significant differences, $F(6) = 24.53$, $p < .0001$. Specifically, post-hoc testing using the Tukey method showed that factors b, c, and d were significantly different from f, g, and h, which indicated that providing students with support and extra instructional cues, enhancing classroom behavior management procedures, simplifying instruction, and using supplemental resources are the most feasible.

Both Schumm and Vaughn (1991) and Ellet (1993) found that the most reasonable and feasible strategies for students with disabilities were those that involved providing positive reinforcement and encouragement, as well as establishing and clarifying expectations. Those least reasonable and feasible included instructional accommodations and modifications and the use of computers to assist with instructions. Overall, general educators in both studies seemed to be willing to make subtle changes in their teaching practices as long as they were easy to implement and would benefit all students. This, unfortunately, does not include the individualization needed for students with disabilities to be successful in the general education

environment. Although general educators recognized the importance of individualization, it is just not often done (Johnson & Pugach, 1990).

Current research syntheses conducted on effective instructional practices for students with LD include many practices that general educators find to be infeasible and unreasonable. In one research syntheses conducted by Vaughn et al. (2000), they identified several major principles in effective instruction for students with LD. These included making instruction clear and specific, controlling the difficulty of tasks so students are challenged yet maintain high levels of success, using small groups of six or less students that are interactive and flexible, providing interactive dialogue between students and teachers and between students, and employing strategies that provide students a plan of action to guide them through academic activities. In addition, Heward (2003) derived a list of recommended instructional methods from a research syntheses on students with disabilities. It included the following:

1. Assess each student's present level of performance to help identify and prioritize the most instructional targets.
2. Define and task analyze the new knowledge or skills to learned.
3. Design instructional materials and activities so the student has frequent opportunities for active response in the form of guided and independent practice.
4. Use mediating scaffolding (i.e., provide and then fade prompts and cues so the student can respond to naturally occurring stimuli).
5. Provide systematic consequences for student performance in the form of contingent reinforcement, instructional feedback, and error correction.
6. Incorporate fluency-building activities into lessons.

7. Incorporate strategies for promoting the generalization and maintenance of newly learned skills (e.g., program common stimuli, general case strategy, indiscriminable contingencies, self-management).
8. Conduct direct and frequent measurements of student performance and use those data to inform instructional decisions. (Heward, 2003, p. 197)

But as Heward noted, although such research-based practices have been proven to be effective in the education of students with disabilities, there is a large gap “between what is known and what is practiced” (p. 201).

Classroom Management

Doyle (1986) defined classroom management as “the actions and strategies teachers use to solve the problem of order in classrooms” (p. 397). Order is a necessary component of the classroom environment for teaching and learning to occur. It is even more vital in today’s diverse classrooms where the needs of students are much more complex to accommodate and meet. Order is established and maintained through the development of rules, procedures, and expectations; the monitoring of student behavior, and the effective management of instructional time and resources (Duke, 1987). Order allows teachers to organize and manage their classrooms so all students can achieve.

Students with LD have not been successful in the past in the general education classrooms (Zigmond & Baker, 1995). However, with the inclusion movement and support of federal legislation, most students with LD receive the majority of their education in these classrooms today. Thus, to assist with the success of these students in general education classrooms, changes in management and order are necessary.

Smith (1983) conducted a study that investigated the classroom management approaches of general educators and LD resource teachers. Specifically, he examined two types of socialization or classroom management, inductive style and sensitizing style. He defined inductive style as one that “emphasizes the student’s role in a behavioral situation, and utilizes techniques that facilitate the development of internalized controls over behavior,” and sensitizing style as one that “emphasizes the specific behavioral situation, and ‘sensitizes’ the student to the situation with techniques that focus on the external risk of punishment” (p. 363). Inductive teachers not only praise students, they also tell them why they are praising them. They use indirect methods to motivate and control the classroom. In addition, they use student ideas in their instruction. Sensitizing teachers, on the other hand, use criticism more often with the threat of punishment.

The sample of this study consisted of 158 general classroom teachers (30 males and 128 females) and 32 LD resource teachers (all females). Each teacher completed the Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ) developed by the author that addressed the teacher’s style of socialization. The validation of the CMQ consisted of classroom observation of 16 teachers that scored at least one standard deviation above or below the mean on the CMQ. The 16 teachers were observed on at least four occasions for a total of 60 to 75 minutes by two observers (one male and one female). Two matrices were then constructed, one representing inductive teachers and one representing sensitizing teachers. The two matrices were compared using the Darwin Chi Square procedure, revealing that the interaction of the two matrices were consistent with the induction-sensitization paradigm ($p < .001$).

The CMQ was comprised of aggressive, dependent, and academic subscales made of 12 items (six involving male students and six involving female students) and also a male and female

subscale with 18 items each. Each item on the questionnaire consisted of a behavioral situation in which the teacher chose between two alternatives, a sensitizing approach and an inductive approach. No examples of the items were included in this article.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a significant difference on the full scale of the CMQ, $F(1, 156) = 5.27, p < .02$, as well as the dependent subscale, $F(1, 156) = 3.87, p < .05$ and the female subscale, $F(1, 156) = 5.25, p < .02$. Results revealed that LD teachers selected inductive responses significantly more often than general educators. These teachers used incidents of misbehaviors as teachable moments, where they taught students replacement behaviors. This approach was the complete opposite of the sensitizing style used by general educators that used techniques that were punitive in nature with the goal of immediately stopping the behavior.

In conclusion, Smith (1983) stated that there was a noticeable difference between the approaches of general educators and LD resource teachers in dealing with student behavior. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of examining the styles of teachers before students with disabilities are educated in general education environment.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring can be accomplished through several different measures, such as questioning students during lessons; completion of classwork, homework, and projects; performance levels on teacher-made tests and quizzes; and for students with disabilities, progress towards goals and objectives on IEPs. Monitoring student progress through these means allows teachers to ensure that students understand content material.

Unfortunately, Schumm et al. (1995) through interviewing, observing, and surveying 12 general educators found that teachers were more concerned that students were on task during

class activities, following directions, and completing assignments than they were about students actually understanding the content material. McIntosh et al. (1993) also through observing 60 general educators found that general educators monitor the performance of students without disabilities much more often than students with disabilities. Additionally, even though the IEP is the cornerstone of special education, Pugach (1982) discovered after surveying 33 general educators that general educators seldom use IEPs for monitoring the progress of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is a type of progress-monitoring system that measures student performance and identifies instructional needs. More specifically, the goal of the developers of CBM, according to Deno et al. (2001) was to establish a system that:

(a) teachers could use efficiently; (b) would produce accurate, meaningful information with which to index standing and growth; (c) could answer questions about the effectiveness of programs in producing academic growth; and (d) would provide information that helped teachers plan better instructional programs. (p. 508)

However, in the age of accountability, progress monitoring is crucial. School districts are responsible for accounting for student progress towards state standards. This includes students with disabilities. Therefore, educators must possess a reliable form of measurement to routinely assess student performance. CBM is a measurement system that can be used by educators to evaluate student progress and instructional effectiveness by incorporating data on student achievement into the daily instructional decision-making of educators (Deno, 1985).

In 1989, Fuchs et al. conducted a study to investigate the effects of the instrumental use of CBM to enhance instructional programming for students with mild disabilities. Participants of this study consisted of 29 special educators working in 16 schools in a southeastern metropolitan

area. The teachers were directed to select two students with mild disabilities that had an IEP goal that specifically addressed reading. Several students were excluded though because of incomplete information. Of the 53 students with mild disabilities selected for the study, 41 were classified as learning disabled and 12 were classified as emotionally disturbed. Students classified as learning disabled exhibited “more than 1 standard deviation between achievement and cognitive/intellectual functioning when provided with appropriate learning experiences” (Fuchs et. al).

