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Understanding the Co-Teaching Experience of Teachers: Negotiating Choice and Efficacy

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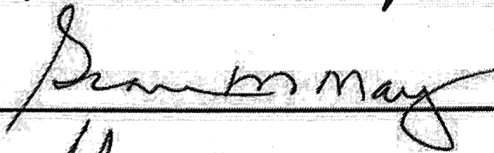
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Abstract

Co-teaching, a main strategy of the inclusionary movement, has been widely researched over the last 25 years. Although there is much research in the way of student outcomes and best practices, the research on teachers' perceptions of co-teaching on the secondary level is non-existent. Although all of the research on best practices of co-teaching suggests that voluntary participation and choice of partner is important when implementing a co-teaching program, school administration tend to veer away from giving teachers choice due to scheduling or financial constraints.

Using qualitative, case-study research methods, including teacher and administrative interviews, survey and field observations, this study's findings add to the existing body of research that focuses on teachers' experiences in co-teaching. This research reaffirms findings from extant research while also identifying new themes of choice of partner and/or participation as well as efficacy.. Teacher choice and teacher collective efficacy informed the positive experiences of co-teaching in important and interesting ways and should be acknowledged by district level and school wide administrators looking to implement or improve co-teaching initiatives. This study not only endeavored to explain, understand, and share the stories of 12 teachers given choice, but it also hopes to bring awareness to the understanding of the value teachers bring to their craft through their self and collective efficacy. Also, this study attempts to describe the influence administrative decision-making has on the practice and perceptions of teacher.

Keywords: Co-teaching, choice, collective efficacy, inclusion, teachers' perception, administrative supports

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The inclusionary movement is rooted in the changing landscape of the public education system. In 2014, approximately 13% of all public school students (6.5 million) in the U.S. received special education (NCES, 2016), an increase of 11% (5 million) in 2000 (NCES, 2016; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). As the students in the U.S. public school system exhibit greater diversity in their learning needs, there has been a call to create strategies and to improve achievement for all students, especially for students with disabilities.

According to Salend, Garrick and Duhaney (2007), and Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007), the inclusionary movement is a set of shared beliefs in the school community that emphasizes the principle that all students can learn regardless of their ability. Traditionally, educating students with disabilities took place in separate schools and classes away from their general peer groups. The model of resource room in special education is education in isolation with no integration with non-disabled peers (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). With its roots in Wolfenberger's Normalization principle (1972) suggesting that placing special needs students in a setting with typical, chronological peers leads to normative changes in behavior and self-esteem, the inclusionary movement has become a national effort to create schools and other educational environments that meet the needs of diverse populations of learners by respecting and learning from other's differences (Friend, Bursuck, 2008; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Salend, 2002; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Yell, 2005).

Born out of the reauthorization of special education laws such as PL 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975) and its updated version, the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 and 2004, legislators in the last 40 years turned their focus to educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms to ensure a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students. One way to ensure that all students receive FAPE is by placing them in the least restrictive environment (LRE) reflecting their individual learning needs. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is defined as an educational setting for students with disabilities that is most like that of typical, chronological peers in which they can succeed when provided with special education services (Friend, 2008). The mandate of LRE has made the inclusionary movement the go-to strategy allowing students with special needs to access an inclusive environment where applicable (Yell, 2005). . For example, Blackford (2003) found that students in a resource room setting were not as well accepted by their peers as those in inclusion classrooms. Also, students in resource rooms often experienced lower self-esteem and self-efficacy in their academic ability than those in an inclusion classroom (Blackford, 2003). Research indicates that students with disabilities are more likely to learn without embarrassment or discrimination by peers, or other educators, in an inclusion classroom rather than in a special education setting (Friend & Bursuck, 2008; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Scuggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie 2007).

With the passage of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001), there has been an increase in the demand that all students, including those with disabilities, have access to the general education curriculum, be taught by highly-qualified teachers, and be included in the new accountability measures for student outcomes (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Education's 37th Report on IDEA (2015), more than six out of 10 school aged students serviced under IDEA spend at least 80% of their school day in a general education setting. This represents a 30% increase from 2004 in

learning side-by-side with nondisabled peers, demonstrating the push for inclusion throughout the country by districts in order to comply with federal education law (U.S. DOE, 2015).

Kloo and Zigmond (2008) identify co-teaching as the main strategy of the inclusionary movement, suggesting that "co-teaching will ensure that students with IEPs (Individual Education Program) will receive whatever support is necessary for them to function successfully in general education classrooms" (p. 13). Also known as team teaching, co-enrollment, collaborative teaching, or cooperative teaching, co-teaching occurs when a general education teacher and a special education teacher work as partners in a general education classroom to teach both special education and general education students in the same space (Friend, 2008). The variation of terms is indicative of a lack of consensus about how to implement the co-teaching strategy. In general terms, the co-teaching strategy asks both teachers to coordinate instruction to meet the needs of a heterogeneous class of students (Austin, 2001; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). By placing both a general education and a special education teacher in the same classroom, teachers could incorporate a broader range of instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of all students in general education classrooms, ensuring that students who are not classified, but are at risk, also receive the necessary support to succeed (Kloo & Zigmond, 2008). Ideally, co-teaching will reduce the stigma that is associated with the resource classroom and provide the rich instructional environment of having two experts to deliver content, manage student behavior, and offer extra help to both special education and general education students in a LRE (Austin, 2001; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Co-teaching as a strategy illustrates the complexity of conceptualizing and implementing collaboration in special education. Co-teaching, theoretically, allows for the blending of expertise of both general education teacher and the special education teacher to share the responsibilities of improving participation, rigor, and performance of a diverse group of students (Murawski & Dieker, 2008). However, the practice of co-teaching can prove to be a complex issue. The co-teaching environment is anchored in mutual participation and commitment from each teacher and cannot be produced by one teacher alone; the exact contribution that each teacher makes may vary (Friend, 2008). Many factors play a part in the complexity of co-teaching. By describing co-teaching as a marriage, Kohler- Evans (2006) suggests both individual teachers should willingly participate, communicate, and share responsibility and mutual respect for successful practice of co-teaching. Much of research indicates that whether teachers have a choice to be part of a co-teaching team is key to the success of co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2008; Grill, Moorehead, &, Bedesem, 2011; Kohler-Evans, 2006). However, due to lack of time, money, personnel, and training to implement co-teaching effectively (Nichols, Dowdy, &, Nichols, 2010; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012; Woolery, Gessler, Werts, Caldwell, &, Snyder, 1996), co-teaching teams have often been forced together, and thus, the partnership deals with a myriad of issues negatively impacting the co-teaching environment, including lack of commitment, resentment, and ineffective instruction (Friend, 2008).

According to Friend and Cook (1995), teachers who voluntarily participate in co-teaching bring certain characteristics, knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy with them to work effectively with another teacher. Research shows that teachers who choose to participate in co-teaching have

a higher level of "self-efficacy" and skills to meet the learning needs of all students in their classroom including students with disabilities in a general education, inclusion classroom (Bandua, 1977; Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). Research also suggests that self-efficacy is an important influence on human achievement in a variety of settings including education, health, sports, and business (Klassen & Chui, 2010). Furthermore, researchers are finding that teachers' self-efficacy influences their teaching behaviors and their students' motivations and achievement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Therefore, a teacher's self-efficacy is key to a successful co-teaching partnership and classroom environment.

     Friend (2008) asserts that only two committed educators that care about meeting the learning needs of all students can work successfully together to create a positive co-teaching environment. You need a sentence here that connects the previous sentence with the one that follows. Collective efficacy suggests that a teacher must be willing to work collaboratively (with a co-teacher) and seek out support in order to successfully meet the district and school goals aligned with the learning needs of all students in the co-teaching classroom (Bandura, 2000; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). The key to collective efficacy is institutional and administrative support of common goals. Villa, Thousand, Nevin, and Liston (2005) found that the amount of administrative support experienced by the co-teaching team plays an integral part in fostering positive attitudes of general education teachers towards co-teaching. The research suggests that common planning time and training for co-teachers is essential to the success for the co-teaching environment (Austin, 2001; Dieker, 2001; Manset & Semmel, 1997; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The belief in the efficacy of inclusion, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy is significant to the effectiveness of a

co-teaching environment. Thereby, schools and districts must buy in to the importance of inclusion and should provide the supports needed for the co-teaching to be successful. (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012).

Extant literature points to the negative impact of involuntary participation on co-teaching, specifically the communication of the partnership and purposely planned instruction (Carlson, 1996; Carson, 2011; Rosa, 1996). Given that communication and relationship are at the heart of co-teaching models, research on the characteristics, motives, attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives of participants, entering the co-teaching classroom with either reservations and/or willingness, must be studied.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how general education and special education teachers understand the role of choice and efficacy in their co-teaching classroom as they work together to meet the needs of all students. More specifically, this study examined why teachers chose to participate in a co-teaching program and what kind of relationships they forged and strategies they implemented with their co-teachers in order to create effective learning environments for all students. Also, the study examined the motivating factors of the administration to provide teachers with the choice of participation in co-teaching and how their administrative supports impacted teachers' experiences.

Research Questions

This study investigated the perspectives of voluntary co-teaching participants in a high school where co-teaching was promoted. The following overarching questions informed the research inquiry:

1)   What motivates teachers to participate in a voluntary co-teaching program?

2)   How does choice of participation and choice of partner influence teachers'

        experiences of working in a co-teaching environment?

3)   What are the perceptions of general and special education teachers regarding how

        their collective efficacy influences their co-teaching experience?

4)   How do the administrative decisions on co-teaching influences teachers'

        experiences of co-teaching?

Significance of the Study

Although the co-teaching model has become a fairly common strategy for inclusion, there seems to be a lack of consensus on the specific features required for an effective environment, the precise role of the special education teacher and the general education teacher, and the best way to measure effectiveness of co-teaching as an inclusion strategy (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018; Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graezts, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005; Trembley, 2012). The literature on co-teaching mirrors a lack of understanding of co-teaching and the complexities surrounding the factors contributing to effective partnership (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008). Weiss and Brigham (2000) reviewed the many issues in the research on co-teaching, citing omission of data in results, examination of only successful co-teaching teams, and small sample sizes. More recent literature suggests similar issues including methodological limitations, contradictory and unclear findings, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about what makes co-teaching successful (Dieker & Murkowski, 2003; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chanberlaind, & Shamberger, 2010; Murkowski, 2009; Tremblay, 2013).

Although many studies have been conducted examining teachers and teaching

partnerships in a co-teaching classroom (Carson, 2011; Minke & Bear, 1996; Scruggs et al.,

2007; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Baker, 2000), very few have examined the attitudes and

willingness of special education and general education teachers to take on the responsibility of

meeting the learning needs of all students in their classroom. Though the research suggests that

teachers bring their own beliefs and attitudes that in turn impact the co-teaching environment, the

concept of self- efficacy of co-teachers has not been explored. This study explored the themes of

self and collective efficacy among special education and general education teachers in a co-

teaching classroom in order to determine what role those beliefs played in their experiences in a

co-teaching environment.

Another theme examined in this research is the theme of choice or voluntary participation

in co-teaching programs. The literature on co-teaching indicates that voluntary participation of

teachers in a co-teaching environment is important to the successful implementation of a co-

teaching environment (Kohler-Evans, 2006; Friend, 2008, Friend & Cook, 1996, Grillo,

Moorehead, & Bedesem, 2011). However, there is little research on the role that choice plays in

the perceptions and experiences of special education and general education teachers in a co-

teaching environment. According to the research on student choice in the classroom by Olutayo

(2012) based on Glasser's Choice Theory (1998) when given a choice, motivation, participation,

creativity, as well as one's sense of efficacy, are improved. If applied to a teacher in a co-

teaching environment, voluntary participation would impact special education and general

education teachers' beliefs in their ability to meet all of the learning needs of their students

(Pattal, Cooper & Wynn, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1984). This voluntary participation also added a

layer of complexity beyond the student because teachers also understand the role of

administrative support in their work. This study aimed to examine how teacher choice played a role in the perceptions and experiences of special education and general education teachers in a co-teaching environment, as well as the impact of administrative supports on co-teaching experiences.

In order to understand the experiences, motivations, and perceptions of voluntary participants in a co-teaching environment, there was a need for a descriptive qualitative study that used teacher testimonies as the primary avenue for investigating co-teaching. Some anecdotal information exists on the topic of co-teaching. However, few qualitative explanatory studies exist on the secondary level (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). Bamberg (2006) discusses the narrative inquiry citing Drew (1998).

> In the (interactional) circumstances in which we report our own or others' conduct, our descriptions are themselves accountable phenomena through which we recognizably display an action's (im)propriety, (in)correctness, (un)suitability, (in)appropriateness, (in)justices, (dis)honesty, and so forth. Insofar as descriptions are unavoidably incomplete and selective, they are designed for specific and local interactional purposes. Hence they may, always and irretrievably, be understood as doing moral work—as providing a basis for evaluating the "rightness" or "wrongness" of whatever is being reported. (p. 295).

In regards to studying co-teaching at the secondary level, Reith and Polsgrove (1998) stated that "it's not enough to merely place students with disabilities in general class settings without providing appropriate support, materials and training for students and their teachers. To do so surely invites failure" (p. 287). By studying general and special education teachers' sense making of choice and efficacy in co-teaching through a qualitative lens, the previously

unexamined complexities of the co-teaching relationship, the motivations of co-teachers, and the significance of the understanding of the concepts of choice and efficacy began to emerge with the intention of improving the practice of co-teaching.

Overview of Methods

Using single case study methodology to explore the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching, this qualitative study utilized Saldana's (2009) two cycle coding method to understand special education and general education teachers' experiences, motivations, and perspectives of their co-teaching environment. According to Stake (2005), qualitative understanding of a phenomenon requires experiencing the case as it happens in context. As Bruner (1990) states, "To insist of the explanation in terms of *causes* simply bars us from trying to understand how human beings interpret their world and how *we* interpret *their* acts of interpretation" (p.   ). As such, semi- structured interviews, observations, and document examination were also utilized to better understand both special education and general education teachers' experiences of co-teaching.

This study was conducted at Park High School. Data was collected from the special education and general education teacher in co-teaching classrooms and administrators in the form of interviews, observations and document examinations. Interview questions were open-ended in order to generate rich data. Teachers were purposefully sampled based on their voluntary participation and choice of partner, as well as their content area, in order to develop a cross section of multiple perspectives. After the interviews were collected, they were transcribed. Using Saldana's (2009) initial coding technique, the transcriptions, documents and observation notes were systematically coded by hand. As the codes were analyzed, they were separated into themes, relationships, and trends in order to construct descriptive narratives of each of the

16

participants. While constructing a narrative for each participant, I examined each interview, observation notes, and documents for emerging themes and patterns across participants (Maxwell, 2004).

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five additional chapters. Chapter Two contains the historical background of inclusion and federal policies informing the co-teaching movement, as well as a review of the literature about major trends in co-teaching. This background knowledge provides the research and practice context for exploring the points of study presented here. After the literature on each topic is discussed and synthesized, a discussion of the foundations and tenets of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) is provided. Using Choice Theory, this section of the chapter deals with the application of these theories to the study of voluntary co-teaching and co-teacher practices.

Following a review of the literature in Chapter Two, Chapter Three discusses the qualitative design methods used while employing Social Cognitive Theory and Choice Theory as analytical frameworks to examine the intersection of choice and efficacy in teachers' experiences in the co-teaching environment. Chapter Four addresses the findings of the study. Chapter Five presents 16 participant narratives in order to further capture the nuances of the single case, case study examining choice in co-teaching to demonstrate themes and patterns as well as contradictions between different groups. Finally, Chapter Six focuses on a discussion of research findings, implications for practice and concludes with recommendations for future research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Researchers, educators, and policy makers have been concerned with the educational outcomes of students with disabilities in this country for many reasons (Carson, 2011). The number of students receiving special education services is increasing every year and so, the educational policies and practices on the K-12 levels must be examined to ensure that the needs of all students are being met and the educational outcomes are appropriate and attainable. According to NCES (2016), in 2013–14, the number of children and youth ages 3–21 receiving special education services was 6.5 million, or about 13 percent of all public-school students. Among students receiving special education services, 35 percent had specific learning disabilities (NCES, 2016). Special education services allow students to receive the appropriate education for their learning needs.