Of the 29 teachers, 20 were assigned to an experimental reading CBM group, consisting of 36 students, and 9 were assigned to a control reading group, consisting of 17 students. All students participated in an achievement test (reading comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test) and a standardized test of recall, the Recall Test (RECALL). The students in the experimental group also participated in a CBM index of reading comprehension, which involved curriculum-based recall and cloze tests.

Teachers in the CBM treatment group had to first select a level of curriculum to establish a goal for each student. Using recall and cloze measurement procedures, teachers assessed the reading performance of each student twice a week. At the end of each week, teachers used a data-management software that stored and graphed data, as well as provided an aimline to set additional goals. After 7 to 10 measurements were collected, a regression line was compared to the aim line. If the regression line was below the aimline, an instructional program change had to be completed to improve the rate of progress towards the goal. If the regression line was above the aimline, a new goal had to be set that was challenging but still realistic for the individual student.

Teachers in the control group set goals for their students and used unsystematic observation performance to measure progress. Fuchs et al. (1989) commented that the control group represented typical special education practice in monitoring student progress.

After 15 weeks, the CBM group was separated into two levels based on measurement alone or measurement with evaluation. Measurement was when curriculum measures were administered, scored, and graphed. Evaluation was when an instructional modification was implemented for at least 2.5 weeks as a result of the data. In the measurement only group (M-ONLY) there were 15 students, and in the measurement plus evaluation group (M + E), there were 21 students.

Analysis of the achievement data for the RECALL pre-test revealed the following means: $M = 6.80$ ($SD = 4.52$) for the M-ONLY group, $M = 9.65$ ($SD = 6.19$) for the M + E group, and $M = 10.35$ ($SD = 4.86$) for the control group. The ANOVA revealed that the differences among the groups were not significant. However, the one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) conducted using post-treatment RC scores and RECALL as the covariate, revealed a significant effect, $F(2, 49) = 4.70, p < .05$. Follow-up tests to the regressed adjusted scores revealed that the achievement of the M + E group was greater than that of the control group, $F = 15.11, p < .001$ with an effect magnitude of .72. However, the achievement of the M-ONLY group was not significantly different than the control group, $F = 3.19, p = .08$ with a magnitude of .36.

A slope was calculated using a least-squares regression equation for the data set of each student in the two CBM implementation groups. The slope revealed average weekly gains on curriculum-based assessments. The ANOVA conducted on this slope produced a statistically significant value, $F(1, 34) = 3.98, p < .05$. Specifically, the slope for the M + E group exceeded the slope of the M-ONLY group with an effect magnitude of .86.

In conclusion, Fuchs et al. (1989) noted that “when teachers not only collect CBM data, but also use CBM indicators of student learning to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs and to experiment with alternative instructional elements, student achievement appears to be enhanced (p. 59). Thus, CBM can be used as an integral component in planning instruction in today’s classroom. Fuchs et al. cautioned, however, that experience within CBM implementation and on-going training and support is necessary for CBM to be effective.

Deno et al. (2001) conducted a more recent investigation with the purpose of illustrating how CBM could be used not only as a form of progress monitoring but also to establish academic growth standards for students with LD in the area of reading. Deno et al. also compared normative CBM growth rates with typical practice to CBM growth rates with effective practice.

The first approach, normative CBM growth rates within typical practice, studied how much growth would be expected from students with and without LD from instruction derived from typical teaching practices. Participants included students with and without LD from grade levels 1 through 6 from four local education agencies: urban north (N = 249), urban south (N = 728), rural midwest (N = 1742), and mid-size west (N = 280). Approximately 10% of the sample consisted of students with LD. The authors did not define the criteria used by the four local education agencies to classify students as those with LD.

Scores used for analyses in this study were the results of oral reading CBM. The scores were the number of words read aloud correctly in one minute. The reading aloud was monitored individually by a tester. The passage difficulty remained the same as the goal was to measure reading proficiency rather than passage difficulty. Growth rates for the students were determined through a regression line fitted to each student’s CBM scores using the Ordinary Least Squares

method. Using the resulting beta level, Deno et al. (2001) computed the weekly increase in the numbers of words read correctly each week across students within each grade level and within the two program types. Weekly increases were then averaged across students in each grade level, disaggregating data for students with and without disabilities. Results revealed that in the first grade the differences in the rate of growth (slope) between students without disabilities ($M = 1.80, SE = .15$) and students with disabilities ($M = .83, SE = .15$) was the greatest. Differences decreased progressively in grades 2, 3, and 4; however, in grades 5 and 6, growth rates were virtually identical for both groups. This was due to a sharp drop in the slopes of students without disabilities.

Thus, students without LD gained approximately 2 words per week in grade 1 compared to students with LD who gained approximately one word per week. Students without LD continued to gain at least one word per week in grades 2, 3, and 4, where students with LD never achieved a growth rate of one word per week after grade 1. Growth standards set by these results for students with LD would result in a goal of one word per week for students in grade level 1, and .60 words in grades 2 through 6. However, with such goals, students with LD would complete grade 6 with a reading performance level that would be half that of their peers without LD.

For the second approach, CBM growth rates and effective practice, Deno et al. (2001) examined the research literature and identified studies that met several criteria. They included (a) studies that incorporated at least a 10-week reading treatment; (b) studies that reported pre- and post-treatment data using a CBM measurement; (c) studies that reported outcomes for both students with and without disabilities; (d) studies that included a control or contrast group; and

(e) studies that documented statistically significant improvements for at least one experimental treatment.

Of the five studies that met the inclusion criteria, the following variables were coded: authors, duration of treatment, number of students with LD in the study, the reading level of students at the beginning of the study, the treatment used during the study, the CBM measured used to monitor student progress, and weekly and monthly CBM gains. Results revealed that students with LD made weekly gains from .56 to 2.10 words, with a weighted mean gain of 1.39 words per week.

The results of the CBM growth rates and effective practice approach portrayed a weekly CBM gain of 1.39 words, which was more than two times that made by students with LD in the normative CBM growth rates with typical practice. It is also important to note that a weekly CBM gain of 1.39 words is comparable to the weekly CBM gains of students without LD within typical instruction represented by the first approach of this study. Thus, these “findings suggest that standards that describe typical progress may underestimate the capacity of students with LD and therefore prompt schools to establish relatively unambitious goals” (Deno et al., 2001, p. 518). Ambitious goals are important to set for students with LD. In doing so, teachers and students are more likely to reach higher expectations (Deno et al.).

Clinical Assistance

With the reauthorization of IDEA, there has been an increased emphasis on the educational outcomes of students with disabilities (Huefner, 2000). Nolet and McLaughlin emphasized that the 1997 amendments to the IDEA represent a major advancement in ensuring that each student with a disability receives a high quality and individually designed education. For students with LD, the responsibility of these outcomes falls on both general and special

educators. Recent amendments emphasize the importance of collaboration between special and general educators in determining what must be done to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education environment (McLaughlin, Nolet, Rhim, & Henderson, 1999). They are both responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities have opportunities to access and progress in the general education environment. An integral part of the measurement of progress for students with disabilities is the individualized education plan (IEP).

An IEP is a “formalization of the student’s overall instructional framework” (Shriner, Kim, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1993), which delineates a set of standards for that student’s progress. The IEP includes information on the student’s current level of performance, annual goals, and short-term objectives, and procedures used for documenting the student’s progress toward the annual goals. It is the key to tailoring individual programs. There are those who believe that the IEP is actually the documentation of the curriculum for students with disabilities (Lieberman, 1985), “liberating special educators from the constraints of the general education curriculum” (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995, p. 69). Others, on the other hand, view the IEP as consisting of instructional and curricular accommodations, adaptations, and modifications that assist students with disabilities in accessing the general education curriculum (McDonnell et. al, 1997; Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). Only a combination of the two is appropriate and legal, though. Not only is the IEP the vehicle that determines the accessibility of the general curriculum, it also must address issues posed by the disability.

For students with LD in inclusive instructional settings, IEP goals should not be separate and unrealistic to the goals of the standards of the general education environment (Horn, Lieber, Li, Sandal, & Schwart, 2000). Discussions about the IEP should not only be individualized, but they should “start from the expectations of the general curriculum and what is required to help

the student access the curriculum” (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. xvi). Therefore, as Nolet and McLaughlin further noted, the IEP is not the intended curriculum for students with disabilities but rather “a plan for making the intended curriculum more immediate and specific for the student” (p.161).

The discussion of the starting place for the education of students with disabilities must begin in the general education environment. The location of the education of these students should be decided based on the child’s ability to achieve goals in that setting. With the REI and the reauthorization of the IDEA, the location of education for many students with disabilities has become the general education environment, particularly for students with LD. As a result, the 1997 amendments make the IDEA the first federal requirement to mandate the participation of at least one general educator in the IEP development process (McLaughlin et al., 1999). The requirement of the general educator is to assist with making the linkage between the IEP and the general education curriculum more effective. Successful collaboration and communication, however, is more critical than just the presence of the general educator at the meeting to make inclusion effective for students with disabilities. The involvement of general educators in the IEP development process is needed to make them take some ownership of IEP documents and the overall education of students with disabilities.

Menlove (1999) conducted a research project to study IEP team member satisfaction with the IEP development process. The basis of her study was the assumption that IEP team members that understand and feel satisfied with their roles in the IEP development process will participate more readily with the outcome being “greater learning by students receiving appropriate special education services detailed in an effectively team-developed IEP based on individual student needs” (p. 8).

Data were gathered through the survey of IEP team members using the IEP Team Member Satisfaction Survey created by Menlove (1999) with follow-up exploration using IEP team member focus groups. The target population consisted of Utah IEP team members including students with disabilities, parents of students with disabilities, special educators, regular educators, Local Education Agency (LEA)/building administrators, special education professional staff, student services personnel, and transition services/agency representatives from 40 Utah school districts and the Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind. Survey participants were selected through the following three sampling selection procedures: volunteer, stratified, and random. Thirteen school districts volunteered to participate, representing a variety in district size, geographic location, and rural, and urban designation. Survey participant groups were stratified by school district affiliation and membership in an IEP team member group. IEP team member groups were then stratified by specific factors relating to that group. For example, special and general educators were then stratified by elementary and secondary level. Survey participants were then randomly selected from these stratified groups. For the purpose of this review of literature, only special and regular educators' results will be reported from Menlove's study.

The survey used consisted of seven questions relating to the survey respondent's role in the IEP development process, number of IEP meetings they attended, general IEP meeting length, and a check-off list of those members who routinely attended IEP meetings. The second portion of the survey was a Likert-type format consisting of 21 questions that addressed IEP meeting factors, IEP role factors, IEP paperwork factors, and IEP team factors. Surveys were mailed to participants.

The accuracy of the instrument used in this study was measured through two validity procedures, content validity and construct validity. Menlove shared both a copy of the letter containing the instructions for completing the survey, as well as the survey with two expert reviewers from Utah State Office of Education. Both the instructions in the letter and survey were found to be valid in regard to content and construct. Validity was further explored in field-testing. In addition, Menlove noted that a statistical measure of validity was calculated to explore how the satisfaction and importance factors related to each other; however, the information was not provided in the dissertation. Menlove only reported that the instrument did in fact measure both satisfaction and importance.

Reliability of the instrument was determined through a test of internal consistency. More specifically, three correlation coefficients were computed: correlation between forms (.92), Guttman split-half (.95), and equal length Spearman-Brown (.96).

The overall response rate of the survey was 64.3% (1005 of 1563). Specifically, 80.4% (160 of 199) of the special educators and 60% (126 of 210) of the general educators responded to the survey. In addition, 26.3% of the overall survey respondents worked in the inclusion/co-teaching model at one time, and 69.9% of them also had worked with students with LD.

Data analysis was initially conducted using SPSS statistical analysis software for the top and bottom portions of the survey using descriptive statistics with percentages of responses found for each item. Percentages of responses were also found for each possible rating on the second portion of the survey. Results of the top portion of the survey revealed that 90% of the special educators routinely attended IEP meetings, whereas general educators attended only 50% of the time.

For the results of the second portion of the survey, only specific items will be addressed here. The percentages of responses for the importance of the items reviewed below is a combined percentage of those that marked “very important” and “important.” The percentages of responses for the satisfaction of the items is also a combined percentage of those that marked “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”

For the item concerning the clear purpose of the IEP meeting, 98.2% of the special educators found it was important, and 96.2 % were satisfied with it. However, the percentages of responses for the general educators were considerably lower with 76.2% finding it important to understand the purpose of the IEP meeting and 66.7% actually satisfied with it.

In regard to the IEP team member’s role, 98.7% of special educators rated it important for the team member to feel prepared to carry out their role in the IEP meeting. Only 74.6% of the general educators felt the same way. A difference was also found in the satisfaction of feeling prepared to carry out IEP team member role, with 91.9% of special educators and 61.1% of general educators marking high ratings. Similar results were seen in the item regarding overall satisfaction with role in the IEP process. Special educators ranked importance (97.5%) and satisfaction (92.5%) much higher than general educators, which ranked importance at 67.2% and satisfaction at 62.7%.

Another item looked at the value for IEP team member input. Again, special educators perceived that the value for their input by other team members is important (96.2%), whereas general educators did not see their value as important (72.2%). Special educators, in turn, reported higher levels of satisfaction (93.8%) that their input was valued compared to what was reported by general educators (65.1%).

The importance and satisfaction of decisions being discussed and decided by the IEP team was also investigated in one of the items. Special educators (96.9%) felt that the decision-making process of the IEP meeting was much more important than general educators (74.6%). Satisfaction ratings of the decision-making process were higher for the special educators (82.5%) than the general educators (58.7%).

The last item in this section of the survey revealed the importance and satisfaction that IEPs enhance student learning. Results of the special (79.4%) and general educators (69.8%) in regard to importance did not differ as much as those in the previous discussed items. Similar results were found in the satisfaction ratings, with 64.4% of special educators and 52.3% of general educators being satisfied that IEPs enhance student learning.

Although the above information does not represent all 21 items found in this portion of the study, it gives a general picture of the differences found between special and general educators in reference to the importance and satisfaction of the IEP development process. Overall, general educators did not see the importance of particular aspects of this process nor did they get as much satisfaction out of them as special educators. In addition, neither general nor special educators saw a connection between the IEP and student learning.