According to Yell (2005), The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first federal law requiring a free and public education (FAPE) for all. The broad expanse of the civil rights legislation in the Rehabilitation Act led to the creation of a more targeted, school focused law called PL 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975. Updates and a name change to PL 94-142 to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) were completed in 1997 and 2004. The concept of FAPE, a free and appropriate public education, was central to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The subsequent federal education laws reinforced the centrality of FAPE in service to students with disabilities. In addition, they added essential concepts such as LRE (least restrictive environment), IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or a 504 Plan, and due process for families. States are required to follow, at minimum, these federal laws and are

eligible to provide additional services (Carson, 2011). The IEP is one of the major vehicles for which educators ensure that students receive FAPE. The IEP serves as the blueprint for a student's educational needs and is the guide for any services provided (Carson, 2011).

In order to ensure students with disabilities receive FAPE, their strengths and challenges must be assessed to determine the least restrictive environment best suited for their individual learning needs. According to Friend (2007), students should be placed in settings that are most like that of typical, chronological peers in which they can succeed when provided with special education services. According to Carson (2011), it is assumed that the LRE for the majority of students who qualify for special education services is the general education setting, However, IDEA (2004) does make provisions for a range of LRE settings that might be needed for students with more complex, comorbid disabilities.

The Inclusive Movement has its roots in the LRE mandate. Prior to 1973, students with disabilities were excluded from general education classrooms and some schools (Blackford, 2010). Beginning in 1975 and continuing through today, federal education law states that students with disabilities must be placed in the LRE reflective of their individual needs.

There are many different definitions of an inclusive education. Connecting back to a concept widely written about and applied to the care and treatment of persons with intellectual disabilities in the 1970's, normalization was viewed as an approach to bridging the experiences of persons with disabilities to their non-labelled peers. The inclusive classroom might be thought of as an extension of that concept, bridging the learning experience of all students within a shared environment (Scheffel, Kallam, Smith, & Hoernicke, 1996; Wolfenberger, 1972).

Inclusion, according to Nilhom (2006), means that students of all kinds attend the same classes where variation is valued and that students have a right to participate, learn, and build

new social relationships. Salend, Garrick, and Duhaney (2007) state that the inclusionary

movement "seeks to create schools and other social institutions based on meeting the needs of all

learners as well as respecting and learning from each other's differences" (p. 114). One of the

strategies to provide an inclusive environment for students of all needs is co-teaching (Carson,

2011).

Co-teaching came out of the inclusion movement and is a collaborative strategy

commonly used in K-12 classrooms (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). Although collaboration

has long since characterized the landscape of special education, using paraprofessional, school

psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, counselors, and other service

providers to work with special education teachers to provide the best accommodations for

students with disabilities, most of these collaborative partnerships were confined to the special

education classroom (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2008).

No Child Left Behind (2001) was a major factor contributing to the intensified interest in

co-teaching, posing requirements that all students, including those with disabilities, access the

general curriculum, be taught by highly qualified educators, and be included in the new

accountability measures for student outcomes (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain &

Shamberger, 2010). Another key factor of the popularization of co-teaching was the

reauthorization of IDEA (2004). Co-teaching has become a strategy through which educators can

meet legislative expectations and support students with disabilities with an LRE and

interventions addressing their specific needs (Carson, 2011).

History of Inclusion

The field of special education has changed dramatically over the last four decades. Often,

these changes are rooted in the "social, political, legal and scientific forces … creating

controversy and fragmentation among professionals and parents of students with disabilities"
(Cronis & Ellis, 2000, p.   ). In the U.S., a free and public education is a right for all citizens,
however, individuals with special needs have historically received separate and unequal
educations. Prior to the 1960's, students with special needs were educated in separate schools
from their peers (Yell, 2005). In 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education* paved the way for all
students to have access to equal education. According to LaNear and Frattura (2007), Brown v.
Board of Education may be the most significant inclusion case in relationship to students with
disabilities. The rationale provided by the court, that separate can never be equal, is analogized to
students with disabilities (Carson, 2011; LaNear & Frattura, 2007; Yell, 2005).

In 1963, as a response to the movement to improve the educational opportunities for
students with mental retardation, the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental
Health Construction Act was passed (P.L. 88-164, 1963) (Carson, 2011). The mandate was one
of the first to ensure that a developmentally appropriate education was provided to students with
mental retardation. Following this act, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (P.L 89-10,
1965) created the foundations for policy to address the separate and inequitable educational
opportunities for economically disadvantaged students. According to LaNear and Frattura
(2007), this act set up the legal foundation for special education legislation.

Following the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, The Handicapped Children's
Early Education Assistance Act (P.L. 90-538, 1968), promoted educational initiatives like Head
Start for students with disabilities. In 1973, The Vocational Rehabilitation Act was passed with
section 504, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities under any
program receiving federal assistance (Yell, 2005). This civil rights law was so important because
public schools receive federal funds; therefore, section 504 protects those students with

disabilities from discrimination within the school system (Carson, 2011). This act is at the core

of the movement to stop the education of individuals with disabilities in separate environments

(Carson, 2011). Along with these federal laws, Wolfenberger's normalization principle (1972)

furthered the movement to inclusion. Normalization is the idea that people with disabilities,

different from the norm, be provided opportunities to learn and live as their nondisabled peers as

an essential basic right (Wolfenberger, 1972). A subsequent federal law was passed, The

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, along with amendments (PL 89-199 and

P.L. 99-457) required that all student with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive

environment (Cronis & Ellis, 2000). However, these laws did not compel states or districts to

implement it in a focused way, so how they provided FAPE was open for interpretation (PL 94-

142, section 504, 1973).

In the 1980's, the Regular Education Initiative was a movement to merge general

education and special education students together in an educational setting (Carson, 2011). The

REI was based on the assumption that students are more alike than they are different, so

"special" education is not required and good teachers can teach all students (Kavale & Forness,

2000). Proponents for the movement born from the REI suggest that all students would be

provided with a quality of education without reference to the traditional categories of special

education (Kavale & Forness, 2000).

As previously mentioned, the most recent federal law that is associated with inclusion is

the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) and its amendment (P.L. 108-46) in

2004, which advocated for students with disabilities to be placed in a general education

classrooms and outlined procedures for effectively implementing inclusion. These acts also

placed the responsibility on the educators to include students with disabilities in a general

education environment and to consider additional support services, such as collaboration and in

class support, as part of IEPs, thus setting the stage for the inclusion movement (Cronis & Ellis,

2000).

Again, NCLB (2001) emphasized accountability and scientific- based research. The law

mandates that students with disabilities be included in all assessments, meaning that they need to

make adequate AYP or Annual Yearly Progress alongside their non-disabled peers (LaNear &

Frattura, 2007). The inclusion movement has not been without criticism. The idea of the "one-

size-fits- all" assessments mandated by NCLB have come under sharp criticism for as unfair for

the students with disabilities. Also, often by including the assessments of the students with

disabilities in the school's AYP report, schools have come under sanctions, as they have not met

the adequate progress of test scores for the school. Sadly, these punitive results have the potential

to ostracize and demonize students with disabilities as the "cause" of school failure (LaNear &

Frattura, 2007).

Synthesis

Special education as a field has seen vast changes over the last five decades, mostly in terms of

reforms that deal with inclusion of individuals with disabilities into a general education setting.

Overwhelmingly, the literature suggests that including special education students in a general

education classroom has positive impacts on special education students and teachers. However,

like much educational research, oftentimes the scientific process can be sullied by political

agendas, unclear results, and whitewashing of anything negative in the way of results (Cronis &

Ellis, 2000). Moving forward, more research must be conducted that examines not only student

outcomes, but teacher and student experiences in the classroom that are free from the political

agendas promoting new reform efforts. Getting a real picture of what happens in the classroom is essential to continue to reform the field of special education.

Co-Teaching as Defined

Co-teaching is commonly defined as a collaborative model of teaching with two experts sharing responsibility. Friend (2008) defines co-teaching as:

> the partnering of a general education and special education teacher or another specialist f or the purpose of jointly delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, including those with disabilities or other special needs in a general education setting and in a way that flexibly and deliberately meets their learning needs. (p.   )

She also refers to co-teaching as and "intuitive practice" as it blends the expertise of both special education teacher and general education teacher. For true co-teaching to occur, both professionals must co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess a diverse group of students in the same general education classroom (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). Although the initial concept of co-teaching is described as a shared responsibility, it often turns into the special education teacher supporting the general education teacher. Marilyn Friend calls Co-teaching 2.0 the practice of co-teaching with a considerable responsibility on the special education teachers to support the "Specially Designed Instruction" (SDI) to meet the IEPs (Friend & Barron, 2017, Friend & Cook, 2014). SDI is a set of teaching practices designed to meet the unique learning needs of a student with a disability and is comprised of teacher actions that carefully plan and monitor individual students in order for students with disabilities to gain equitable access to the curriculum in a general education setting (Friend & Cook, 2017).

There are many benefits to the co-teaching model. According to Magiera and Zigmond (2001), the major goals of co-teaching are increasing access to a wide range of instructional

options for students with disabilities, enhancing the participation of students with disabilities in a general education environment, and improving performance of students with disabilities. Co-teaching, in its most effective form, can promote equitable learning opportunities for all students by scaffolding instructions, varying content presentations, individualizing instruction, and monitoring students' understanding (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012).

Although co-teaching makes sense intuitively, using shared expertise to improve participation, rigor, and performance of students with disabilities, shared responsibility is a complex issue, especially when it comes to teaching. The exact contribution that each teacher makes may vary, but together, both the special education and general education teacher, create a learning environment that is hinged on mutual participation and cannot be produced with one teacher alone (Friend, 2008). With shared responsibility, there needs to be clearly defined roles for both the special education teacher and the general education teacher. Friend (2008) suggests that each teacher should contribute in specific areas of their expertise. General education teachers should deal with depth of curriculum and how it should be taught, classroom management, typical learning and behavior patterns of students, and pacing of instruction so that the rigor expected can be accomplished (Friend, 2008). Special education teachers should focus on the process of learning for individuals through modifications, accommodations, strategies, and tools to facilitate learning, focus on students' individual learning needs as related to learning, behavior and other areas, completing the required paperwork included IEPs and focus on the mastery of learning (Friend, 2008).

According to Friend (2008), co-teaching suggests that professionals who share instruction can: combine their knowledge and skills to create a learning environment that is both rigorous and flexible, standards-based but accommodated to each students' unique learning need and can

do so in a way that respectfully draws on each other's individual talents, acknowledging that it is unlikely that a single professional in today's school could possibly know everything necessary to optimize learning.

Models of Co-teaching

Although there is little variation in the accepted definitions of co-teaching, the actual implementation has broad variability. According to Cook and Friend (1995), they identified six different models of co-teaching, all of which are designed to meet the same end, providing instruction to a diverse group of students to encourage more participation and achievement.

The first model as identified is *One Teach, One Observe*. One teacher has the responsibility of class management, instruction, and discipline. The second teacher is responsible for systematically checking in on students, observing students, and sharing the information observed to be utilized in the planning and modifications of the next lesson (Cook & Friend, 1995).

The second method is called *One Teach, One Drift*. This model shares many similarities with the first, however the second teacher has the responsibility of refocusing students, modifying instructions, supplementing instruction and assignments, as well as delivering accommodations on a one to one basis. The first teacher is still responsible for the delivery of instruction and management of the class. However, the secondary teacher has a more active role in the class environment (Cook & Friend, 1995)

The third style of delivery is *Station Teaching*. Here, the teachers divide the lesson in three parts located at different stations in the classroom. The first two stations have one teacher delivering instruction and in the third station, students complete an activity or assessment independently to check for understanding. This style requires much more in depth planning in

that each activity and group must meet the same goals, and groups must be strategically created based on level, ability, and behavior (Cook & Friend, 1995).

The fourth method of co-teaching is *Parallel Teaching*. Here, both teachers are teaching the same information to two strategically split groups. These groups are often split based on ability, so are more heterogeneous in nature. The benefit of parallel teaching is that it lowers the teacher to student ratio and is frequently used when students needs to engage on hands-on activity, share answers aloud, or interact with each other. Planning for parallel teaching happens together but delivery is separate (Cook & Friend, 1995).

The fifth style of co-teaching instruction is *Alternative Teaching*. In this model, one teacher manages the instruction, classroom management, and accommodations of a larger group while the second teacher does the same for a much smaller group. This model works well for students who are absent, struggle with language barriers, need a concept re-taught, alternate assessments, or struggle with social skills (Cook & Friend, 1995).

The sixth and last style of co-teaching is *Team Teaching*. In team teaching, both teachers act as one unit in the classroom. Both are involved in classroom management and might take turns learning discussion or instruction. One might teach, while one demonstrates. This style is the most effective in terms of fostering a positive and interactive classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995).

In terms of the research on the kinds of models co- teachers used, Solis et al. (2012) found a variety of instructional arrangements following some variation of Cook and Friend's suggested models of co-teaching are most often used (1995) Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie (2007) found that the most frequently cited model used was *One Teach, One Assist*, with the special education teacher playing a more subordinate role in the classroom. According to

Carson's (2011) study, the subordinate role of the special education teacher can have wide ranging impacts on the co-teaching relationship and thus, students' experiences in the co-teaching of the class.

Synthesis

Currently, little research has been conducted on the impact of different co-teaching models. If the research largely indicates the most popular model of co-teaching is *One Teach, One Assist*, there needs to be an investigation into why this is the most utilized model. It may be that it is the easiest to implement, allowing the general education teacher to instruct, while the special education teacher monitors students. Also, it would be important to find out if this model is the most effective way to utilize the expertise of both highly trained educators in a co-teaching classroom. This *One Teach, One Assist* model indicates a disproportionate amount of responsibility on the general education teacher. Conversely, the special education teacher may feel underutilized; both scenarios may lead to a negative working relationship with the co-teaching team.

Components of Successful Co-teaching

Co-teaching may be a popular inclusion strategy, but it doesn't always come naturally (Ploessel, Roch, Schoenfeld, & Blanks, 2010). As with any working relationship, many factors play a part in the complexity of co-teaching. Kohler-Evans (2006) compares a co-teaching relationship to a marriage and that, more often than not, is more like a forced union rather than an amicable partnership with mutual respect, shared responsibility, philosophy of education, and style. Often, co-teaching teams that have been forced into partnerships deal with a myriad of issues including district-wide compliance of federal mandates. In order for co-teaching teams to be successful in their implementation, several things need to be in order.

Kohler-Evans (2006) suggests that asking for voluntary participation from teachers could change the whole "marriage" and thus positively impact students. Friend (2008) asserts that only two committed educators who care deeply about reaching students learning needs can work successfully together to have a positive co-teaching environment and teachers should have a choice as to whether or not they want to be a part of a co-teaching team (Friend, 2008). According to Cook and Friend (1995), individual teachers who have voluntarily come into co-teaching bring certain characteristics, knowledge, strategies and skills to the co-teaching environment. Teachers who have personal characteristics that enable them to work effectively with an adult, have content knowledge and skills, and have voluntarily entered into the pairing are best suited for the co-teaching classroom (Grillo, Moorehead, & Bedesem, 2011). However, according to the literature, the majority of teachers participating in a co-teaching model did not choose to participate and instead were mandated or placed in a co-teaching team thus, creating a difficult relationship with lack of commitment and resentment (Friend, 2008).

The research also suggests that, along with choice of participation, the first steps in establishing an effective co-teaching relationship are developed goals, expectations and roles, as well as understanding classroom expectations and student needs (Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012). Communication between the general education and special education teacher is essential for this "marriage" to work. A discussion of what responsibilities each teacher will assume is essential. Also, discussing the instructional model that will be used is important for teachers to agree upon before entering the classroom setting. Oftentimes, there is a communication breakdown early on in the partnership, and the relationship often crumbles in front of students because there has not be adequate care invested into establishing clear roles and expectations (Kohler-Evans, 2006).

To the point above, co-planning time is essential for the success of the co-teaching team, especially when teams are new. As Friend suggests (2008), co-teaching should be a mutually agreed upon relationship based on compromise and respect. In order to develop this kind of mutually agreed upon relationship, teams need time and training to feel comfortable working together and to understand how to implement co-teaching models (Friend, 2008; Kohler-Evans, 2006). However, universally, research suggests that co-teaching teams do not have adequate planning time and this impacts their quality of practice (Friend, 2008). This co-planning is so important for the sharing of key ideas and discussing critical topics unique to each group of students, curriculum, and instruction. It is also essential to have time for the "on the fly" conversations that occur about instruction; what worked, what did not, as well as team reflection each day (Friend, 2008). Though it is universally acknowledged by teachers and researchers alike that common planning time is an essential component to the success of an inclusive educational environment, teachers across studies examined by Scruggs and colleagues (2007) suggest joint preparation time is necessary but is often not provided or inadequate. Wolpert (2001) reported in his survey of teachers, that "the most common request for improvement for the inclusion model was more planning time" (p. 6). In many cases, teachers are allotted approximately 45 minutes a week to meet and plan with their co-teachers. Teachers suggested that they needed three times that amount of time to adequately prepare and address the instructional and behavioral needs of their students (Dieker, 2001). Teachers in Austin's (2001) research claimed that daily planning time would be optimal. Teachers frequently framed planning time in the context of administrative support, and reported feeling that it is the administration's responsibility to schedule adequate planning time for teachers to meet, noting

that they were satisfied with their co-teaching assignment "but not with the level of support received by the school, noting that they need more planning time" (Austin, 2001, p. 251).