Menlove also conducted analyses to look at the relationship between perceived importance and satisfaction by calculating means for responses and then applying the Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient r . The following scale was used to determine the mean of each item: 2 being “very important” and “very satisfied,” 1 being “important” and “satisfied,” 0 being “no opinion,” -1 being “not too important” and “not too satisfied,” and -2 being “really not important” and “very unsatisfied.” The overall mean satisfaction of the IEP factors was .92 ($SD = .62$), and the overall mean importance of the IEP factors was 1.22 ($SD = .58$) with a

correlation coefficient r of .55, which was statistically significant at .01 level. Thus, the IEP team members reported that the IEP factors were more important than they felt satisfied with the factors. Special educators had the highest mean importance at 1.40 ($SD = .45$) with a mean satisfaction of 1.0 ($SD = .55$). The general educators had a mean importance of .98 ($SD = .66$) and a mean satisfaction of .61 ($SD = .71$). The Pearson correlation coefficient r for general educators was .61 and for special educators was .31, both statistically significant at .01 level. The .31 correlation coefficient r indicates a weaker relationship between what special educators perceived to be important and the factors that they are satisfied with in the IEP development process, where the relationship was stronger between the two for the general educators. Special educators working in the inclusion/co-teaching model had a mean importance of 1.52 ($SD = .40$) and a mean satisfaction of .98 ($SD = .53$). The resulting correlation coefficient was .44 significant at the .01 level. General educators at the middle school level reported a mean importance of .85 ($SD = .71$) and a mean satisfaction of .53 ($SD = .66$) with a correlation coefficient of .65 significant at the .01 level. In comparison to other school levels, it seemed that as students increased in age, mean importance and mean satisfaction decreased. The correlation coefficient of the special educators at the middle school level was .08 with a mean importance of 1.37 ($SD = .50$) and a mean satisfaction of .97 ($SD = .54$). The correlation coefficient, however, was not significant.

A multiple regression analysis was also conducted to examine the relationships between individual satisfaction factors and overall satisfaction, resulting in an R of .76 and R -squared of .58. Thus, 58% of the variance in satisfaction can be accounted for by factors related to preparation, perception that input was valued, and the perception of collaborative effort.

Eight focus groups were conducted, one for each IEP team member group relationship. The general educator focus group consisted of four teachers. The teachers stressed that IEP meetings went well when the special educator was organized. General educators reported that they were lost during their first few IEP meetings but became more comfortable as they attended more. They emphasized that they were unclear about their role. General educators stated that over the last two years special educators have asked for more input from them. Overall, general educators felt that IEPs did not address problems occurring within the general education classroom. They viewed IEP goals as unrealistic and felt that IEPs, in general, had nothing to do with learning. Lastly, general educators stressed the importance of increased communication between general and special educators.

The special educator focus group consisted of five teachers. They discussed that it was difficult to get general educators to attend IEP meetings. They emphasized the need for more opportunities for students with disabilities to be included in the general education environment, as well as more feedback from general education teachers. They stated that the IEP was an important piece of documentation, but it did not benefit the general educator or drive instruction.

The overall question of the focus groups was to determine why IEP team members were not satisfied and what could be done to improve this. Overall, general educators reported a lower level of satisfaction with IEP development. Additionally, secondary teachers reported a lower level of satisfaction than elementary teachers. Reasons for low levels of satisfaction were grouped into five areas: team connection, time, preparation, training, and IEP relevance.

General educators did not feel connected to the IEP team or the process. General educators reported that the IEP decisions were made prior to the meeting without them, and they were required to only sign; therefore, the general educators felt as if their input was not

important. General educators felt that the time required for the IEP meetings did not allow for their participation. General educators commented that they were generally not approached prior to the meetings to discuss what their role would be, demonstrating the lack of preparation of some special educators. They also stressed the need for training them in the IEP development process. General educators did not see the connection between the IEP and the general curriculum; therefore, they did not see the relevancy of the IEPs. General educators found IEP goals unrealistic and not related to what was going on in the actual classroom.

Seventeen years prior to Menlove's (1999) study, Pugach (1982) also investigated the general educator's involvement in development and use of IEPs. The basis for this study was that the general educator is the primary person responsible for providing instruction to students with mild disabilities, including students with LD. The participants consisted of 33 elementary general educators from a Midwestern school district that were randomly selected from 10 elementary schools. Of the 33, 23 completed a 19-item questionnaire and 10 completed an interview. The first five questions addressed demographic information, and the next 11 questions involved responses about the planning of instruction for students with mild disabilities. Two of the questions on the questionnaire dealt with teacher involvement in the IEP development process and the frequency of teacher use of the IEPs consisted of five items. Each of these items was rated by the respondents using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The last question was an open-ended question that requested information on what changes would be necessary to encourage general educators to take a more active role in the IEP development process.

Pugach did not address the validity or reliability of the instrument used to obtain the data in this study. Although the majority of the questions requested the participant to write in specific

information, two questions, consisting of a total of 10 items that addressed the development and use of IEPs, required participants to use a five-point Likert scale to rate each item. As in previous studies discussed in this review of literature, Pugach considered a Likert scale as an interval scale of measurement and calculated both means and standard deviations of these 10 items. Such consideration remains the center of one of the longest standing debates in behavior science methodology (Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993).

The question concerning involvement in the IEP development process was broken down into five items: fill out forms about student's educational program, confer with special educator, give information on current levels of student performance, give information on goals and objectives, and suggest support services to help implement instructional programs. Results of the data for this question showed that involvement in IEP development usually involved conferring with the special educator ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .83$) and by providing information regarding current levels of student performance ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.03$). The least involvement in the IEP process was filling out forms about the student's educational program ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.82$).

The question involving the use of IEPs was also broken down into five items: prior to parent conference, prior to annual reviews, prior to generating new instructional objectives, prior to informal meeting with special educators, and prior to filling out report card. The majority of the teachers indicated that they seldom used IEPs for instructional planning and monitoring. If IEPs were reviewed, it was prior to annual reviews ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.58$) and prior to generating new instructional objectives ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.38$).

On the questionnaire, 52% of the respondents stated that they had attended the most recent IEP meeting for their students with disabilities. Of the respondents, 67% of the teachers reported that the specific goals and objectives were not written in the IEP for participation in the

regular education classroom. In the interview and responses to the open-ended question, teachers noted that they did not see any coordination between general and special education. 52% of the teachers contributed this to the lack of planning time for IEP development. Those teachers who were satisfied with the instructional planning of students with disabilities in their classrooms reported that it was a result of daily contact with the special educator. Additionally, 34% of the respondents stated that the IEP was useful for the special educators, but only 15% stated that utilizing the IEP had assisted them with the instruction of students with disabilities.

Although Menlove's study was conducted 17 years later than Pugach's study as well as after the reauthorization of IDEA, which mandated the involvement of general educators in the IEP development process, the results of both studies were very similar. Pugach noted that the majority of general educators in her sample were not involved in the IEP development process for the students with disabilities in their classrooms. These were students in which they were primarily responsible for the majority of their instruction. Both studies emphasized the need for increasing the acceptance of practices used to assist students with mild disabilities meet their goals. They both stressed the need for the collaboration of general and special educators to assist students with disabilities meet curriculum standards.

Nevin et al. (1983) conducted a study regarding IEPs with a slightly different angle. Their study investigated the general educator's role in implementation of the IEP. The methodology for their study consisted of three phases: a student IEP records review, a teacher survey, and follow-up teacher interviews. Interviews were conducted "to obtain a measure of the reliability and validity of written survey responses and to obtain additional information about teacher activities in implementing IEPs" (p. 153). The IEP records review was used to identify general educators who participated in the IEP development. Of the 100 general educators identified, 59 were

randomly chosen to respond to a survey and 16 of these were then randomly selected to participate in direct interviews and observations.