The research states that co-teachers universally report the need for training to implement the co-teaching models effectively (Manset & Semmel, 1997; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Scruggs et al., 2007). Teachers who participated in co-teaching models identified the following needs: training, planning time with colleagues to collaborate with facilitators, administrators about the formalized process of co-teaching was essential (Scruggs et al., 2007). Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) report that teachers consistently express the needs for training on the teaching models, even though only 30% of their special education colleagues expressed the belief that their general education counterparts did not have the knowledge to execute the co-teaching models. Nichols, Dowdy, and Nichols's (2010) surveyed 24 school districts. They found that only three districts reported that they provided professional development and training before initiating the co-teaching model; only one district indicated that it provided regular professional development on co-teaching during the school year. In Wolery, Gessler Werts, Caldwell, and Snyder's (2015) survey research of 158 teacher participants, many participants reported that they "had" some training or professional development but was "less than they needed." Wolery et al. (2015) also reported that a high percentage of the respondents indicated the need for training in inclusion, but a low percentage in availability in training. The need for training may be related to the general educators' expressed beliefs that they were not prepared in their school to teach students of disabilities (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Nichols et al. (2010) suggest that co-teaching models are initiated in part without proper staff developments for special education teachers, regular education teachers, and school administrators

Additionally, research shows that administrative support is essential in teachers' attitudes towards their co-teaching practice. Co-teachers often report that their principals support co-teaching in words, but not actions and do not seem to understand the complexity of co-teaching programs, leaving too many of the details to the teachers to work out for themselves (Friend, 2008). If administrative support is one of the most important factors in the attitudes of co-teaching teams, it would be important that co-teachers have the support of professional development and training before and during their co-teaching courses.

The research on the positive relationship between administrative support to the success of co-teaching is well documented (Santoli, Sachs, Roney, & McClurg, 2008). According to Villa, Thousand, Nevin, and Liston, (2005), the most positive predictor of general educators' feelings towards inclusive practices is the amount of administrative support experienced by the co-teaching team. In Villa, Thousand, Meyer, and Nevin's (1996) survey research of 680 teachers and administrators from 32 school districts, they concluded that attitudes and behaviors of the administration has a great impact on the experiences of teachers in the inclusion environment. Co-teaching requires administrative support to be successful. Types of administrative support range from creating a positive school culture, allowing time for planning and providing professional development, giving teachers choice of participation, and adding incentives for teachers to join the inclusive practice (Santoli, Sachs, Roney, & McClurg, 2008). The research also suggests that teachers identify different kinds of administrative support including but not limited to, voluntary participation, common planning time, appropriately placed students, and professional development (Barnett & Monda-Amaya,1998). However, providing what co-teachers need often costs money and time that school districts are not willing or unable to provide (Werts, Gessler, Wolery, Snyder, & Caldwell, 2012).

Synthesis

Overwhelmingly, the research indicates several themes that emerge as essential to the success or failure of the co- teaching experience. Choice, common planning time, adequate and on-going training, positive school culture, and appropriate placement of students are elements that can make or break the inclusive environment. In terms of choice, administration should allow teachers voluntary participation and choice of partners for best results. There is almost no research on co-teaching teams and voluntary participation or choice of partners. There needs to be further investigation into the impacts of choice on the co-teaching environment. Common planning time, in light of practice, is a difficult thing to provide, and often conflicts with schedules, personnel, and instructional needs of the district. However, the impact of limited or no planning time is disastrous on the co-planning team. School administration needs to make the time for teachers to work with each other ,creating communities of collaboration and respect. Training is essential for co-teaching to be well-executed. However, training costs time and money, two things that districts often lack. Administration needs to make the necessary arrangements for the inclusive program to be successfully implemented, giving teams the best chances to make the most positive impact. Lastly, administrators need appropriate training on the implementation of inclusionary programs, especially with all of the components necessary to successfully implement co-teaching practice. Top-down supportive leadership can change the outcomes of inclusion programs; so it is essential for administration to put into practice the necessary training and preparation to support co-teaching teams.

Research on Co-teaching

Although, the co-teaching model has become a fairly common strategy for inclusion, there seems to be a lack of consensus on the specific features required, the precise roles and

responsibilities delegated of both the special education and general education teacher, as well as the best way to measure the effectiveness of co teaching as an inclusion strategy (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graezts, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005). Kloo and Zigmond (2008) contend that most of the published research on co-teaching focuses on the logistics of the co-teaching process and typically emphasize that co-teaching is challenging and difficult to do well. In their study, Weiss and Brigham (2000) listed several overall problems with the research on co-teaching including omission of information on data results, studying only successful co-teaching teams and stating the results subjectively. Today, the research is not without similar pitfalls. The research examined for this study was lacking in several areas most specifically, small data sets, unclear findings, methodological limitations, and outdated results. It is difficult to make generalizations about inclusion and co-teaching as a strategy because much more research needs to be done, especially in the form of qualitative research.

The research is also lacking in quantitative studies dealing with impact of inclusion of student achievement. Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley (2012) in their meta-analysis of the research on co-teaching, examined the research on co-teaching between 1990 and 2010. Out of 146 studies, they found only two studies that focused on student outcomes in inclusion settings (Manset & Semmel, 1997, Murawski & Swanson, 2001). Manset & Semmel (1997), in their study of eight different models of co-teaching on the elementary level, indicated that inclusive programs were effective for some students with disabilities, however, due to methodological limitations, conclusions about co-teaching versus pull-out models were not possible.

Looking at student outcomes as a criterion to measure the efficacy of the co-teaching model, the research is contradictory and limited. In Res, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas's (2002) study, students with learning disabilities in co- taught classrooms were found to have

higher grades in core classes and attended more school days than their counterparts in pull-out programs. In contrast, Murawski's (2006) study demonstrated that students with learning disabilities did not achieve better standardized test scores than those in the self-contained classes.

Upon further examination of the research on the impact of co-teaching on student test scores, Murawski and Swanson's (2001) meta-analysis of the quantitative research on co-teaching, rigorous review criterion allowed for the inclusion of only 37 articles, only six of which had enough information to calculate effect sizes for student outcomes. Upon examining, ELA scores, there seems to be a large mean effect size (1.59) and a moderate mean effect size for math scores (0.45). However, there is a small effect size (0.08) for social outcomes, including peer acceptance, friendship quality, social skills, and self-concept Ultimately, the findings indicate a moderate effect size (ES=.40) finding co-teaching models to have a generally favorable impact on students with disabilities, however the overall data set was too small to draw firm conclusions (Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012). Other research seems to indicate similar findings, where, academically, students with disabilities failed to succeed at a lower rate in an inclusion setting than in a special education class (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Although the research on the impact of co-teaching on non-disabled student outcomes is sparse, contradictory, inconclusive, and dated (largely from 25 years ago), several studies show that there is no negative impact on student learning (Salisbury, Rainforth, & Palombaro, 1994; Sharpe, Yorke, & Knight, 1994; Salend & Garrick-Dunahey, 1999). Research on the positive social outcomes for non-disabled students in inclusive learning environments cite positive views of co-teaching, desire to build friendship with their peers with disabilities, elevated acceptance of learning differences, improved self-cognition, social cognizance, and improved positive engagement with peers with disabilities (Cappert & Pickett, 1994;

Helmstetter, Peck, & Giangreco, 1994; Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990).Co –teaching may

also positively impact student behavior. According to Scruggs, Mastropieri, and

McDuffie's (2007) meta- analysis of the qualitative research on co-teaching, co-teachers

sometimes noted increased cooperation of students in co-taught classes. Also, co-teachers

reported positive effects of co-teaching as a social model for students, and was more often

discussed than the academic benefits (Carlson, 1996; Frisk, 2004, Hardy, 2001; Hazlett, 2001;

Trent, 1998).   In Drietz's (2001) qualitative study, 54 secondary students were interviewed

about their inclusion class and 53 all reported benefiting from the collaboration. Drietz (2003)

interviewed six special education and general education students, all reporting that the extra

attention from the teachers in a co-taught class benefited them academically. Again, this

qualitative study gives a snapshot into what co-teaching may be like, or may have an impact on,

but has limited potential to inform practice due to the small sample size and dynamic nature of

the classroom environment.

Appropriate student placement is essential in an inclusive environment. Scruggs et al.

(2007) found that in 20 of the 32 studies reviewed, both special and general education teachers

reported strong concerns that students in their co-taught classes have a minimal behavioral skill

level to succeed in an inclusive setting. Thompson (2001) found that in his interviews of 11

elementary school co-teachers, "The participants repeatedly cautioned about administrators

forcing teachers to co-teach and felt equally adamant about including students with disabilities

whose needs could not be met in the general education setting" (p. 129). Six special education

co-teachers echoed the same concerns about students with special needs in a co-taught classroom

in the qualitative study by Weiss and Lloyd (2002). Similarly, Walther- Thomas's (1997)

research reported "horror stories about poorly planned classrooms… some ended up heavily

weighted with students who had learning and or behavioral problems. Unfortunately, these ill-fated classrooms set teachers and students up for failure and frustration" (p. 43).

Looking at the non-academic variables for students in co-teaching classes, Solis and colleagues (2012) found that student grouping strategies designed to facilitate student-to-student discussion and small group instruction were potentially effective co-teaching strategies (Klinger & Vaughn, 1999; Manset & Semmel, 1997; Scruggs et al., 2003). In terms of how both general education and special education students experience co-teaching, the research is methodologically limited and inconclusive. Solis et al. (20012) indicated only one study that examined how students experience co-teaching. Klinger and Vaughn (1999) found that students found value in working with peers in small groups as well as getting help from peers, rather than large group instruction or independent work. In terms of the general education students in the co-teaching classroom, Klinger and Vaughn (1999) found that students believed that all students should have the same homework and modifying grades was unfair. However, all students wanted their strengths to be considered when assigning grades (Klinger & Vaughn, 1999). Students with disabilities were not always clear how grades were assigned for them compared to their typically achieving peers (Klinger & Vaughn, 1999). On the whole, students reported that they found classroom practices of routines, clear directions, repetition of directions and examples, assistance, and time considerations all beneficial to their learning experiences (Klinger & Vaughn, 1999). The research on co-teaching on the secondary level is limited and this also extends to students' perceptions in a high school inclusion setting. In one study, Dieker (2001) found, in interviewing 54 special education and non-special education high school students in a co teaching program, all but one student reported benefiting from the co-teaching environment.

Synthesis

The research on co-teaching over the last 30 years has yielded mixed and oftentimes conflicting results. Co-teaching as a process has such complexity; it is a dynamic concept that continues to evolve in response to changing conditions including the political landscape, district and administrative influences, teachers' attitudes and experiences, as well as student demographics. The impact of co-teaching is unclear, though there seems to be some evidence that it can be effective in helping students with disabilities. Despite the inadequate and often contradictory research on the impact of co-teaching, the research reviewed suggests that co-teaching generally has had positive impacts across the board, especially for students with disabilities. However, there is very little research exploring co-teaching on the secondary level. If the goals of co-teaching are to "support diverse students' access, participation and progress in the general education setting" (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005, p.   ), it appears that co-teaching can be an effective strategy for all students. There does not appear to be any negative impacts of a co-teaching classroom, however, most studies only examine successful co-teaching teams. It is possible that a poorly matched co-teaching team can have a negative impact on students' perceptions of co-teaching. Also, although co-teaching is a strategy that can meet a number of ends, including federal mandates and accountability for teachers and districts, the limited and inconclusive results of co-teaching on student achievement needs to be further examined. Much more research needs to be done, especially longitudinal data collection on the long-term impact of co-teaching on student outcomes and teacher's experiences. In terms of the qualitative research that has been done, it does help "flesh out" what happens in the classroom and can offer general conclusions about behaviors and performance of groups, as each class and teacher pair bring with them such differences, it would may make the research less relevant to individual

cases, and thus not inform practice. Without developing a larger and more connected research base between qualitative and quantitative studies, the current research may only have a limited impact on policy and practice.

Teacher's Perceptions of Co-teaching

It is important to understand the roles and actions of educators in co-taught classrooms, as the complexities of co-teaching are vast. That said, there is an expressed need for ongoing qualitative research in the field of co-teaching to monitor the dynamic nature of the environment. Using, the meta-analysis of Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) as a foundation to examine the most comprehensive qualitative meta-analysis of co-teaching to date, there are emerging patterns in teachers' perceptions of co-teaching and universally identified challenges or expressed needs of the teachers on all levels. Due to the lack of research on co-teaching at the secondary level, studies will be examined on all levels for comparison.

Scruggs et al. (2007) examined 32 qualitative studies, some of which included survey research, examined 454 co-teachers, 42 administrators, and 142 students spanning geographical areas and grade levels in an attempt to conduct an integrative review of the literature on co-teaching. Their findings indicated that teachers generally found that they benefited professionally from their co-teaching experience. However, this perceived value of the experiences appeared to be predicated on the two teachers in the co-teaching team being compatible. If the teachers were not compatible, Scruggs et al/ (2007) found that the co-teaching efforts were undermined by the negative relationship.

In their survey research of 185 co-teachers' attitudes about inclusion, Bear and Minke (1996) examined the perceptions of co-teachers in a co-taught classroom with interesting findings regarding the levels of perceived competence of teachers . Bear and Minke (1996) found that

general education teachers in co- taught classes "reported levels of competence similar to those of the special education teacher in managing behavior" of students with disabilities (p. 179). Conversely, "regular education teachers in traditional classrooms regarded themselves as less competent in both the teaching and behavioral management of students with special needs", also reporting the lowest levels of satisfaction of teaching children with disabilities. (p. 179). The findings suggest that co-teachers, both general and special education, can be positively disposed towards inclusion and can find some success even when they are assigned rather than volunteer. Those teachers, who thought that co-teaching should not be mandated, believed that it should be phased into the school culture over a number of years with proper training and support for teachers and staff (Scruggs et al., 2007). Bear and Minke's (1996) study has some serious limitations by omitting some important information from their measures and stating some of their outcomes subjectively (Carson, 2011). The limitations beg the question: what is actually occurring in co-taught classes in terms of teacher behavior? According to Van Reusen, Shoho, and Baker (2000),

> The degree to which [high] schools provide effective and equitable inclusive education may depend to a large extent on the attitudes and beliefs teachers hold regarding their abilities to teach students with disabilities and their willingness to assume responsibility for the achievement of all students assigned to their classrooms. (p. 8)

The research suggests that teachers bring their own beliefs and attitudes about teaching into the classroom and can impact the compatibility of co-teaching teams on a large scale. As Green states (2015), "teachers' understandings of disabilities and perceptions about inclusion classrooms and the strategy of co-teaching varies person from to person" (p.   ). Their perceptions are developed from experiences and preconceived notions whether they come from teacher preparation programs, in-service teaching, or from outside sources, like professional development or others in the

teaching profession. The ideas of self-efficacy and collective efficacy play a major role in the success of co-teaching teams. Self- efficacy according to Social Cognitive theorist Bandura (1977), is the belief in one's own capacity to organize and execute the procedure to get a desired goal accomplished. One's efficacy is based on personal experiences, environmental influences, and learned behaviors. Thus, teachers' self-efficacy, the collective efficacy of a co-teaching team, and the school as a whole, are significant in fostering an inclusive environment. These are particular to factors that influence a teacher's attitudes towards co-teaching including: time, work setting, social situations and relationships, administrative support and belief in one's abilities to be successful (Robbins, 2007).

According to Scruggs et al. (2007), teachers reported (almost universally) the need for co-teachers to be compatible. Rice and Zigmond (2000) surveyed 17 secondary level co-teaching teams from the U.S. and Australia, and found that compatibility was rated by several as one of the most critical variables for success in a co-teaching environment. Having similar educational philosophies, personalities, as well as goals for the class, are all significant factors in determining compatibility. Ideally, the co-teachers would have an established mutual, professional respect for each other (Friend, 2008). Again, the idea of voluntary participation and choice of partner would help mitigate many compatibility issues, thus improving the overall inclusive learning environment.

In addition, Green (2016) suggests that secondary general education teachers and special needs teachers communicated feelings of inadequacy toward meeting the needs and requirements of special needs students in their inclusion classrooms (Friend & Cook, 2004). Whether these feelings stem from a lack of understandings about disabilities, lack of content knowledge, or lack of knowledge about best teaching practices to address the needs of each individual student, all

can affect the learning outcomes for the students within the inclusion classrooms (Friend & Cook, 1995; Keefe & Moore, 2004, Schumacher & Deshler, 1995).

As co-teachers' feelings of inadequacy can be attributed to lack of training and professional development in best practices, the research suggests that co-teachers express the need for training across investigations (Scruggs et al., 2007). This lack of preparation or perceived lack of preparation may have attitudinal effects on the teacher, the students, and the co-teaching pair (Santoli, Sachs, Romey & McClug, 2008). Across the literature, teachers expressed the need for training to promote learning of more flexible thinking, co-teaching strategies, collaborative consultation skills, characteristics of students with disabilities, and more effective communication (Scruggs et al., 2007).

Synthesis

In spite of all the environmental and social factors impacting co-teaching as a practice, many general and special education teachers express the sentiment that co-teaching reaches more students, provides for better student care, is enjoyable, and is invaluable when the educators support one another in co-teaching the class (Kohler-Evans, 1997). Teachers also reported that given the opportunity, they would have participated in a co-teaching team again (Kohler-Evans, 1997). Interestingly, although the majority of the co-teaching teams did not volunteer for the experience; many saw it as worthwhile (Austin, 2001). However, there are some teacher-identified conditions that need to happen in order for co-teaching teams to be successful. Aside from choice, adequate co-planning time, consistent and quality professional development prior to and during the course of the co-teaching program, as well as appropriate student placement, teachers have clearly linked much of their positive and negative experiences to the choices and attitudes of their administrations.

It also appears that there is a lack of administrative training on what co-teaching is, how to do it, and best practices around its successful implementation. It would be my suggestion othat school administrators gain a deep knowledge of inclusion and turnkey it to their staff. Also, where possible, teachers that have choice of participation, of partner, and feelings of value in their school community tend to be more successful at co-teaching than those that do not. School culture comes from the top down and administrators need to acknowledge their responsibility for the inclusion setting to be one of rigor, diversity, and positive staff development.

In terms of teachers' feelings of inadequacy, it is essential for practice that teachers on all levels gain sufficient and ongoing training in special education strategies and content area skills, in order to eliminate or greatly diminish both teachers' feelings of inadequacy. For two teachers to be equals and share responsibility across the board, both must feel that they have the skills and competencies to do the job well, i.e. self-efficacy. From a research standpoint, there needs to be further investigation into why teachers feel the way they do, in terms of efficacy and what happens in the classroom setting, as well as the interactions between co-teaching partners.

Co-Teaching at the Secondary Level

Though co-teaching is a widely accepted practice to support inclusionary learning environments, it is found more often in the elementary and middle school classrooms than the secondary school environment (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Due to federal mandates of increased accountability for districts to include special education students' test scores with the district level scores, there has been an increase of co-teaching at the secondary level. However, there are issues that are unique to the secondary classroom that have not been addressed by the previous research, as they are based largely on the inclusion environment in elementary and middle schools (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). The secondary teaching environment, as a whole, is

a completely different educational environment than the middle or elementary school. Obstacles associated with the high school setting include an emphasis on content area knowledge, faster pacing of instruction to meet curriculum requirements, high stakes testing, short class periods, large class sizes, teaching several classes per day, inadequate planning time, limited administrative support, and resources (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001).

According to Dieker and Murawski (2003), there are four categories of issues that are unique to co-teaching teams on the secondary level: (i) content issues; (ii) structure; (iii) assessment, and (iv) diversity. Secondary special education teachers often provide instruction in a remedial format to students with disabilities who are lacking the skills necessary to be successful in a general education classroom. This remedial content instruction is not compatible with current secondary classrooms, as it creates two separate learning environments, defeating the purpose of inclusion. Also, many special education teachers may be lacking the in-depth content knowledge required, often having only limited credits in core curricular areas. Expecting special education teachers to have an equal part in instruction in a co-teaching classroom is often unrealistic. Additionally, Dieker and Murawski (2003) found that special education teachers focus only on the needs of the special education students, which often requires a development of social skills and life skills. This apparent dichotomy between content and life skills can make the collaboration between co-teachers more difficult (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). However, to address the perceived lack of knowledge in teachers, more and more districts are asking for content experts with special education certification, so teacher preparation programs have created dual-certification programs.

. The research suggests, almost universally, that one of the biggest impediments to a successful co-teaching environment is the lack of planning time to discuss the behavioral and

logistical needs of the class; if secondary teachers are prepared to work together in a collaborative environment, common planning time is essential (Dieker & Murawski, 2001; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). At the secondary level, common planning time is not always possible and when it is, it is either not utilized by the co-teaching team appropriately or not scheduled frequently enough (Dieker & Murawski, 2001, Keefe & Moore, 2004). Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) reported that research suggested that secondary co-teachers lacked training and skills and have more negative attitudes about inclusion than their elementary and middle school peers.

Also, there is often issue of classroom ownership by the general education teacher on the secondary level, making it a difficult environment for co-teaching. Autonomy is considered by many to be a desired job characteristic and many secondary teachers have developed their own course offerings, which makes receptivity of another teacher in one's own class difficult (Schumaker & Deschler, 1988; Vaughn, Schumm, & Arguelles, 1997). Webster (2012) stated, collaboration in a full inclusion co- teaching classroom is hard work, and really requires   the right kind of people. The worst thing a principal can do is to force people into co- teaching situations. Even teachers who have a history of sharing information and   collaborating with teaching peers may find their comfort with another person in "their" space is very low, that sharing responsibility for a classroom with another adult is incredibly uncomfortable. Again, voluntary participation would mitigate the issue of ownership in many cases.

Assessments for co-teaching teams on the secondary level come with their own set of challenges. As previously stated, the national trend of accountability, data-driven instruction, and high stakes testing have serious ramifications for co-teaching (Deoler & Murawski, 2003). Co-teaching teams are pushed to teach more information faster and better to ensure that everyone

can reach proficiency on some level of standardized testing (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). Though there is a presumed level of equity in mandating students with disabilities take the same tests as their more typical peers, it may not be the most effective measurement of success for all students, especially those students with more involved cognitive disabilities (Levin, 2002). A fast moving, data-driven curriculum may cause conflict between the special education and general education teachers who may have different goals (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). This issue is further complicated in that teachers are assessed, among other things, on the performance of their students on standardized tests and the success of co-teaching hinges on test scores. This could cause resentment towards those students who cannot perform successfully.

As our society continues to change, schools must consider how to address the changing needs of a diverse population. According to Dieker and Murawski (2003), on the secondary level, general education teachers often feel unprepared to address the unique learning needs of a culturally diverse population, as well as the needs of students with disabilities. Whereas special education teachers often feel underqualified to teach the in depth content they are required to have their students master (Deiker & Murawski, 2003; Green, 2015). Special education teachers and general education teachers need to have training and collaboration time to meet the needs of their diverse population of students. Often, however, teachers are given little training on inclusion strategies and even less professional development on the changing needs of the population of students (Deiker & Murawski, 2003; Green, 2016).

Synthesis

There is a critical lack of empirical research on inclusion on the secondary level (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). The majority of the research has mixed reports on the implementations and student outcomes (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). In much of the research there is

no distinction between middle and high school studies, in that both are often labeled as "secondary" school, despite the clear differences educators face in the inclusion classroom. The studies that were found were very weak methodologically, had small sample sizes, or were over 20 years old. However, research on the secondary level should include an examination of the goals for a secondary co-teaching classroom. As stated, there is a dichotomy between life skills curriculum for students with disabilities and content area standards for general education students. Both are essential, but only the content area standards are tested in high stakes testing. What should co-teachers do about assessment? In terms of policy, the NCLB mandates of AYP for student and districts should be examined on a regular basis. Alternate assessments for student with disabilities might be beneficial to measure their growth.

It is not surprising that a positive, secondary, co-teaching relationship begins with choice, communication, adequate training, and top down leadership and expectations, as consistent with the emergent themes of the literature previously examined. It would be important to further examine schools that have co-teaching on the secondary level and what the administration does to ensure a positive school culture supporting inclusion. Further investigation needs to address what works and what doesn't in co-teaching on the secondary school level and then secondary classroom level.

Roles and Relationships

Educators involved in co-teaching share responsibilities for activities related to the planning and delivery of instruction as well as evaluating, grading and disciplining students (Salend & Johnansen, 1997). Co-teaching partnerships have been likened to a marriage, in that they require deep commitments, negotiation and flexibility (Friend, 2008; Kohler-Evans, 1997). For inclusion to be successful, this partnership must also include resolving differing opinions,

trying new strategies, and cultivating professional relationships. Each educator's expertise is essential in achieving improved outcomes for students as well as strong teaching partnerships. Clearly, the concept of choice of partner and voluntary participation are essential here. In this collaborative model, co-teachers are supposed to be equals but that seldom happens, especially on the secondary level (Nichols, Dowdy, & Dowdy, 2010).

A review of the literature reveals that in many studies, teachers reported the need for voluntary participation and that teachers who volunteer should have a choice in who they partner with (Scruggs et al. 2007). Both Carlson (1997) and Thompson (2001) found that co-teachers advocated strongly for voluntary participation and that "the impetus for the team comes from the two individuals involved and that it's not imposed by administration (Carlson, 1997, p. 154). By and large, the research indicated that co-teaching teams are forced into the inclusive environment, are also given no input in who they are to work with. These factors cause issues within the team, negatively impact instruction and the success of the co-teaching model (Kohler-Evans, 2006). The relationship is challenging, even in the best circumstances of choice of partner and choice of participation, but oftentimes, due to scheduling and other school level factors, teachers do not consistently work with the same co-teacher year after year, often having to rebuild a relationship and re-establish goals, philosophies and work out personality conflicts (Carson, 2011).

In terms of roles and instructional time, Austin's (2001) survey research of teachers' beliefs about co-teaching used 139 co-teaching teachers from 9 school districts over all grade levels. Austin (2001) found that responses from both general and special education teachers suggest "the general education co-teacher did the most in the inclusive classroom" (p. 248). Austin (2001) theorized that this may be due to the fact that the special educators is often the "visitor" to the classroom and is often viewed as the expert in accommodations and modifications, where the

general education teacher is often regarded as being the expert in the content area. This study also reported findings that general education teachers reported doing more overall work than the special education teacher, bringing up the perceived competencies of the special education teachers (Austin, 2001).

Harbort, Gunther, Hull, Brown, Venn, Wiley, and Willey (2007) have produced the most robust collection of data with regard to teacher roles in a co-teaching classroom when examining two co-teaching teams. Some of their research findings are corroborated by other studies. By breaking teacher behavior up into 11 categories with the goal of understanding the roles of each of the teachers in the co-teaching classroom, Harbort et al. (2007), found that the regular education teachers delivered instruction to the whole class more than 30% of the time, where the special education teachers almost never instructed the large group (.99%). "A high percentage of instruction devoted to the large group instruction makes it unlikely that differentiated instruction… is being planned for" (p. 21). They also found that general education teachers were not interacting with students (non-instructionally) 28% of the time, meaning they were completing paper work or checking email. However, the special education teacher was only not interacting with students 4% of the time. "Monitoring the classroom is important, however, it is not the most effective use of highly trained special educator" (p. 21). It is evident that Harbort et al. (2007) could not address all of the complexities in the behavior of teachers in a co-teaching classroom, especially with their sample size, however, their research seems to indicate a pattern of behavior that appears in other studies and is worth further investigation.

According to Scruggs et al. (2007), the most common model of co-teaching delivery reported is some variation of *One Teach, One Assist*, which in its fundamental set up has inequitable roles for teachers. Westberg's (2001) study of nine elementary co-teaching pairs

reported that, by far, *One Teach, One Assist* was the most observed model for instruction. "The general education teacher was most frequently the lead teacher, while the special education teacher usually moved about the room and interacted when necessary with individual students, although not necessarily the classified students" (p. 70). Although some teachers throughout the research reported "trying out" other models of co-teaching, like *Parallel Teaching* or *Team Teaching*, these strategies were often abandoned for seemingly minor issues. One teacher in Hazlett's (2001) study said, " We tried parallel teaching but it just did not work out because the two teachers have real strong voices and each group was distracted" (p. 104). Similarly, in Zigmond and Matta's (2004) quantitative study, they concluded "our data set indicates that the special education teacher seldom took, or was permitted to take the lead in instruction" (p. 63). In addition, Rice and Zigmond (2000) found in their qualitative study of 17 secondary teachers:

In all of our interviews and classroom observations we did not find a model of co-teaching that fully met the criteria we set: a shared teaching space with a diverse student group, shared responsibility for planning and for instruction, and substantive teaching by both co-teaching partners. (p. 196)

The issue of the inequitable roles in the classroom is a pervasive issue, and is often not addressed in any meaningful way. Many times, this inequitable distribution of power is further exacerbated by the lack of administrative support, or the school's leadership's view of the role of special education teachers. In many instances, the special education teacher was seen to assume a subordinate role to the general education teacher (Anita, 1999; Hazlette, 2001; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Norris, 1997; Rice & Zignmond, 2000). The special education teacher often self- identifies as a classroom aide or assistant, and often has less than equal status and ability to successfully meet the demands of a diverse population (Anita, 1999; Norris, 1997). According to Scruggs et al.

(2007), this subordinate role of the special education teacher appeared to be hinged on the greater depth of content knowledge of the general education teacher. This is most often seen at the secondary level.

In Carson's (2011) qualitative study of 11 middle school teachers participating in an inclusive classroom environment, he found that of the six special education teachers interviewed, three had unfavorable perspectives of their experiences in co-teaching classes, one was neutral, and one was favorable. Conversely, of the five general education teachers interviewed, four had neutral perspectives towards co teaching, only one was favorable. Carson (2011) found that the special education teachers often felt like second-class citizens, often being thought of as an instructional aide and interloper in the general education classroom. The general education teachers often understood and agreed with the perceptions of special education teacher as unequal. Carson (2011) also found that the administration played a key role in the unequal status of special education co-teachers. Many of the instructional, curricular, and planning activities do not involve special education teachers (Carson, 2011). The administration also used special education teachers as substitute teachers, reinforcing their "non-essential" role in the school (Carson, 2011). This, again reinforces the research findings administrative support is an essential component to teacher's attitudes towards co-teaching (Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008).

When looking at the individual relationship of the co-teaching teams, Carson (2011) noted that there was often resentment and even rage between the two co-teachers, especially over the "assigned" roles within the classroom. One of the participants suggested that the co-teachers don't have to be friends, they just have to have a respectful working relationship, which can be nearly impossible if there is not a "co-equal" relationship in the classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995). Again,

administration creating a culture of respect, and introducing choice and training may mitigate these issues.

Synthesis

An examination of the literature pertaining to roles and behaviors of teachers in co-teaching environments reveals a few reoccurring themes, unequal distribution of power and need for administrative support. According to some studies addressed in this literature review, some general education teachers feel that they do more work than their special education counter parts. This could be due to the lack of planning and training to work on their co-equal relationship. This also could be due to the feelings of inadequacy expressed by some special education teachers regarding content mastery. Oftentimes, the role of the special education teacher is to be the content modifier rather than instructor. Further research is needed to investigate the possible causes for the inequitable distribution of responsibilities in inclusive classrooms. In terms of administrative support, there is well-documented evidence that administrative support is directly linked to the success of the co-teaching relationship. Voluntary participation might mitigate some of these issues. For most schools, the school leadership must help establish the cultural norms of co-teaching partnerships. Further research should be done to examine successful administrative practices supporting successful co-teaching teams.

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Administrative Role in Co-teaching

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School administrators who supervise district-level special education programs are responsible for serving as advocates for special education initiatives. The school administrators are responsible for training for staff, delivering information to students and staff, clarifying and complying with educational law. According to Pazey and Cole (2013), the responsibilities of

educational leaders to be instructional leaders for all students are ever present in the Educational

Leadership Core Curriculum (ELCC) standards. Standard Two (NBPEA, 2011) states:

> A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of
>
> every student by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and
>
> instructional program conducive to student learning through collaboration, trust,
>
> and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students;
>
> creating, monitoring and evaluating a comprehensive rigorous and coherent
>
> curricular and instructional school program; developing and supervising the
>
> instructional and leadership capacity of school staff to maximize time spent on
>
> quality instruction; and promoting the use of the most effective and appropriate
>
> technologies to support teaching and learning within a school environment. (p. 6)

The administrator's' role is comprehensive and has a major impact on all school

initiatives, especially in special education. According to Salend (2007), administrators must

"ensure that all legal guidelines for due process, family involvement, assessment and

confidentiality have been followed" (p. 152). Using the combination of the ELCC standards

definition and that of Salend (2007), all of these elements of administrative responsibility fall

under of management and leadership, which are both needed to promote, productivity, and

positive school culture.