Nevin et al. (1983) found that only 24% of the modifications being done in the general education environment were ones listed on the IEPs. These modifications in general were common teaching techniques used for all students, not necessarily ones done to benefit students with disabilities. Overall, IEPs were infrequently used by general educators. Most commented that they used them once or twice a year. However, those teachers that had hard copies of the IEPs in their rooms were more likely to refer to them throughout the year. Additionally, Nevin et al. concluded that although general educators were not involved in the formal IEP process, they were actively involved in the education of students with disabilities in their classrooms. Self-reports by general educators revealed they were frequently engaged in activities such as monitoring/evaluating progress, direct instruction, assessment, and planning and coordinating instruction. Most general educators also reported interacting with special educators one or two times a week, although the purpose and length of time of these interactions was not discussed.

Collaboration of general and special educators is a key component of the IEP development and implementation process, particularly when students with disabilities are receiving the majority of their instruction in the general education environment (McLaughlin et al., 1999). One of the most important decisions made during the collaboration of general and special educators is what skills are necessary for students with disabilities to meet content standards. Another goal of collaboration is to provide strategies and materials to assist general educators in meeting the needs of this population of students and to enable special educators to link IEPs with instructional planning. Minimal coordination of special and general educators has

resulted in the failure of the purpose of many IEPs, the cornerstone of special education (Nevin et al., 1983; Pugach, 1982).

Care-giving

“Without the sense they are cared for, many students may be unable to take full advantage of learning opportunities, however rich and plentiful” (Duke, 1987, p. 69). Thus, the attitudes of general educators in general but also their attitudes and beliefs about the inclusion of students with LD in general education classrooms may impact student educational success. Therefore, it is important for general educators to communicate acceptance and support for students with LD by listening, as well as recognizing and reinforcing their efforts.

McIntosh et al. (1993) conducted a study in which they examined 60 general educators (K – 12) and 60 students with LD across 10 elementary, 5 middle, and 3 high schools in a large southeastern school district to investigate the instructional practices used by general educators, the behaviors of general educators towards students with LD, as well as student-student interactions in the inclusive instructional settings. They also wanted to see if the teachers treated students with LD differently from their peers without disabilities.

LD students identified for this study met the school district placement criteria for LD through a battery of tests: an intelligence test, an achievement test, and a range of processing tests. “Placement criteria included evidence of academic achievement that was significantly below the student’s level of intellectual functioning, evidence of a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes, and evidence that the learning problems were not due to other disabilities” (McIntosh et al., 1993, p. 252). However, a description providing a range of the cognitive abilities of the students with LD represented in this study was not provided by the authors.

The researchers developed the Classroom Climate Scale (CCS) to measure both teacher and student behavior. It is a 21-item instrument divided into four components. On the first three components items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, and on the last component, items were in yes/no format. Listed below are the four components with a brief description:

1. Teacher-initiated behaviors (9 items) concern instructional grouping, types of monitoring and modifications made for students, use of praise, and teacher fairness and impartiality.
2. Student-initiated behaviors (5 items) include students' level of involvement in class activities, asking for help and volunteering, and levels of frustration and confusion.
3. Student participation and interaction (3 items) represent interactions between the student and the teacher, class activities, and other students.
4. Overall classroom climate (4 items) reflects the consistency or discrepancy in assignments, materials, and location and involvement in class activities between general education students and mainstreamed students with learning disabilities. (p. 253)

Descriptive statistics were reported for each item, including the median, mean and standard deviation. Wilcoxin Signed Rank two-tailed tests were also used to compare differences for each item.

Results of the first component, teacher-initiated behavior, did not reveal many significant differences between how teachers treated students with and without LD. No significant differences were found for the following items: uses whole-class activities, uses grouping activities, uses student pairing, uses individualized assignments/activities, makes modifications for students, and appears fair and impartial. Three items, however, were significant at the .01

level. For example, teachers made more negative comments to students without LD ($M = 1.56$, $SD = .66$) than students with LD ($M = 1.18$, $SD = .68$). Teachers monitored the ongoing performance of students without LD ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.31$) more than students with LD ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.49$), and lastly, teachers used praise more frequently with students without LD ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.22$) than students with LD ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.32$).

Results of the second component, student-initiated behavior, indicated that there were several significant differences at the .001 level between students with and without LD. Students without LD ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.19$) asked for help from the teacher more than students with LD ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 1.30$). In addition, students without LD ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.35$) volunteered to answer questions more often than students with LD ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.23$). Students with LD ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.32$), however, interfered with the work or activity of other students less often than students without LD ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.38$). Another significant difference at the .01 level found that students with LD ($M = 1.28$, $SD = 0.72$) made less negative comments than students without LD ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 1.18$) even though the frustration level of both students appeared to be the same.

Student-teacher participation and interaction, the third component, found that students with LD ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.54$) participated significantly less often than students without LD ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.92$) in teacher-directed activities at a .01 significance probability. Other items representing general interactions between students and teachers and students and other students, however, were not found to be significant.

The last component, overall classroom climate, revealed students with LD were expected to work on the same activity or assignment, follow the same sequence of activities, and use the

same materials. In addition, students with LD were seated among their peers without disabilities within the classroom.

Thus, in general, McIntosh et al. (1993) concluded as an overall finding of this study that students with and without LD are treated similarly in the inclusive instructional setting. As the authors pointed out, there is both a positive and negative side to this. On the positive side, students with disabilities were accepted by the teacher, treated fairly by the teacher, and worked on the same activities, using the same materials as other students in the class. However, on the negative side, instruction was not individualized and few accommodations were made to meet the needs of students with LD. Students with LD participated very little in class activities, whether teacher-directed or not. They also interacted less often with the teachers and their peers. Thus, students with LD were allowed to continue to be passive learners by the teachers in this study.

Olson et al. (1997) conducted a study that also investigated the attitudes and attributes of general educators working with students with disabilities in inclusive instructional settings. These general educators were identified by special educators and principals as effective at including students with disabilities in their classrooms. The basis of this study was to determine if there was more involved in the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education environment than just particular teaching methods.

The participants of the study were 10 general educators from elementary and secondary schools in the Grand Forks metropolitan area and surrounding districts identified by principals and special educators as effective inclusionists. Of the 10 general educators, five were secondary teachers, and five were elementary teachers. The five secondary teachers had experience working

with students with mild disabilities, whereas the five elementary teachers had experience with a wider range of students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities.

Each of the general educators participated in a semi-structured interview that took approximately one hour. Transcripts from taped interviews were analyzed for unifying themes. Participants also completed follow-up questionnaires, consisting of a list of the seven themes identified by the researcher. They were given the opportunity to agree or disagree and comment on each theme. The following seven themes emerged from the data. The teachers “(a) described their personalities as tolerant, reflective, and flexible; (b) accepted responsibility for all students; (c) described a positive working relationship with special education; (d) reported adjusting expectations for integrated students; (e) indicated that their primary inclusionary attitude was showing interpersonal warmth and acceptance in their interactions with students, (f) felt that there was insufficient time available for collaboration; and (g) expressed reservations about fully including all students” (p. 28).