It is well-documented that the role of school leadership is essential to the success of

inclusive learning in terms of creating a positive school culture and supportive environment. In a

survey of teachers' attitudes towards co-teaching in one province in Canada - Villa, Thousand,

Meyer, and Nevin (1995), found that the degree of administrative support for the practice of

inclusion was the most powerful predictor of the educators' positive feelings towards the success

of co-teaching. Accordingly, and based on further research, Villa and Thousand (2005) developed 5 essential actions of administration in order to successfully foster inclusive practices:

1. Build a consensus for a vision of inclusive schooling

2. Develop educators' skills and confidence to be inclusive educators by arranging on-going, meaningful professional development

3. Create incentives (i.e. time to meet, training, listen to staff concerns, collaborative decision making) for people to take the risk to change to inclusive schooling practices

4. Recognize and expand human and other teaching resources

5. Plan for and take action to help the community see and get excited about the new educational vision of inclusive education

Additionally, other research suggests that schools implementing new inclusive environments used data-based decision making to place students appropriately and measure growth as well as the creation of small professional learning communities among staff (such as PLCs), allowing for growth and collaboration, shared reflection and support (Grady & Villa, 2004).

As previously stated, the administration can impact the culture of a school in a variety of ways. The administrations' attitudes towards co-teaching have a great impact not only on the teacher's attitudes towards co-teaching, but also the creation of a positive school culture (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). The work of Zoller, Ramanathan, and Yu (1999) in a year-long ethnographic study, helped to enrich the body of research on complex educational environments. Zoller et al. (1999) addressed two important areas in the field of education: inclusive leadership and shared language. According to Zoller et al. (1999), "every school has a unique cultural climate that is shaped by administrative decisions and other actions" (p. 163). Additionally,

Zoller et al. (1999) found that a principal's values can greatly influence a school's administrative practices, such as top-down management, assisting cultural changes at the surface level. "The surface level transformation is easy to accomplish but difficult to sustain" (p. 163). However, Zoller et al. (1999) suggest a "participatory approach that involves understanding and adopting common underlying assumptions that can have long term cultural changes" (p. 163). For example, Zoller et al. (1999) proposed that a person exhibits commitment and belonging to an organizational culture by some shared languages. They found that the inclusion of students with disabilities was highly valued by teachers, students, parents of both typical and special education students, thus contributing to a positive school culture supporting inclusion (Carson, 2011).

Synthesis

The literature examining the role of administration and leadership in the implementation of inclusion brings forward several reoccurring themes that have been mention in the literature reviewed. Administration's role is essential in the training, implementation and support of co-teaching teams, but it is also clear from the research that administrative attitudes and behaviors impact the culture of the school and therefore infiltrate the culture of the co-teaching classroom, especially fostering co-equal partnerships. In regard to practice, administrators should be trained in best practices when implementing new inclusion programs. Also, it would be important for administrative practice to reexamine policies and regulations impact the success of co-teaching. Training, common planning time, and choice of participation are all key elements to the successful implementation of co-teaching teams. Administration has a major say in whether or not all of the components for success implementation are met, including how to incentivize volunteering for co-teaching. It would be important for researchers to further investigate how administrators put into place all of the components necessary for successful co-teaching teams. It

would also be important for administrators to be trained in creating a positive school culture to improve the acceptance of special education students into general education classrooms, as well as promote the import of co-teaching as a practice among staff.

Findings

As previously stated, the research on co-teaching needs to expand greatly. There is a lack of consensus among educators, researchers and policy makers, with regards to what components, behaviors, attitudes make for the most successful co-teaching experience. Qualitative research is necessary to expand the understanding of what factors contributes to a successful co-teaching environment for teacher satisfaction and student learning. There is also a lack of consensus of the impact of co-teaching on student achievement and learning outcomes for both general education students and special education students. It appears that co-teaching has a moderately positive impact on special education students' behaviors and experiences. Co-teaching also appears to have a somewhat positive impact on special education students' grades and some areas of testing. However, it is unknown whether co-teaching is beneficial to all students. Further quantitative research is indicated to determine the impact of co-teaching on all student achievement.

Additionally, further qualitative research is necessary to determine what aspects of co-teaching environment most positively impact students, both general and special education. The literature reviewed for this study also provided several reoccurring themes that lend themselves to the impetus for more research. Teacher choice, teacher training, and administrative support are factors that are universally acknowledged to be key in the successful implementation of co-teaching. However, there is little quantitative or qualitative research examining the impact of such components on co-teaching, nor is there any research on co-teachers who volunteered

and their experiences in a voluntary environment. It would be important for further research to examine why teachers would voluntarily participate in co-teaching and how the concept of choice informed their decision. Also, though the research examined in this literature review spanned decades, there is still much that needs to be done in the way of research to understand the complexities of co-teaching. There is little research discussing the role of administration in the motivation to have teachers choose co-teaching, rather than assign or mandate the partnership. It would help to inform practice for further investigation in to the administrative perspective on choice in the co-teaching partnership.

Theoretical Framework

The current body of literature on co-teaching reveals very little discussion with regard to the theoretical framework of co-teaching as a concept, rather than a practice. There is a wealth of literature on why educators should support inclusion, what they think of inclusion, and evidence that co-teaching is a practical and productive strategy to comply with federal special education laws (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; McDuffie et al., 2009). However, there is a lack of research on successful implementation of co-teaching with voluntary participation. Research strongly indicates that choice to participate in co-teaching is key to the success of and inclusive environment. However, the implementation of co-teaching is often based on the mandatory participation of teachers, resulting in lack of commitment and negative impacts on the co-teaching environment (Friend, 2008; Kohler- Evans, 2006). In addition to the lack of research on teachers' perceptions of co-teaching given choice, little is known about why teachers choose to participate in a co-teaching environment. Also, there is a serious paucity of research in examining the motivations of administrators in their decisions to implement a co-teaching as an inclusive strategy, other than compliance with laws.

Choice

Choice of power to make a selection is essential to lead a happy life, to express individuality, and to maintain motivation for a broad variety of behaviors (Patall, Cooper, &, Wynn, 2010). According to self-determination theory, choice is also one of the several determinants central to supporting feelings of autonomy and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Glasser's choice theory (1998) builds on self-determination theory, suggesting that all behaviors are consciously chosen and, in choosing, we seek to satisfy our basic needs. There is a great deal of research on choice in the classroom, with findings of increased motivation, feelings of autonomy, sense of belonging, and power for students when given choices (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Barzan, 2012; Olutayo, 2012; Patall, Cooper, & Wynn, 2010; Reeve, 2006; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Using Glasser's choice theory and self-determination theory, it can be assumed that there are some motivations for why teachers would choose to participate in co-teaching.

The frame of choice theory hinges on the premise that "all behaviors are a result of choices and our choices are driven by basic needs of survival, love belonging, power, freedom and fun" (Glasser, 1998, p.). Self-determination theory also suggests that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the three fundamental needs that underlie people's intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both theories overlap in the areas of freedom (autonomy), power, and belonging (relatedness). According to Glasser (1998), choice theory explains that all behavior is purposeful and is an attempt to close the gaps between our needs and wants and what one is actually getting out of life and people motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic values (Corey, 2013). In order to uncover the motivations of both special education teachers and general education teachers, this study will attempt to unpack the factors

that contribute to teacher choices and administrators' motivations for implementing choice in co-teaching partnerships.

As previously stated, the literature on teacher choice and administrator motivation to allow choice is almost non-existent. However, there is some research on choice and teachers' belief in student choice within the classroom environment. The research by Omar and Barzan (2012) and Olutayo (2012) examine the positive effects of choice in the classroom for both students and teachers. According to Olutayo (2012), both teachers and students come into the learning environment with pre-coded obligations to survive physically and emotionally. "While teachers are concerned about their physical well-being, their career and their image, which they will do everything possible to protect," (p. 21), Omar and Barzan (2012) suggest that, teachers need to realize how they feel valued, given tasks they perceive as meaningful, and not coerced to behave in certain ways as an educator (Glasser, 1990). Chances are that teachers will feel more motivated to perform well in their role whatever it may be, just as students will be more motivated to achieve when given choice (Omar & Barzan, 2012; Patall, Cooper, & Wynn, 2010).

The need for belonging, or relatedness, can also be explored using Olutayo's (2012) study examining choice to foster creativity. Olutayo (2012) suggests that when students work in teams and a sense of belonging is provided as the initial motivator for them to do the work, students may gain a sense of belonging. Therefore, this concept may be applied to co-teaching, in that if teachers are part of a teams and feel that they have stake it what needs to be accomplished, they are more motivated to do what has to be done. "Learning in teams stands a good chance of tapping into the internal motivation of all students…" (p. 22).

For the purposes of this study, this concept of belonging to a team can be applied to co-teaching teams in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where teachers meet by grade

level, discipline, or team to develop, plan, and collaborate instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Using choice theory and self-determination theory, it can be assumed that teachers working in co-teaching teams may be further motivated to perform as successfully, intrinsically motivated to do a good job. With regard to the concept of power, Glasser (1990) defines it as "...refer[ing] to respect, recognition, feeling important and the need to be heard by others" (p.) For students, the feeling of having power over one's world is a difficult concept to achieve in the classroom, as students often have little say in what happens in a classroom environment, relying on the teachers' instruction and mandates (Olutayo, 2012). Teachers' sense of power in the context of the school can also be difficult to achieve and be contingent on the attitudes of the administration and the power over the faculty and students. Many times, the teachers are left out of policy changes or decisions that impact the classroom environment, even though teachers' perspectives as the "boots on the ground" are essential in informing policy. As the research indicates, most co-teaching teams are implemented without the voice of the teachers and without choice (Friend, 2008; Kohler-Evans, 2006). However, if teachers do feel that they are given choice, given recognition and heard by others, like students, they may be motivated to "produce competent or even better quality of work" as co-teachers in the classroom (Olutayo, 2012, p. 22).

Autonomy is key to the ideas of choice for teachers in this study. Among the definitions of autonomy or freedom is the idea of being in control of one's desires and to make choices to do so (Glasser, 1990). In his work with students, Glasser (1990) suggested that "whenever we lose freedom, we reduce or lose what may be a defining human characteristic: our ability to constructively create" (Olutayo, 2012, p. 22). Students need to feel that they have the freedom to choose where to sit in class, which book to read, or what to do on the playground (Olutayo,

2012). By giving students choice, this can maximize their creative ability and are not constrained to one way of thinking, doing or being. This allows students to develop a sense of autonomy. The concept of autonomy, "around any process... gives people the freedom in how they approach their work heightens their intrinsic motivation and sense of ownership" (Amabile, 1998). Likewise, teachers who are given the freedom of choice in co-teaching may experience enhanced intrinsic motivations, sense of ownership and creative process, thus improving their practice.

Efficacy

The empirical research on co-teaching, as previously stated, largely focuses on the impact of instructional activities and procedures on student achievement (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Mastropiere, McDuffie, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2009) and the responsibilities of co-teachers (Fieker, 2010) in order to evaluate its efficacy on the education of students with disabilities. However, there is little research on the attitudes of co-teachers on the efficacy of inclusion in a co-teaching classroom, which is equally important in the development and execution of an effective co-teaching environment (Strogilos & Stefaindis, 2015).

Framing co-teaching through Social Cognitive Theory, there are three kinds of efficacy: self, proxy, and collective. Bandura, (1997) suggests that people's actions are connected to the belief they hold about what they can achieve. Therefore, efficacy is improved by individual's perceptions, which impact behavior and drive outcomes. This concept holds true in Bandura's research on teachers' collective efficacy, where he found that in student achievement was connected to teachers' willingness to work collaboratively towards the fulfillment of the common goals (Bandura, 1997). An emerging body of research shows that teachers' efficacy— the belief teachers hold about their capability to influence student learning—is associated with student factors like achievement and motivation (Capara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006).

The discussion of collective efficacy, Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) and Bandura (1997) suggest that collective efficacy is based on trust, in the ways in which individuals support each other within the school organization. The concept of collective efficacy is key in this study and ties into choice theory's concept of belonging. The co-teaching partnership may foster a sense of belonging and mutual belief in each other's' competencies to work towards a common goal successfully. Collective efficacy provides the opportunity for people to contribute their talents and to support each other in their shared goals and practice aimed at achieving common objectives in lieu of autonomously pursuing the same endeavors in isolation (Bandura, 2000). Collective efficacy is based on the notion that, people realize greater success through shared beliefs and combined efforts than working alone, and the willingness to join together, share knowledge and skills required to effectively carry out tasks to achieve the results, can carry greater common goals than what is accomplished alone. Researchers (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000) examined the relevance of collective efficacy and posited that shared beliefs impact group success, in particular student achievement, superseding race, socioeconomic status, gender and prior performance (Goddard et al., 2000). Collective efficacy, as with co-teaching, includes mutual commitment, practicing self-reflection, accountability, trust and equity as critical factors for collective success.

Sometimes, as in the case of proxy efficacy, it is necessary for individuals to seek support from others in order to achieve desired goals and meet the objectives of the organization at large (Bandura, 2000). Administrative support is key to proxy efficacy in that it can only occur if the administration is committed to the common goal, in this case, successful co-teaching.

Findings

Drawing on the previously mentioned research on best practices of co-teaching, this

study attempts to examine how teachers come to understand choice and efficacy while engaged in their co-teaching experience. By framing the phenomenon of "choice in co-teaching" with choice theory (Glasser, 1990, 1998) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2000), choice in co-teaching might play an important role in shaping teachers' feelings of value, belonging, power, and autonomy. It can also be assumed that choice in co-teaching can positively impact the co-teaching, partnership, classroom, and instructional strategies. The research consistently suggests that mandatory participation in co-teaching negatively impacts teachers' feelings of motivation, commitment, and resentment (Friend, 2008; Nichols, Dowdy & Nichols, 2012; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012; Woolery, Gessler, Werts, Caldwell, & Snyder, 2012).

This study also intends to uncover what motivates teachers to choose to participate in co-teaching. Using Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997, 2000) to frame motivation, it can be assumed that teachers' feelings of collective-efficacy drive their decisions to participate in co-teaching. The assumption is that teachers believe that they have the skills to effectively teach students of all abilities. Bandura's (1997, 2000) concept of collective efficacy is present in co-teaching teams who have the choice to participate, teachers choose to belong to a partnership, and therefore, they believe that their partner also has the ability to teach diverse population. Teachers' belief in shared skills and expertise will assist them in reaching the common goals associated with a successful co-teaching experience. The concept of proxy efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 2000) allows for the understanding of co-teachers' perspectives of the administrative support of co-teaching. Also, proxy efficacy lends itself to exploring the motivations of administration in implementing choice in co-teaching, as it allows for the understanding of the interplay between teachers 'experiences in co-teaching and the administrative goals in the

implementation of co-teaching.

Choice and efficacy are two concepts that are not explored in the literature on co-teaching. By using choice theory (Glasser, 1990, 1998) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2000), I unpack teachers' motivations to participate in co-teaching. By doing so, I explore teachers' feelings of power, autonomy, and value while they are engaged in co-teaching practice. Through choice, teachers have a voice in their school's implementation of co-teaching. The opportunity for choice may allow a teacher to explore their own feelings of self-efficacy in co-teaching by asking questions like, "do I have the ability to meet the needs of a diverse population of students?" If they choose to participate in co-teaching, they may have determined that they may have the ability to teach all students, demonstrating self-efficacy. Also, if they voluntarily choose to participate, they may see the value partnering with another expert to reach a common goal of co-teaching, i.e. collective efficacy. If both members of the team are given a choice to participate and share collective efficacy, they may seek to ensure their success by reaching out to other co-teachers, colleagues or administration for resources, strategies and support, proxy efficacy, in order to best perform in the co-teaching classroom.

Co-teaching is a complex concept with many factors contributing to the success or failure of the environment. By exploring choice and efficacy in co-teaching using choice theory (Glasser, 1990, 1998), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and efficacy (Bandura, 1997), I was able to use data collected to attempt to explain why choice is important and what motivates teachers to participate in co-teaching. The theories of choice, self-determination, and efficacy informed me as I developed and identified themes and patterns across data (autonomy, power, value, collective-efficacy, and proxy efficacy) which helped me better understand the phenomenon of "choice and efficacy in co-teaching" in this qualitative

study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers' understanding of choice plays a role in their co-teaching experience, as they work to meet the needs of all students. This also includes examining why teachers choose to participate in co-teaching models and the kind of relationships they have forged with their co-teachers.

Impetus for Research

The decision to study choice in co-teaching came as a result of a survey on teachers' attitudes about co-teaching sent out by a new superintendent, in 2015, at my school. The survey was aimed to gauge the staff at this regional high school on their support of inclusion and desire to take part in the new initiative of co-teaching during the 2016-2017 academic year. As a secondary English teacher for 13 years and working in this district for the last 11 years, I had never experienced nor been given the opportunity to take part in an intervention for students of this magnitude. I was curious about the impact of co-teaching in a general education classroom and I became interested in participating in the co-teaching program. The survey also asked respondents if they were open to participating, as well as whom they would like to work with as a co-teaching partner. This choice also impacted my rationale for signing up for co-teaching, as I felt that my choice and preferences were given validation.

As a result of the survey, 16 of my colleagues and I signed up to work together as co-teaching teams. We were sent to other districts to observe co-teaching in well-established programs. After each visit to local high schools to observe co-teaching practices, we worked together, in our PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to examine the curriculum and prepared lessons for the forthcoming school year. It was my perception that those who signed up

were motivated and positive about the co-teaching as they began the school year, in spite of the short timeline to get preparations in order and lack of training on co-teaching practices.

The shared perceptions and experiences of co-teaching of my colleagues and I seemed to be contrary to what we observed at the other high schools. The experiences of co-teachers we spoke with at the other schools did not mirror our positive experience. The major issues that the co-teaching teams from the other schools shared were: (i) mandatory participation; (ii) lack of choice in partner, (iii) lack of preparation, (iv) lack of consistent partnership from year to year, (v) lack of planning time, and(vi) limited or no training. All concerns that were voiced by co-teachers at other schools are echoed by the research (Dieker & Murawski, 2001, 2003; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Santoli, Sachs, Romey & McClurg, 2008).

We were encouraged to report what we saw and what we thought we needed to be successful to the superintendent, director of guidance, and the director of special services. We prepared reports after each visit detailing suggestions we thought would ensure a strong start and successful implementation of co-teaching at our school. As the 2016-2017 academic schedule was created at the end of 2015-2016, co-teaching teams were provided, each day, common planning time (PLC) and were not assigned a duty, as other staff were as part of the contract. Also, our district was working with a Professor- in -Residence who was available to meet with co-teaching teams on a frequent basis to provide feedback and to enrich the co-teaching practice.

As I designed my study, I was unaware of the budgetary restraints of Park High School as an impetus for co-teaching. After interviewing the superintendent, I was made aware that co-teaching was largely a fiduciary decision, with positive impacts on policy and practice, such as more rigorous curriculum, real-world learning environment for all learners, and the removal of

stigmatization of resource classes. The trickle-down effect of the policy decision made at the top was interesting to examine through interviews with other administrators and co-teachers.

During the first year of co-teaching, there were clear challenges that co-teaching teams faced. After several conversations with my co-teaching colleagues, there was general agreement on similar issues and experiences. However, what intrigued me the most was that 16 of my colleagues signed up to co-teach without any knowledge of incentives (common planning time, actual assignment with choice of partner, no duty) or administrative support. Using case study research methodology to systematically observe the practice of co-teaching at my school, themes emerged through the coding process as to why my colleagues chose to participate in co-teaching, and what part choice had to play in their motivations.

Researcher's Role

Qualitative research is essentially "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2008, p. 4). In conducting a descriptive qualitative study of this magnitude, as a researcher-participant with the purpose of unpacking teachers' experience of co-teaching given choice, I feel it is important to highlight my own experiences of the co-teaching experience, as well as my motivations to participate in the co-teaching initiative.

No matter how much you try, you cannot divorce your research from your past experiences, who you are, what you believe, and what you value. Being a clean slate is neither possible nor desirable. The goal is to become more reflective and conscious of how "who you are" may shape and enrich what you do, do not eliminate it (Bodgan & Biklen, 2006, p. 38). The sharing of my own experiences have exposed several innate biases in the study. However, I committed to safeguarding against letting them cloud my interpretation of the data.

Often, "qualitative researchers try to acknowledge and take into account their own biases as a method of dealing with them" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 38). A core principle I hold central as an educator and researcher-participant is the value of developing an understanding an experience or situation from the inside rather than only applying an external lens and terms. By choosing to participate in co-teaching and subsequently conducting case-study research, I have attempted to uncover teachers, within this context, who chose to participate and what role choice played in their participation, in order to improve my craft as an educator and inform best practices.

Education research often falls short by leaving a gap between theory and practice, what should be taking place and what actually is taking place in the classroom (Johnson, 2005). The research on co-teaching falls into this category. Through case study research, this study dismantles the special education system within a school district, examining teachers' perspectives on choice, efficacy, and the power the administration holds over the policy-making in a secondary school environment. Case study methodology allows for the researcher to collect data on the best practices grounded in theory and at the same time, this data can be used to inform research related to best practices. Yin (2003) suggests that you should use case study research when:

(a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d)the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. (p.34).

Examining the experiences of teacher and the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching lend themselves to case study methodology. Stake (1978, 2000) maintained that "case studies are useful in the study of human affairs because they are down-to-earth and attention-holding" (p. 19). This approach to research makes sense in this study because it examined understanding of the naturalistic world through personal experiences. The researcher must be "ever-reflective", considering impressions, and deliberating on materials and recollections. Stake furthered, "The researcher digs into meanings, working to relate them to contexts and experience. In each instance, the work is reflective" (p. 450). He confirmed his earlier views on the significance of the concept of generalizability of case study research, when he noted, "The purpose of case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case … the utility of case research to practitioners and policy makers is in its extension of experience" (1994, p. 245).

The examination of the case of choice an efficacy in co-teaching at the secondary level is born out of the unique environment what was created at Park High School as it implemented co-teaching for the first time during the 2015-16 school year. Park High School is the only school in the region that allowed teachers choice of participation and/or choice of partner. Other inclusion programs, both elementary and secondary, throughout the area assign teacher pairs based on content area and scheduling. Park High School provided the place, time, and environment to allow teachers to have some say in their assignments and participation. Also, the empirical research on co-teaching at the secondary level is sparse and mostly examines student outcomes (Mastriopieri & Scruggs, 2001; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). Therefore, examining choice and efficacy in co-teaching at Park High School provided me with the unique opportunity to examine those elements within the implementation of the program of co-teaching in a one-school, school district. Based on my own experiences and the results of this single case, case study, I believe

that the opportunity for choice in the co-teaching initiative, both in participation and in partnership, played an important role in co-teachers' experiences. By participating in co-teaching, teachers felt they had some voice in the decision-making; the choice to participate in co-teaching allowed teachers to have a sense of ownership over the policy changes occurring in the district.   Empowered teachers were able to bring their talents, experiences and creative ideas into the classroom, as well as implement new strategies to meet all learning needs, improving self-efficacy, student achievement and the school as a learning community (Johnson, 2005; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Case-study methodology allowed me, the researcher-participant to examine the interplay between teachers' choice, motivation, efficacy, as well as the impact of administration on teachers' experiences. Case-study methodology allowed me as the research participant to be "ever-reflective" in my data collection and analysis.

As a participant in the co-teaching initiative, I brought several biases to the study. I believe that my co-teacher and I, because we had the opportunity to volunteer to pick each other, and to have common planning time, did the best we could to meet all of the learning needs of our students. I was committed and fairly enthused about our work and saw the benefits of our combined expertise in the classroom. Our co-teaching experience was not like other co-teaching teams in the building as there were many variables that were different in our experience. My co-teacher and I had seniors who had been in the school for three years or so; they had familiarity with their surroundings as well as more emotional and social development than the underclassmen. These factors may have impacted the students' behaviors and socialization in the classroom. Also, our content area is English/ Language Arts, and the subject and curriculum lends itself to developing a collaborative community, through discussions and small group interactions. We were able to deal with real-world issues as they related to the content and the

lives of our students, and I know my content area may have added to my biases of co-teaching at Park High School. Also, my co-teacher was the resource room teacher for many of the students in our classes in previous years, so she had a rapport with them, allowing for a foundation of trust and cooperation within the classroom for both teachers and students. In my role as researcher-participant, I was mindful that I could not expect other co-teaching teams to be equally positive in their perceptions of the co-teaching experiences. I also understand that there were different reasons for participation in co-teaching that were not in line with my own and I needed to be open to hearing all that participants had to share in order to have a rich data and a methodologically sound study. By acknowledging my own biases here, I was cognizant of them through reflective memos as I collected the data, so that I was able to interpret the data with as little bias as possible.

Design and Methods

It was the intention of this study to gather data about teachers' experiences and motivations to participate in co-teaching teams through qualitative research design. Qualitative research has a flexible structure of inquiry, allowing the research to explore the inductive reasoning, individual meaning, and the importance of rendering complex situations (Creswell, 2009). According to Baxter and Jacks (2008), constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one's perspective. This paradigm "recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity. Constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality" (Searle, 1995). One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Through these stories, the participants are able to describe their views of reality and this enables the

researcher to better understand the participants' actions (Lather, 1992; Robottom & Hart, 1993). Yin (2003) and Stake (2000, 2008) both describe case study methodology with the constructivist paradigm. As such, this methodology allows more from for co-construction. As Bell (2011) asserts:

> The nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participant, as it develops through recruitment, initial contact, the research interview and any follow-up contact, is multidimensional. Typically, the researcher's construction of the nature of their research is systematically explored. However participants' motivations to participate and their constructions of the research process are not often directly explored. In order to avoid a 'top-down' approach to research or making assumptions about participants, it is pertinent to directly explore participants' motivations and to gain an indication of their construction of the process. (p. 3)

This study used the case study approach, focusing on single-case analysis to examine the case of choice and efficacy in co-teaching at a regional high school in NJ. "The qualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations" (Stake, 2005, p.). Yin (2002) defines a case as "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context" (p. 13). In more recent discussions of case study methodology, Stake (2005, 2008) continued to focus on the importance of the role of researcher as interpreter, and he commented that if the case is "more human or in some ways transcendent, it is because the researchers are so, not because of the methods" (2005, p. 443). The work of the researcher is to identify "coherence and sequence" (2005, p. 444) of the activities within the boundaries of the case as patterns. The case needs to be organized around

issues – complex, situated, problematic relationships – and questions around these issues will help deepen the theme of the case. Stake (2005) noted that the contexts of the case, whether they are social, economic, political, ethical, or aesthetic, are important to consider, and they "go a long way toward making relationships understandable" (p. 449). As previously discussed, the implementation of co-teaching is quite complex with many variables that play a part in the success or failure of the experience. Case study methodology allowed me to capture the complexity of a single case (Merriam, 1998). The case is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as, "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, "in effect, your unit of analysis" (p. 25). Asking yourself the following questions can help to determine what your case is; do I want to "analyze" the individual? Do I want to "analyze" a program? Do I want to "analyze" the process? Do I want to "analyze" the difference between organizations? (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It was the intention of this case study to explore the phenomenon of a voluntary co-teaching practice as the case examined. The case study approach also allowed me to attempt to describe what motivated both special education and general education teachers to participate, and what role, if any, efficacy played in teachers' motivations. And lastly, using a single case, case study, I attempted to link choice, motivation and efficacy together, while also exploring the motivations of the administration to allow choice in co-teaching.

According to Stake (2005), qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case, as it occurs in context. In case studies, the situation is expected to shape the activity, the experience, and interpreting the activity (Stake, 2005). As a research-participant, I used semi structured interviews, survey responses, and field observations of common planning sessions to better understand special education and general education teachers' experiences of co-teaching with choice. To better understand the motivations of co-teachers and experiences

from the participants' point of view, I interviewed both teachers and administrators at a regional high school where co-teaching was occurring on all grade levels. The teachers interviewed, completed, and returned the informed consent and verbally agreed to participate in the study. The administrators interviewed were chosen based on the roles they played in the development and execution of the co-teaching program, the director of guidance, supervisor of humanities, director of special services and the superintendent. The administrators also completed and returned the informed consent forms and verbally agreed to participate in this study.

Site

Park High School is a public, regional high school, located in a suburban neighborhood, serving a student population speaking more than seven different languages from three neighboring towns in the Northeastern region of the United States. The school services students from grades 9-12, has an enrollment of 1,348, and is comprised of an economically and racially diverse population. Of the total enrollment, 24.5% of the student body are considered to be economically disadvantaged, 62.7% are White, 28.6% are Hispanic, 5.9% are Asian and 2.5% are Black. Students with disabilities represent 13% of the total population and more than 22% of students are dual language speakers, chiefly English and Spanish or English and Arabic. School wide PARCC scores for the 2014-2015 year are reported as 42% of students met or exceeded expectations in English/Language Arts and 36% of students met or exceed expectations in Math. Only 13% of students with disabilities met or exceeded expectation in ELA and 3% in math. The school is working on meeting growth targets for each year in Math and ELA. The graduation rate is 94%, which is higher than the state average of 78%. Of the students who graduate, 81% of the population will enter a 2 or 4-year school, as opposed to the state average of 78.5%.

The student to teacher ratio is 13:1; which is higher than the state average of 12:1. However, this ratio is not indicative of the actual class size. It simply means that there are 13 students in the building for every certified teacher. Typically, class sizes fluctuate throughout the year with numbers closer to 25. Daily instructional time is 6 hours and 5 minutes. There are a total of 102 instructional staff members, all of which are highly qualified. 53 teachers have graduate degrees. Park is a one school, school district with the Superintendent of the district residing in house. Under the Superintendent, there are 11 administrators; the hierarchy includes one principal, six vice principals, and four supervisors. This hierarchy was recently put in place, concurrently with the co-teaching initiative. The former hierarchy consisted of one superintendent, one principal, four assistant principals, and department level supervisors.

There has been no history of co-teaching or inclusion strategies at this high school, since its founding in 1940. Prior instructional strategies for students with disabilities included resource classes and pull-out classes. However, due to budgetary restraints, co-teaching was implemented as a cost-saving measure, replacing resource. If any of the instructional staff had experience with co-teaching, it was during pervious employment or during teacher preparation and professional development course work. Park was selected because it is a typical 9-12 regional high school. It has not received any awards for quality or effectiveness, nor has it been put on any lists of schools that are chronically underperforming or unsafe. It is an atypical site as it is the only regional public high school in Northeast Region that allowed for teachers to choose to participate and choose their partners. Essentially the results of my study will be useful to administrators and teachers in similar high schools. From the information provided the administration, this school is a typical regional public high school in New Jersey.

It should be noted that Park High School had had budgetary issues in the last 6 years, as many other districts in the region have had, due to the 2% cap on taxes. As such, there has been an increase in expenditures for Special Education Services and Instruction each year of about 8% due to the rising cost of services in and out of the district, such as an increase in the number of students coming from sending districts needing services, the hiring of full-time Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, and the placement of students out of district which often costs the school district anywhere from 65,000 to 90,000 per year, per student. Although the school district has tried to cut down on the students placed out of district placements to defray costs, there is still a shortfall. I was unaware of the how much the budgetary issues played a part in the policy implantation of co-teaching. Only through interviews with administration was I made aware that eliminating resource classes and implementing co-teaching allowed a more cost-effective way serve the students with disabilities. The district cut 17 paraprofessionals who would work 35 hours a week with the students with disabilities in both resource classes and inclusion classes, saving the district approximately 340,000 dollars each year. Also, two certified, highly qualified teachers in a room capped at 28 with a heterogenous population allows for larger classes sizes, while keeping the student to teacher ratio down for the state report card.

According to the public budget, published by the state, Park High School spent 3,431,786 dollars on Special education services and instruction in the 2015-2016 academic year. However, during the first year of co-teaching, 2016-2017, the total cost of special education services was $4,192,108, however the net cost that year was $2,159,919. Although there are many factors contributing to the numbers that I could not find explanations for, the idea is that co-teaching was a strategy to save the district money to make up for the financial shortfall.