The theme of particular interest for this portion of the review of literature was that these teachers expressed interpersonal warmth and acceptance towards students with LD. They believed that this provided an environment that fostered student development. One teacher talked about the need to build a sense of community in the classroom where children worked together and ultimately cared about each other, too. Secondary teachers described themselves as “approachable.” They emphasized that it was just as important for students with disabilities to adjust socially as it is academically. Others also stressed the importance of getting to know students with disabilities and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Overall, “the heart of the inclusionary attitude of the teachers interviewed was a humanistic stance regarding the worth of individuals” (Olson et al., 1997, p. 32). They expressed

their responsibility for all students including those students with LD. In addition, each one had a personality with characteristics of tolerance, reflectivity, and flexibility that assisted them in meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

McIntosh et al. (1993) found that in comparison to students without disabilities, general educators made less negative comments towards students with disabilities and praised them more often, too. Although such behaviors represent caring behaviors, these same teachers did not monitor the progress of students with disabilities as much as those without disabilities. They also did not meet the needs of students with disabilities through the use of accommodations and individualized instruction. Olson et al. (1997), on the other hand, discovered that those teachers identified as most skilled at including students with disabilities in the general education classroom exhibited attitudes and attributes that showed that they cared for both the social, as well as the academic success of this population of students. Teachers of this study emphasized that “positive attitudes and warm interpersonal relationships were central to effective inclusion.” (p.31)

Chapter Summary

Despite recent federal legislation mandating the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities as well as the inclusion of this population in accountability and assessment systems, studies reviewed in this chapter show that general educators are not doing what is necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities. As a consequence, they are not assuring FAPE for these students. Studies that investigated each of Duke’s six teaching situations revealed that most general educators are aware of what needs to be done to promote the success of students with LD in the inclusive instructional setting, but yet they have made only minimal provisions to do this.

None of the studies reviewed looked at the entire educational process as outlined by Duke's six teaching situations, planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and caring for students. However, there is a need to look at the total picture, including the practices general and special educators working in inclusive instructional settings are utilizing to meet the diverse needs of a population of students with LD that have found their way back to the general education classroom.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter begins with an overview of the methodology of this study. It then addresses the assumptions and rationale for a qualitative design. Following this section is a detailed description of the overall procedures used for this study, focusing specifically on data collection and data analysis procedures.

Overview of the Methods

With the inclusion of students with LD in general education classrooms, teaching has grown much more complex. Not only are educators responsible for teaching standards set by the state, they are also responsible for meeting the individual needs of a population of students that the general education environment failed before. An environment where previous research has found that “undifferentiated, large-group instruction is the norm” (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995, p. 264) and that general educators have made only subtle changes in their educational practice to assist in meeting the diverse learning needs of students with LD.

Landmark legislation such as the IDEA mandates that students with disabilities receive FAPE in the LRE. In addition, recent federal legislation has supported the inclusion of students with disabilities in standards-based reform with the hope to align special education policies with educational reform initiatives that focus on educational outcomes (McLaughlin et. al, 1999). As a result students with disabilities have been included in state assessment and accountability systems with the “clear presumption that students with disabilities . . . have access to the general curriculum and the same opportunity to learn challenging and important content that is offered to all other students” (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 9). NCLB also focuses on accountability, requiring schools to make adequately yearly progress towards specific goals. It specifically identifies

students with disabilities as a subgroup that receives particular attention, too. Therefore, general and special educators must not only change their teaching practices to provide students with high quality instruction that allows students with disabilities to access new state standards, they must ensure FAPE by meeting the individual needs of each student with a disability. Otherwise, goals set forth in recent federal legislation will be difficult to attain.

As noted in Duke's (1987) vision of teaching excellence, there are six central teaching situations critical for student achievement: planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and care-giving. But as described in chapter 2, the literature reviewed in this study only considered one or two of these teaching situations in their investigations. None of these studies addressed the total educational process represented by Duke's six teaching situations. However, professional commentary stressed the importance of each teaching situation represented by Duke's vision of teaching excellence as critical instructional elements.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the current practices of special and general educators in the planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and caring for students with LD in inclusive instructional settings. The data collected through focus groups will provide the district with descriptive details of the teaching practices used with students with LD in inclusive instructional settings. The overarching research question that will be explored is this: How do teachers working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD characterize their teaching practices? Supporting questions include: (a) How do special educators describe their teaching practices? (b) How do general educators describe their teaching practices? and (c) How are the teaching practices of special and general educators similar and different?

Procedures

This section begins by describing the assumptions and rationale for a qualitative design. It then describes the procedures for obtaining permission from the school district and the university, the setting selection, and the participant selection. It also provides an explanation of the data collection and analysis procedures used to conduct this study.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

A qualitative research design was used to conduct a descriptive investigation of current teaching practices used by general and special educators working with students with LD in inclusive instructional settings at the middle school level. Gathering qualitative data from focus groups provided vivid and rich descriptions of how general and special educators describe their teaching practices.

Type of Design

The focus of this study was on how educators engage in teaching practices represented by Duke's (1987) six teaching situations. The analysis focused on the individual and group responses of general and special educators working at the middle school level in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD.

The methodology chosen for this study was focus groups. Focus groups are an interactive method concerned with understanding attitudes of participants rather than just measuring the attitudes. Focus groups provide data that describes not only what people think, but why they think the way they do (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Krueger and Casey further noted that focus groups should be used when the researcher is trying to understand differences in the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions between two categories of people. In addition, they emphasized that focus groups are naturalistic because the environment they present is one in which participants

are influencing others and are also influenced by others just as they are in life. Focus groups are a study of social interaction where participants “influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion” (Krueger, 1994, p. 6). In other words, not only “what individuals do in a group depends on the group context but also that what individuals do in any group depends on the individuals who make it up” (Morgan, 1997, p.60).

Therefore, the use of focus groups was a good choice of methodology for this study because the study was investigating the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of two groups, general and special educators, working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD. Focus groups were in particular well suited for answering the research questions in this study because focus groups involve the interaction of participants--interaction that involves participants working together to answer questions. This interaction represents the collaborative relationship that is necessary among teachers working in inclusive instructional settings to better serve students with LD (McLaughlin et al., 1999).

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p.7). The researcher served as the moderator of each focus group, directing the discussion and keeping the conversation flowing.

Being the primary research instrument, the researcher's background and experiences played a role in this investigation. Serving currently as special education department chair, the researcher is responsible for supervising the education of students with disabilities. The researcher works daily with general and special educators to provide students with disabilities FAPE, specifically meeting the unique educational needs addressed in student IEPs. This creates the potential for observer bias. However, the researcher implemented several strategies within the data collection procedures and analysis to control for such bias. First, the assistant moderator,

helping with the focus groups, was a general educator. The assistant moderator was also the one to take notes during the focus groups and identify key points of the discussions with the participants.

Because the participants involved in this study came from the eight middle schools in the school district, the researcher did not have any direct involvement with these teachers. However, serving previously as special education department chair at one of the middle schools, the researcher did have past involvement with participants from that school. Because the researcher served in the position for only one year, the researcher did not expect that it would impact the results of this study.

Gaining Access and Entry

Before conducting research in the selected school district, a research proposal had to be submitted to the district's Department of Research, Testing, and Statistics. The proposal included a rationale for the study, the purpose of the study, a description of related studies, a description of the methodology, and an outline of data analysis techniques. See Appendix C. Permission from school district to conduct the study is on file with researcher. Additionally, approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). See Appendix D.

Following permission from the school district and IRB, a letter describing the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures necessary to complete this study were mailed to each principal and special education department chair. This was done with the hope that the principals and department chairs would encourage selected general and special educators working with students with LD in inclusive instructional settings to participate in the focus groups. See Appendix E.