Participants

According to Creswell (2009), purposeful sampling best helps the researcher understand the case being studied. As previously stated, there were 16 teachers who participated in co-teaching. I purposefully recruited participants who fulfilled the following criteria: 1) agreed to participate in the survey, 2) were working with their chosen partner, 3) were present in the building for the training, discussions, and professional development on co-teaching (not out on leave), and 4) taught one of the core content areas (English, Math, Science, History). Of those 16 teachers, 12 expressed their interest in participating in the study.

Six general education teachers volunteered and met the above criteria. They taught English, History, Math, and Science. There were six special education teachers who volunteered to be a part of this study and met the above criteria. The teacher participants range in age from 27-64, six are female, and six are male. As the researcher, I did not participate in this study, nor did my co-teaching partner, due to biases and to avoid any undue pressure on my partner. At the time of this study, the participants had teaching experience ranging from 5 years to 34 years. Each teacher who participated in the study was tenured at the time of the study. Two teachers had graduate degrees; five were in graduate school (education, education leadership); and all were highly qualified and fully certified in their content area according to NCLB (2001) regulations.

One teacher had prior co-teaching experience in another district. Some teachers had coursework in their education classes covering the inclusion strategy, but most believed co-teaching was just "two teachers in a room." The school provided three professional days for training and used a Professor in Residence from a neighboring university to help with best practices. The administrators who participated in this study were the Superintendent, the

supervisor of humanities, the director of guidance, and the director of special services. At the time of the study, the superintendent was ending her second year in the district; the director of guidance had 15 years in district; the supervisor of humanities had 20 years in the district and the director of special services also had 20 years in the district.

Teachers at Park High School, like other public schools, use a range of instructional styles, strategies, and approaches to co-teaching. Almost no participants stated that this was a problem. The few who did suggested that general education counterpart was unaware of how he/she was taking over the instruction and impacting the relationship and the students in the class. There was no designated administrator in charge of the co-teaching initiative; the approach was 'hands off', allowing teams to work through the partnership development process. Many teachers suggested this was a problem and added to the feeling of isolation that co-teachers experienced.

Several teacher-participants suggested that the dominant co-teaching styles at Park High School were team teaching and one teach, one assist. The teachers suggested that, in this type of arrangement, there is equal "stage time", but not every day. However, the participants stated that the goal was to be equal instructional time as well as equal division of duties. The administration allowed for one co-planning period (PLC) per team, per day. Each participant discussed the significance of the common planning time in the development of the relationship, the reflection on best practices and planning better ways to execute lessons to meet the needs of the diverse population.

Co-teaching as an initiative started in September 2016, with three sections of co-teaching, per grade level, per discipline. A survey was sent out to the instructional staff, inquiring whether teachers would be interested in co-teaching and who they would like to work with. All

participants filled out the survey and reported to be interested in co-teaching. The special education teachers were told they would be only assigned co-teaching classes, redefining their instructional roles at Park. Although general education teachers were happy to volunteer, and were given their chosen partners, special education teachers felt that, regardless of their survey responses, they were mandated to co-teach, although paired with a partner of their choice. All teacher participants expressed a general positive attitude about their co-teaching experiences, from their relationships, to their instructional strategies. Almost all the participants expressed frustration and sometimes anger at the administrations lack of involvement, lack of preparation provided and perceived lack of concern for the well-being of the co-teaching teams. However, some teachers before and after interviews expresses their concerns about the administration's reactions to the interviews, concerned that they would be retaliated against by the administration's for answering honestly. I had to assure each participant of the confidentiality, anonymity and the process by which all identifying information would be removed from the interviews and observational data.

In a case study, the researcher is responsible for generating a picture of the case, then producing a portrayal of the case for other to see (Stake, 2005). As the researcher, I attempted to understand the participants and to do so is to also understand their journey to becoming an educator. I used the data I collected through interviews, survey responses, observations, and documents, to create a descriptively rich narrative on each participant, in order to flesh out their background story and help understand educators' motivations and experiences. Researcher comments (RC) reflected my thoughts before and after the interview process, as well as the observations, and provided a structured method of addressing my own biases.

Data Collection

In order to generate a clear picture of the dynamic phenomenon of choice in co-teaching, I gathered information from multiple data sources through semi-structured interviews, co-planning observations and surveys administered to co-teaching participants. I purposefully sampled teachers and administrators based on the previously mentioned criteria, but also examined their experiences and backgrounds in order to develop a cross-section of multiple perspectives. I initially asked for verbal permission to conduct my study, working my way up the ranks of my administration. I asked the supervisor of humanities, then the director of special services, then director of guidance. I then scheduled a meeting with the superintendent to request permission to conduct the study. She mandated that I write a letter requesting permission from her to conduct my study at the school, which she then presented to the board with her recommendations for approval. Once I gained Board of Education approval, I started informally discussing my research study with co-teaching colleagues that met the criteria outlined to gauge interest in participation.

I drafted a solicitation script and distribute to the faculty members selected to review at their leisure. I asked potential participants to contact me via email to express consent in participating. Once I had my list of participants finalized, I kept the identities of participants completely confidential, by using pseudonyms for each participant.

Interviews

Interviews attempted to capture the participants' own words and, as analysis emerged, data revealed unexpected dimensions of the topic (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Semi-structured interviews varied in degree and provide a considerable amount of flexibility to pursue whatever topics relating to co-teaching emerge organically throughout the interview process (Bogdan &

Biklen, 2006). Using interview protocol (Creswell, 2009), I completed one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with each of the participants between April- June 2016. I recorded the interviews using an audio recorder and took reflective notes before and after the interviews, in order to capture the elements of the interview that may not have been recorded, like facial expressions, gestures, body languages. I also included notes on my own personal thoughts, speculations and biases throughout the experiences (Creswell, 2009). The semi-structured interviews gave the participants a chance to shape the topic of co-teaching and choice from their perspectives.

I interviewed each participant once and conducted the interviews with the participant at the school site throughout the school day (7:30 am- 3:05 pm), during a previously agreed upon time and place. The interviews took place in classrooms, the teachers' lounge, the library, and the offices of administrators in order to attempt to have as little distraction and interruption as possible. Each interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. Each interview question was open-ended to generate rich data. The interview questions for teachers covered topics such as, the co-teaching partnership, participants' experiences of co-teaching, discussion of challenges and strengths in the co-teaching environment, educational philosophy, motivations and perspectives on their choices, their perceived impact on student learning and administrative support. The interview questions for administrators covered topics related to personal perspectives on co-teaching, perspectives on implementation, motivations behind choice and administrative support.

Observations

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2006), observations, going where the participants do their work in the classroom and co-planning time, builds trust - making the relationship of the researcher and the participant less formal and yield other dimensions of descriptive data. I was

given permission by co-teaching participants (2 pairs) to observe their co-planning time as I

interacted in a more informal setting. These observations were a window into uncovering the

interactions between co-teacher and brought to light a few topics that may have been difficult for

participants to discuss in the interviews, and also served to reinforce the participants interview

responses describing their relationship and their roles with their co-teacher. I used observational

protocol (Creswell, 2009) while conducting observations, taking descriptive notes on the

physical setting, dialogue, teacher student interaction, co-teacher interaction and other

observable elements in the co-teaching/ co-planning setting. I also took reflective notes,

attempting to capture my own personal thoughts and feelings such as "speculation, feelings,

problems, ideas, hunches, impressions and prejudices" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.121).   The

template for observational protocol can be found in Appendix C.

Surveys

Lastly, after each interview, the teacher participant was given a collective efficacy survey

(adapted from Goddard & Hoy, 2003 with permission, See Appendix). The teacher participants

were asked to complete the survey at their own time and place and put the completed survey in a

sealed envelope (provided) and deposit it in my mailbox within 7 days. Participants were asked

not to place their names on the survey, as to maintain their anonymity, thus eliciting more honest

responses. I received 12 surveys back from the 12 participants. The survey has 18 questions,

dealing with collective efficacy of the pair and perceived proxy efficacy of the institution. The

survey responses affirmed much of what the participants said in their interviews, but also

brought to light certain trends of thoughts and motives across the teacher participants about their

beliefs in the ability as a singular teacher, co-teaching pair or member of a larger school

community to make a positive impact.

Data Analysis

After these data were collected, I read through non-interview data, research comment memos, and observation forms to try to identify initial patterns. After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed verbatim. Before and after the interviews, I took reflective notes to discuss my observations and initial biases. Later in the analysis process, I listened to the transcripts for reflections to patterns and themes and record them in the researcher's journal. Lastly, I analyzed the data following the hand coding process described by Saldana (2009).

Single Case Analysis

The case is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as, "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, "in effect, your unit of analysis" (p. 25). I treated the phenomena of choice and efficacy in co-teaching as the entire case. The purpose of single, descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003).

Analysis

The case study moves beyond 'thin' description to 'thick' description by analysis of elicited images, language of description and application, and artifacts (Denzin, 1984; Geertz, 1973; Stake, 1994). As I coded and identified patterns, I constructed narratives of each individual participant using data from the interviews, documents and observations, in order to capture the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching. By triangulating the data, I helped strengthen the trustworthiness of the results and develop thick, rich descriptions or narratives (Geertz, 1973). I summarized patterns and themes within individual narratives and across participants. The narratives are grouped by the categories of teachers and administrators. I used these narratives to highlight relationships, trends and contradictions found in the data. Essentially,

using the concepts that emerge from the narratives is used to connect ideas found in the literature to my research questions (Maxwell, 2004). Once again, each participant was assigned a pseudonym throughout the coding process so as to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Interviews

Interviews were transcribed verbatim after each interview, using Saldana's *two cycle coding process* (2009) . Beginning with a start list of codes intrinsically linked to the research questions (motives, choice, experience, efficacy, & administration), the First Cycle of coding involved looking at the data in chunks and then moving to a line-by-line review of the data in order to make sure each bit of data was examined. During the first cycle of coding, several different categories of codes were used including descriptive codes, process codes, emotion codes, values codes, evaluation codes, holistic codes, attribute codes as well as simultaneous coding, which were used in developing my code book (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). After reviewing each interview transcript several times, I determined that each bit of data was coded. It was time to move to the Second Cycle of analysis, which involved examining the coding from the first cycle and grouping it into themes across participants and observational data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

When a pattern from one data type is corroborated by the evidence from another, in this case a general education teacher and special education teacher; and then teachers and administrators, the findings are stronger (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once I developed a clear understanding of each participant's motives, experiences and perspectives of co-teaching through narratives and coding, I proceeded to the second phase of analysis. The *pattern coding approach* was used for the second cycle of coding. According to Saldana (2009), pattern codes are used to "develop major themes from the data," to "search for explanations in the data," and for the

"formation of theoretical constructs and processes" (p. 152). After examining the initial and simultaneous coded data, several themes emerged among the categories of participants. In order to illustrate the relationship between groups, I examined special education teachers' data and then general education teachers' data for trends and themes across experiences looking to further explain the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching. I then examined administrators' data capture their experiences of co-teaching and compare them to teachers' (both special education and general education) data.

Codes were inductively generated using a thematic analysis approach and emerged from the teachers' descriptions of their experiences in co-taught classes and administrators' perceptions of the implementation of the co-teaching program, through my uncovering and interpretation of the data as a researcher-participant (validity, limitations and biases are addressed in the next section). As I developed the lists of codes, I began to construct a codebook. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2006), developing a coding system involves several well-thought-out steps. You search through your data for regularities (common responses found more than twice in coding) and patterns (the re-occurrence of a particular perspective or outlook for teachers or administrators in their views of the co-teaching world) as well as for topics your data covers than you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting descriptive data you have collected so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data (p. 173).

I organized each code into primary codes then I broke these codes down into sub codes that revealed underlying assumptions embedded in the interviews. I used Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) suggestion to start with a list of codes coming from the "conceptual framework,

list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas and/or key variables that the researcher

brings to the study" (p. 58). Some of the items on my list were:

Roles

Motivations

Choice

Administration

Co-teaching relationship

Challenges in co-teaching

Collective-Efficacy

Proxy Efficacy

These items, along with others, were entered into my codebook which I used as an organizational

tool and to gauge what I should include in my study. In my codebook, I had criterion for each

code. The criterion included labels, definitions, general descriptions, inclusion and exclusion

rules with examples and any sub codes that were associated with that code. Table 1 outlines the

criteria used for one of the codes in my code book.

Table 1
Code Book Example

Label	Teacher Relationship
Definition	The bonds that are formed between teachers based on their daily interactions with their co-teaching partners.
General Description	During the school day teachers engage in a variety of activities that determine their relationships with their co-teaching partners.
Description of inclusion and exclusion	Inclusion- For a data set to qualify for this code, the transcript must highlight the manner in which teachers interact with their co-teaching partners. Exclusion- For a data set to be excluded from this code, there is no mention of teacher interaction or relationship.
Examples (Inclusion and Exclusion)	Inclusion- "I think he's been really open and flexible with the [co-teaching] experience". Excluded-" I think we definitely need to help find what's relevant to their lives"

Sub Codes	Trust-Teachers who believe that trust in important variable in their co-teaching team.
	Friendship- Teachers who believe friendship is either essential, irrelevant or has a negative impact on co-teaching dynamic.
	Respect-Teachers who believe that respect is an important variable in their co-teaching team.
	Equals-Teachers who believe that co-teachers are equally responsible for the class and share the responsibilities.
	Philosophy of Education- Teachers who believe their philosophy of education is similar or different to their partners and impacts their co-teaching dynamic.

Trends and themes were highlighted through the process of two cycle coding (Saldana, 2009) and displayed in the form of descriptive narratives. This technique has revealed both explanations and descriptions as the themes begin to answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As new themes emerged within categories in each description, all previous analysis was reexamined for similar themes (Guba, 1978). Organizing the data in this fashion allowed me to easily identify several themes that emerged strongly from the interviews, observations, survey responses, and documents. Five major themes emerged through the two-cycle analysis: Motives of Teachers, Choice and its Impact on Teacher Experience, Impact on Students, Administrative Influence, and Efficacy.

Observations

Prior to the data collection, each participant filled out an informed consent form, where they indicated if they would be willing to be observed during their common planning time with their partners. Four teachers (two teams) agreed to allow me to observe their common planning time by checking off the agree box on the teacher informed consent form. I did not approach the other teacher participants who did not check the box on the form, as I did not want to push too

hard. The four teachers who agreed to be observed in their element allowed me to compare their behavior, language and observable characteristics as individuals and as a team to compare with their interview responses. Using the observational protocol by Creswell (2009) and my own template for observation, I recorded notes on the interactions, discussions/dialogue, behaviors and body languages and perceived responsibilities and roles. I also recorded my own reflection after the observations to discuss my biases and reflect on the observational experience. After coding the interviews and identifying emerging themes, I examined my observational and reflective notes for corresponding or conflicting observational data during the common planning time. I then reviewed the interview transcripts of all four observational participants again, looking for descriptions of relationships, roles, and responsibilities. I attempted to compare my observational notes and perceptions with those stated by the teachers in the interviews. I found that the observations of common planning time only further highlighted the self-described relationships, roles, responsibilities. I was able to pull out specific language used and during common planning time and using the codes developed, I analyzed my observational notes for commonalities and contradictions in the interview data.

Surveys

The surveys were given to each participant in a plain envelope at the conclusion of the interview. Each participant was asked to return the survey within one week. I explained the results would be anonymous; I requested that they provide no identifying information on the envelope or survey. Twelve surveys were returned to my school mailbox. Once I received the survey responses, I began to tally the answers for all 18 questions. I examined the answers to the questions for corroboration with themes present in the interview data and the observational data. I was able to identify some interesting trends in questions, where teacher participants all

answered similarly on questions or there were variant answers for other questions. I then coded

each of the 18 questions into categories of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy, in order to

organize the responses and look for patterns. I reviewed the transcripts and observational

protocol looking for collaborating or contradictory patterns. Again, I found many overlapping

themes in the answers provided on the surveys and the data analyzed from observations and

interviews. The surveys provided a clean method of finding out exactly what the teacher

participants felt about their individual and collective efforts in co-teaching as well as their feeling

about the administration's support of the co-teaching initiative or lack thereof.

Qualitative Validity and Limitations

Several questions guided my concerns of validity, bias and limitations.

1. Did I use enough data to capture the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching?

2. Did my beliefs and experience impact the data?

3. Did I interview enough teachers?

4. Did I bias the data with the selection of teachers I chose to use?

5. Did I choose a site that could provide data that can be transferable in other studies?

6. How do I know that what the teachers said in the interviews reflect their authentic

    experiences and not just obsequious comments about the school and administration (i.e.

    "I don't want to make the school look bad")?