Setting Selection

The setting for this study was an urban school district of 37,000 students located in a city of approximately 240,000 people in a Mid-Atlantic state. For the confidentiality of the district, it was assigned the pseudonym “District X” for the purpose of this study. District X consists of 35 elementary schools, eight middle schools, five high schools, and various other alternative schools and programs. Just as many other school districts in this age of accountability, the mission of this district is to ensure the success of each student in an environment that is challenging and supported by educators focused on high quality teaching and learning experiences.

Of the schools in this district, the schools at the middle school level were identified for the purpose of this study. This limited the target population to educators working in the eight middle schools. The middle schools were targeted due to their use of a collaborative inclusion model to serve the majority of students with LD in the system. This model of inclusion “is designed to provide instructional support to students based on point-of-service needs” (District X, 2002, p. 7) as determined through the collaborative efforts of general and special educators. Thus, if appropriate accommodations and modifications that meet the needs of students with disabilities are in place, then it is assumed that these students should be able to function independently in the general education classroom.

In such a service delivery model, general educators are primarily responsible for the delivery of the content instruction. The special educator is responsible for the specialized instruction that meets the unique educational needs of students with disabilities with the implementation of necessary accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom. More specifically, the responsibilities of special educators working in the collaborative inclusion model are to do the following:

1. Provide accommodations such as study guides, organizers, outlines, notes, etc.
2. Develop unit/chapter reviews prior to tests.
3. Modify tests.
4. Implement testing accommodations.
5. Introduce lessons.
6. Work with individual students or small groups of students.
7. Monitor student progress/behavior.
8. Develop other options for assessment.
9. Teach/implement applicable strategies.
10. Provide parents weekly assignment guides to include notification of assignments, upcoming tests, and missing assignments.
11. Establish a communication system between regular and special education teachers to keep students abreast of assignments, missing assignments, or upcoming class activities. (District X, 2002, p. 10)

Special educators are assigned to clusters or to specific content area teachers within the cluster. District X stresses the importance of a common planning period for special and general educators working together in the collaborative inclusion model to discuss the individual needs of students with disabilities and the necessary supports that must be provided for these students to access the general curriculum. Special educators are also assigned to resource classes where they reinforce information taught in the content classes based on the individual needs of the students. However, not all students served in the collaborative inclusion model are required to participate in this class. It is an elective class that is assigned based on the needs of the individual student and the decision of the IEP team.

Eligibility Criteria. The eligibility criteria for LD in this district are based on the discrepancy requirement. The Child Study Team (CST) may determine that a child has a learning disability if the child does not achieve commensurate with his/her age and ability levels when provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and ability level (District X, 2003). The CST should also find that the child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability that is not due to any part of the exclusionary criteria specified in the legal definition of LD. However, if there is not a discrepancy, the CST cannot automatically exclude the child.

The district was provided discrepancy tables from S. Ward and T. Ward from the College of William and Mary for the CSTs to use to determine whether a difference exists between ability and achievement scores. Individual tables were provided for each combination of ability and achievement tests. Therefore, after proper selection of the table based on ability and achievement tests used for evaluating the student, the score from the ability test is then located in the "score" column. Finally, a significant difference between ability and achievement is then determined if the achievement scores obtained by the students are equal to or less than the tabled values (Ward & Ward, 2002).

Overall, the following steps were identified as best practice by Ward and Ward (2002) in identifying whether a child has a LD:

1. Determine if there is a deficit in achievement.
2. Determine if there is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language.
3. Determine if the disorder manifests itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.

4. Determine the best measure of intellectual ability.
5. Determine if there is a discrepancy between ability and achievement.
6. Apply the exclusionary criteria.
7. Determine if the student requires a specifically designed educational program to achieve at levels commensurate with age and ability.

In conclusion, Ward and Ward cautioned that the total evaluation procedure and determination of eligibility for special education must be an integrated approach that does not rely on one sole criterion.

Participant Selection

To determine participant selection for focus groups, Krueger and Casey (2000) stated, “the purpose should guide the invitation decision” (p.70). Participants should also be able to provide the researcher with the information necessary to conduct this study. In addition, focus groups should be characterized by homogeneity, allowing participants to feel comfortable. As Morgan (1997) stated, participants should have something in common, such as occupation. Thus, in this study, special educator participants were in groups together, and general educator participants were in groups together.

For this study, specifications for participants included general educators who teach English, reading, math, social studies, and science and special educators working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD at the middle school level. Special education department chairs at each middle school were asked to provide a list of teachers working in such a model. Participants were then separated into two pools, one for general educators and one for special educators. This is called “segmentation,” and it allows the researcher to control group composition.

The sampling used in this study is termed nonprobabilistic (Merriam, 1998). Merriam noted that such a method is the choice of qualitative research because the purpose of qualitative research is not generalizability. “The intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation” (Krueger, 1994, p.87). It is necessary for the researcher to select a sample in which they can learn the most from on the topic (Merriam, 1998), which is why the participants of the focus groups had to be directly involved in the collaborative inclusion model.

Participants of each focus group were randomly selected from two pools of educators. From these pools, 10 participants for each focus group were selected, with the hope that at least 5 participants would agree to participate. Selected participants were then sent a recruitment letter outlining the purpose of the study and how it may be relevant to them in their current position. See Appendix F. Attached to the letter was a response form that the participants were asked to complete and return through the intramail system of the school district. The response form specified whether the participants were able to participate in the focus group. This letter was also sent as an attachment to e-mails to teachers through the school district’s intranet. A follow-up e-mail was sent to those participants who did not respond via e-mail or the intramail system after a one-week time period. If at least 5 participants did not respond for a group, additional names were randomly selected from the appropriate original pools until the minimum number of participants agreed to participate in the focus group.

Selected participants who agreed to participate in the study were sent a letter specifying the date, time, and location of the focus group and a graphic organizer outlining the major topics of the focus group. See Appendix G and H. This information was also sent as an attachment to e-

mails to those participants who responded via e-mail. Participants were directed to make notes under each topic in the designated area prior to the focus group to help facilitate the discussion at the focus group.

Assurance of Confidentiality

Selected participants, individual schools, and the school district were assured of confidentiality of identification. A pseudonym was assigned to the district. Individual participants and the schools they represented were also not included in the written report.

Before the data collection process began, written permission was obtained from the school district, as well as the university's Institutional Review Board. Prior to inviting teachers to attend focus groups, principals were notified about the purpose of the study and the possibility that selected teachers in their building would be invited to participate in focus group discussions. Focus groups were scheduled to be held on a workday or early release days; therefore, permission had to be obtained from principals to allow teachers willing to participate to leave the school buildings during this time. Each middle school principal agreed to allow their teachers willing to participate in the study to be excused from activities scheduled at the participants' schools and leave the building during this time to participate in focus groups. Principals, however, were not provided the names of specific teachers. In addition, prior to the beginning of each focus group, written consent was obtained from individual participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in the form of focus groups for the two sets of educators represented in this study. For the purpose of maintaining homogeneity, special and general educators attended separate focus groups. Data collection involved of a total of 6 focus groups, consisting of at least 5 participants for each group. Of the groups, three were made up of special educators,

and three were made up of general educators. Because the first two groups of general educators and the first two groups of special educators, in general, expressed the same concerns and ideas, the third groups were still conducted for validation purposes.

Means of Collecting Data: Instrument Selection/Construction

The review of literature and the conceptual framework for this study guided the series of questions asked of focus group participants. Questions represented the six teaching situations that comprise Duke's vision of teaching excellence: planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and care-giving. Charlotte Danielson's Components of Professional Practice (Glickman, 2002), which align closely with Duke's six teaching situations, were also helpful in question development. See Appendix I for questions for general educators, and Appendix J for special educators.

Prior to the beginning of the focus groups, participants were asked to respond as a group to a short questionnaire. See Appendix K. The questionnaire consisted of questions about the critical components of special education, which was used to gather a knowledge base of special education for all focus group participants.

Interview procedures and protocols. Separate focus groups were conducted for general and special educators at convenient times and locations for participants. The first two groups were scheduled to take place on a workday; however, due to weather conditions, schools were closed for the day. Participants selected to participate in these two focus groups agreed to stay after school hours to complete the focus group discussions. Other groups were held on early release days, allowing teachers to participate in focus groups during their working hours.

Focus groups were conducted using the recommended protocol suggested by Krueger and Casey (2000). To begin with there was a formal welcome, including introductions of the

moderator and the assistant moderator. Next, an overview of the topic was presented along with expectations of the group. Participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers to questions. They were encouraged to share opinions even if the opinions differed from the rest of the group, with negative comments being as important as positive comments. They were reminded to not use staff names or school names. They were also told that those dominating the conversation would be asked to allow others to talk, and those not talking may be called upon to give their opinions. After this, questions began.

Focus groups were conducted under a structured approach with high moderator involvement and a set of comparable questions asked of all groups. Such an approach allowed focus groups to stay on topics that interested the researcher. Focus groups lasted approximately 1-1/2 to 2 hours. When participants first arrived, they were given a card to complete on their demographic information (Appendix L). There was a brief introduction, consisting of an overview of the study and group expectations (10 minutes). During this time participants were asked to sign the Informed Consent (Appendix M). Participants were then given the questionnaire to complete as a group (10 minutes). Following this was an 85-minute period of questioning, which addressed planning, instruction, classroom management, progress monitoring, clinical assistance, and care-giving. The first question of the group, however, asked participants to describe the typical student with a learning disability in their class. The last 15 minutes were designated for the assistant moderator to work with the participants in identifying the key points of the focus group discussion. Building this into the data collection procedures protected data from the researcher's post hoc speculation (Morgan, 1997).

Observation procedures. The primary means of gathering data was focus groups. The assistant moderator took field notes during the focus group discussions. Focus group discussions

were recorded via a tape recorder to serve as a backup to field notes when clarification was needed. At the end of each focus group, the assistant moderator identified the key points during the discussion with the participants. Following each focus group, the field notes were transcribed by the moderator and data were used to support the key points identified by focus group participants and the researcher.

Document data collection. One form of document collection was the questionnaire dealing with the critical components of special education that participants were requested to complete as a group in the beginning of each focus group. In addition, a researcher's log was kept by the moderator that included information obtained from the debriefing session held by the moderator and assistant moderator immediately following each focus group. Information included observations of individual and group behavior during focus groups.

Field testing. Selected teacher representatives with experience working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD served as consultants to this investigation. They were provided with the purpose of the study and data collection procedures. In addition, the consultants were provided proposed questions to be used during the focus groups. Several suggestions were made to help clarify the questions to be asked of focus group participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in qualitative research. The final product in qualitative research is shaped by the data collected as well as the analyses used during the process (Merriam, 1998). Krueger (1994) suggested the following systematic steps that are beneficial in both data collection and analysis:

1. Sequencing of questions to allow participants to become familiar with the process and the topic.

2. Capturing and handling data through the use of field notes and recording devices.
3. Coding of data.
4. Participant verification of key points made during focus group discussion before the ending the focus group.
5. Debriefing between the moderator and assistant moderator to discuss focus group behavior.
6. Sharing of focus group results.

In addition, when conducting data analysis, Merriam (1998) suggested that the researcher give consideration to the following factors: (a) consider the words; (b) consider the context; (c) consider the internal consistency; (d) consider the frequency or extensiveness of comments; (e) consider the intensity of comments; (f) consider the specificity of responses; and find the big ideas.

Addressing Quality

Trusting research results is important to all professionals, but it is particularly important to those professionals working in applied fields such as education where practitioners intervene with people's lives on a daily basis (Merriam, 1998). Professionals, therefore, want to know that results are trustworthy and that the credibility, transferability, and dependability have been addressed throughout the study. The next section will describe the procedures used in this study to establish the trustworthiness of the findings.

Credibility. First, the questions used for this study were field tested with selected representatives from samples similar to those in the study. Focus groups were conducted with the researcher serving as the moderator. The assistant moderator was purposely chosen due to her experience as a general educator in an inclusive instructional setting. During focus groups, the

assistant moderator took field notes, paraphrasing what participants said and writing down quotes important in supporting the data. Focus groups were audiotaped, allowing the researcher to refer back to them for clarity. During the focus group, the moderator was able to follow up with responses that were not clear by asking participants to clarify or expand upon their responses. Then, at the conclusion of the focus group, participants were asked to identify the key points of the focus group discussion with the assistant moderator.

Transferability. Qualitative research is not intended for generalization because it involves spending a large amount of time conducting research with a small number of people (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In focus group research in particular, it often involves participants not selected in a random manner. Therefore, transferability is the better concept in qualitative research. With this, it is the reader who decides whether the results can be applied in their situation by examining the setting selection, participant selection, procedures, and analysis strategies. Thus, a rich description of the context of this study is provided to allow the reader to compare it to their situation.

Dependability. Dependability refers to whether the results found are consistent with the data collected in the study (Merriam, 1998). Merriam explained dependability further by stating that it is a researcher wishing that readers “concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable” (p. 206). Merriam suggested using an audit trail to ensure that results are dependable because it allows the readers to authenticate the findings of a study by following a detailed description of the trail of the researcher. Thus, a description of all procedures used to collect, manage, and analyze data is provided throughout this study.

Data Management

The data management and analysis strategies used for this study occurred in several steps. First, the responses of each focus group on the questionnaire addressing the critical components of special education were placed in two matrices, one representing the general educators and one representing the special educators. See Appendix N and O. In addition, the demographic information sheets completed by participants and the debriefing notes of the moderator and assistant moderator were grouped together after each focus group and marked to identify the group. This information is summarized prior to reporting the results of each group in the next chapter.

Next, the key points identified by the focus group participants with the assistant moderator, as well as those identified by the researcher, along with supporting details and direct quotations of focus group participants were summarized. These descriptive summaries were then sent to the participants of each focus group. They were asked to review the summaries and send back any comments that would help to clarify what was presented. However, little to no feedback was provided by participants, leaving these summaries unchanged.

The long-table approach was the next strategy used to address the data obtained from the focus group discussions. The descriptive summaries, representing the results of each focus group, were color-coded blue for general educators and yellow for special educators by drawing a line of color down the left margin. If the results were for the first general educator focus group, one blue line was drawn. If the results were for the second general educator focus group, two blue lines were drawn, and so on. The same technique was used for the results of the special educators using yellow lines. Descriptive summaries were then cut apart and each piece was placed on the appropriate large piece of flip chart paper, representing key themes identified after

focus group discussions by focus group participants and the researcher. Pieces were ordered based on the emphasis placed on these themes. The following factors were used to determine emphasis: frequency, specificity, emotion, and extensiveness (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Finally, the researcher created a visual diagram outlining the major themes that emerged during focus groups discussions on the teaching practices of special and general educators working in inclusive instructional settings with students with LD. The development of this diagram allows the reader to easily compare it to the conceptual model used to structure this study. In addition, it assists the reader by visually displaying the emphasis placed on each theme, as well as any recognizable alignment between the teaching practices of special and general educators.