7. Could my research harm teachers or administrators?

Triangulation

To ensure qualitative validity, the researcher must check for accuracy of the findings by

employing certain procedures (Creswell, 2009). Triangulation of data is one way to help ensure

the accuracy of the findings. By examining multiple data sources, interview data from multiple

categories of participants, survey responses, and observation field notes, I was able to build a coherent justification for the themes developed to examine the phenomenon of choice and efficacy in co-teaching (Creswell, 2009). I also triangulated the perspectives of the special education teachers, the general education teachers and the administrators by comparing and contrasting their experiences in and perceptions of co-teaching in order to gain a greater understanding of choice and efficacy in co-teaching. Because themes were established based on converging several sources of data and perspectives of participants, this adds validity to this qualitative study (Creswell, 2009).

Biases

As a researcher-participant, my perspective and biases were difficult to completely eradicate. Therefore, during interviews, I was careful to ask questions and follow-up questions as objectively as possible. I also safeguarded against projecting my own feelings or experiences onto the narratives of the participants. I did this by writing research notes before and after interviews and observations, along with analytical memos during the interview coding proess.Before and after observations, I took reflective memos to discuss my feelings, perceptions, prejudices, hunches and impressions to separate my own biases from what is actually happening (Creswell, 2009). I also used rich, thick descriptions when conveying my findings. By using multiple perspectives and data sources, the results of the study are more realistic and richer, thus adding validity to the findings.

Teacher Selection

Although I recruited teacher participants purposefully in order to get a cross section of perspectives, I was limited in the number of teachers who met the selection criterion. There were 12 teacher participants, six males and six females. Six were special education teachers and six

were general education teachers. There were four administrative participants; one was male and three were female. My sample size was limited based on the previous selection criteria and the cross section of participants was not ethnically diverse. Also, I did not collect data from the teachers who opted not to participate in co-teaching, which could have provided a valuable counter perspective of why teachers would not choose to co-teach. Nor did I collect data from my co-teacher. The co-teachers who chose not to participate in this research have important perspectives that also add value to the research findings.

Site Selection

The site that I chose was a typical 9-12 regional high school in the Northeastern region of the U.S. There are no real characteristics that make the site distinct from other regional high schools in the area. However, the high school was struggling to meet AYP for student with disabilities, performing far below the state-wide percentage of achievement in both ELA and Math, making the implementation of inclusion program more important to study. Implementing co-teaching was one intervention the administration used to improve test scores for students with disabilities. The strategies implemented in a co-teaching classroom were geared toward student achievement and test preparation as part of the general education curriculum, making the school site important to study. As of the 2017-18 school year, there was a slight uptick in ELA scores for students with disabilities. Math scores, however, remain about the same, holding at 13%. The school had a general curriculum with all four content areas being taught each day (English, History, Math and Science). The school was not considered a failing school, but had not received any recognition or awards for academic or other excellence. The implementation of co-teaching as a measure to improve test scores, as well as the concept of voluntary participation, which was

rare in implementation of co-teaching, reinforced the usefulness of my study to other

administrators and teachers who work in similar high schools.

Reliability of Participant Interview

In order to address this issue of reliability, I assured teachers and administration that the

name of the school would not be used, their names were all changed to maintain confidentiality,

and none of the information provided was shared with anyone. I made sure that the interviews

took place in a private classroom or office at the school, to make the participants feel safe and

comfortable. Additionally, the time of year that the interviews took place may have influenced

the responses of the participants. A teacher might feel one way in September and completely

differently in April. After completing the IRB process, I conducted the interviews between April

and June of 2016 in order to foster richness in participants' responses and honesty. During the

transcription of the interviews, I checked the transcript to ensure there are no obvious mistakes

made during the transcriptions process.

Also, as a teacher, perpetual student and researcher-participant in this study, the

participants seemed generally comfortable sharing their experiences with me during the

interviews. However, I was mindful to work collaboratively with the teachers to ensure that all

interpretations of their responses accurately represented their views, opinions, and perceptions.

Ethical Issues

The participants in this study ran the risk of becoming more aware of the issues

concerning co-teaching and administrative support (or lack of). Often, participants do not express

their true feelings at work, unless asked by a third party. Even though the data from the

interviews were not be shared with anyone, there was not a mechanism to stop teachers and

administrators from discussing the interviews with each other. I was unable to eliminate this risk to the participants from the study.

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations of this study. First, this case study is a single case analysis on the phenomenon of voluntary co-teaching practice. Though the purpose of this study is not generalizability, the single case provides meaning particular themes and descriptions developed in context of a specific cite (Creswell, 2009), given the limited sample of participants.

Secondly, I only examined some teachers in general content areas. There were not co-teaching opportunities for teachers in art, physical education, music and theater arts at the research site. Motives and experiences of co-teachers in these very interactive and hands-on classes were vastly different than those in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited in the scope of discussion.

Thirdly, due to time constraints, I was only able to complete one round of interviews and observations. The administration requested that I complete the interviews and observations during my free time during school. The time constraints cut down on the amount of data collected.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to explore what motivates teachers to choose to participate in co-teaching and to understand how teacher's sense of efficacy influences their experiences working in a co-teaching environment. This included examining four central points: (i) teachers' motivations to volunteer to participate in co-teaching; (ii) how choice of participation and/or choice of partner influenced their co-teaching experiences; (iii) how the collective-efficacy of teachers influences their experiences, and (iv), how administrative approaches, supports, and resources impact teacher's co-teaching experience. This study primarily focused on general and special educations teachers' experiences and explored the administration's motives to allow choice in the co-teaching initiative in Park High School. Through semi-structured interviews, an efficacy survey, and field observations, I explored how teachers' perspectives on co-teaching shaped their experience in and out of the co-teaching classroom.

In this chapter, I provide a brief description of four influential themes that emerged from interviews, the survey and field observations. These themes are:

(i)Motives of Teachers,

(ii)Impact of Choice on Teacher Experience

(iii)Teachers' Perceived Impact of Co-Teaching on Student Learning by Participants

(iv) Administrative Influence on Teachers' Efficacy.

The themes are major storylines in the data and link to the research questions posed earlier.

Motives of Teachers

In order to understand why teachers would choose to participate in the co-teaching initiative, I thought it would was essential to try to uncover what brought the teachers into the teaching profession initially in order to understand teachers' experiences as educators and what factors informed their choices. Throughout the interviews, participants discussed what motivated them to become a teacher and then later to participate in co-teaching. There were three main reasons: (i) inspirational teachers from their educational experiences; (ii) family members who were educators who influenced their decisions, and (iii) the desire to help students who need the most and the desire to coach. Additionally, each participant discussed their love of the content area in which they eventually became certified. Bob, a general education teacher and coach recalled his motives for teaching as "At first, to become a football coach. Ok, but to be honest, I fell in love with teaching and then thought, this is probably the best job for me."

Exploring the motivations of these teachers to enter the field of education provides some insight into what might make them open a new and challenging program like co-teaching. Five out of the six general education teachers named inspirational teachers as at least one of the reasons they decided to be a teacher. Angelica said that:

> I knew I wanted to be a teacher ever since I was a sophomore in my English Class. I loved my teacher and wanted to do the same thing. She inspired me and I have always loved the subject and I feel like it's a great platform to reach people on all levels.

Two general education teachers named family members who were educators as major factors in their decisions to become teachers. Jack stated, "Growing up the most influential people in my life, besides my parents, were my teachers and coaches so, it was kinda a natural transition."

General education teachers were largely influenced by external factors to become teachers. It was interesting to see how clearly general education teachers were able to recount, in great detail, how their former teachers and/or family members impacted them. Several teachers even cited the exact moment where they decided to become teachers because of a teachers influence or discussion with a family member who was an educator.

Special education teachers had different motives to enter into the field of education. Of the six special education teachers interviewed, four mentioned the desire to help students with disabilities, in particular, as at least one motivating factor to become teachers. Two out of six special education teachers named family members as an influential factor in their choice to become teachers. Zeek said, "I've always like working with students and especially special ed. My aunts have cerebral palsy so, I kind of got involved with special education at an early age. So, I knew I wanted to do special ed." The special education teachers were largely influenced by an intrinsic desire to help an "underserved" or "in need" population of students. This contrasts with the general education teachers who cited external factors as influencing their decisions. Both groups of teachers cited the desire to be a positive influence like their former teachers, family member, or self- driven desire to be advocate for underserved students.

Why Co-Teach?

 Through the interviews at Park High School, teachers and administrators expressed little preliminary understanding of the theory and practice of co-teaching. Ten out of 12 teachers expressed limited experience or understanding of the practice of co-teaching. Both special education and general education teachers defined their understanding of co-teaching as "two teachers in a room" or "one teacher, one aide." This lack of experience with co-teaching provides

an important context for understanding why teachers were motivated to sign up for co-teaching and how they ended up understanding co-teaching based on their own experiences.

When teachers were asked why they chose to participate in co-teaching, their responses varied greatly, especially among the special educators. At Park High School, a school-wide survey was sent to all faculty, asking about their interest in participating in a co-teaching initiative. This was a first on many levels. The administration at Park High School made it clear that there were programmatic changes on the horizon, but it had never included the teaching staff in any decisions or asked for their input or opinions. When the survey was sent out in early 2015, staff who responded that they would be interested had different reasons for doing so. The special education faculty who indicated interest in co-teaching, based on their philosophical alignments with its goals, were unaware that the administration had determined to remove resource classrooms as part of the continuum of practice. The decisions to close resources rooms, as conveyed to the special educators was that they did not have the content knowledge expertise required, thus co-teaching was considered a viable option to continue to serve the students. The interviews with the special education co-teachers were overwhelmingly consistent in that they all signed up for the survey, but they felt that their participation in co-teaching was a "fake choice" and that they were mandated (not voluntary) into it. The one choice they did express having was the choice of partner, leading to their preferred collaborative teammate.

 In the interviews, general education teachers discussed several reasons to co-teach. They ranged from looking to keep their experience in the classroom fresh and new, to excitement about having a special education expert help them with modification and teaching strategies. Overall, the general education teachers who signed up for the survey, were generally positive about the concept of having another teacher in their classroom. Conversations with general

education teachers revealed that they were looking for as much help from the special education experts as possible. Specifically, they noted that they did not feel appropriately able to meet the needs of the students with disabilities in their current classrooms. Many of them expressed a similar sentiment to John's:

> I looked at like a huge opportunity to actually work with a second teachers in the classroom. I jumped at the opportunity because I was already teaching special ed and I was teaching it by myself.

This sentiment, working with another expert teacher in their classroom, suggests that general education teachers were willing and pleased to work collaboratively with a special education co-teacher to meet the needs of all students in a co-teaching classroom, meaning general education teachers were open to utilizing the shared expertise of the co-teaching teams to improve the student experience and to make their lives a bit easier especially in the way of modifying content for students with special needs

General education teachers also expressed signing up for co-teaching as a "desire to be better" and to make their practice "fresh and new with a new challenge". Four teachers suggested that teaching a different level of their content area or having fresh ideas from a new teacher would only make their experience better.

All of them discussed at length that they did not have a choice to participate. They were told in spring 2015 that they would be co-teaching and not have their own resource classes. The sentiment of a "fake choice" felt by all special education teacher participants largely influenced their perceptions of the administration but did not seem to influence their overall experiences in their co-teaching classes with their chosen partners. One motivation to co-teach that came up

repeatedly with the special education teachers was that they firmly believed that not every

student belongs in a resource room and students need to be challenged. Several teachers

discussed the inequality in resource rooms, in terms of a less rigorous curriculum expectation.

Victoria discussed her perspective on co-teaching and why she signed up. She was very excited

to teach a higher level of content than she could in her resource room, while challenging that

same population of students. Victoria stated:

> I really loved that I was able to be drawn into the inclusion department and
>
> curriculum there. Not that I didn't teach the inclusion curriculum in resource but,
>
> I had to water it down significantly to hit the lowest levels of my resource room. I
>
> actually get to teach what I was trained to do.

For several teachers, co-teaching was not just an opportunity to include students who could

thrive in a general education class but as a challenge for her to teach the content she loves with

deeper and more complex discussion and nuanced assignments.

One other common motivation to sign up for co-teaching among the special education

teachers was that their students with disabilities would be moved to more inclusive settings like

the general education classroom, thus removing the stigma of separation, and providing a more

rigorous learning environment. Zeek stated:

> I was excited for inclusion. I think- I know it was going to be good for the kids-
>
> to kind of not be in that stigma of 'oh, I'm in a resources class' or 'It doesn't
>
> really matter what I do.' I knew it was going to be good for them to get into that
>
> general population. So, philosophically, I was totally behind it.

By and large, each special education teacher mentioned that the inclusion curriculum was more relatable to students and kept the special education students more engaged, than they were with a resource room curriculum. Veronica stated:

> I feel that they [special ed students] can relate to the content in co-teaching more than resource because we are seeking to connect them to the subject through discussion and comparative examples to their real lives. In a lot of ways, our co-teaching class in more 'alive' to our students than my other classes.

Veronica's commentary was critical in understanding one reason for the move to co-teaching and speaks to the issues of inequality in the resource room setting. Having students placed in inclusion classes allows for more appropriate access to inclusion curriculum.

Veteran special education teachers Colin and Jennifer were not as enthusiastic about their responses on the survey. Colin said that he responded 'yes' because he knew they were going to be forced to co-teach anyway and he wanted to appear positive and compliant to the administration. Similarly, Jennifer said that she replied yes to the survey but only because "the thing was shoved down our throats anyway, so- I said yes." Though she felt compelled to sign up to appear compliant to administration, she thought that the co-teaching had potential to be good for some students.

In my discussions with the special education participants, every single participant generally agreed with co-teaching, but were embittered by the perceived insulting way the administration (specifically the superintendent) addressed the department and told them that the main reason for the co-teaching initiative, besides failing PARCC scores, was their ineptitude

and lack of rigor in the resource classes. Ultimately, the special education department was told that they lacked the knowledge and expertise to serve the population that they were committed to educating. Surprisingly though, every single special education teacher described their experience in the co-teaching classroom and partnership as generally positive. Also, special education teachers acknowledged that co-teaching was important and had positive impacts on some or most students who moved from resource to inclusion for the following reasons: that they had more rigorous and relatable content outside of a resource class; they didn't feel as stigmatized as they felt in a resource class; and they were more engaged with the content in the classroom, while working hard to succeed in a new learning environment.

Impact of Choice on the Co-teaching Experience

Park High School's administration's decision to make co-teaching a choice for general education teachers, and then allow both special education and general education teachers to choose their co-teaching partners was apparently informed by a co-teaching expert who came to speak to the administration in the Fall of 2014 and gave suggestions as to how to best implement a co-teaching initiative in a school district. One of the suggestions was to allow teachers, where plausible, to volunteer rather than mandate the co-teaching assignment. The other suggestion was to allow teachers to pick their partners. The co-teaching volunteer survey, sent out in early 2015, was based on the points shared by the expert, at least for the general education teachers. However, according to interview responses, the administration swiftly decided to do away with all resource classes instead of the suggestion by the expert to gradually phase out resource by grade level and/or content area. General education teachers were allowed to choose to participate and choose their partner. Special ed teachers, although given the survey asking for interest in co-teaching, were mandated to co-teach as their role in the school changed. Just as

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students with disabilities were marginalized and separated, thus less empowered, their special education teachers were put in a similar position as far as having a 'real' voice in the volunteer process. This is an important subtheme as special education teachers were "voluntold" and were not treated equitable, as their general education peers, highlighting a clear difference in the value assigned to what special education teachers bring to the table as per the administration. They were, however, given choice and input in who they would like to work with in their co-teaching assignments. If teachers chose a partner that did not choose them, in that the partnerships did not match up, the administration did one of two things. They either asked the teacher to work with the available partner or they gave teachers a split schedule of one partner they chose and one partner they did not. There were three teachers in the first year of implementation who did not get their choice of partner. None of those teachers participated in this study.

Choice for General Education Teachers

Each of the participants emphasized the importance of choice in their experiences of co-teaching, both choice of partner and choice of participation were discussed. Every general education teacher described their experiences with co-teaching positively. General education teachers discussed ways that choice impacted their experiences of co-teaching. First, that teachers' ability to choose to participate and choose their partner, positively impacted their relationships with their co-teachers. Every general education teacher described their relationship in positive terms, using words and phrases like "awesome", "good connection", "happy to be working with", "great pair", "good partners", "worked out really well". All attributed their positive relationship, at least in large part, to choice. Anthony stated how choice impacted his experience co-teaching:

I think that if I was mandated to do it, it would probably be different. And no one wants to be told you HAVE to do it. You know they give you the options and you say, "Ok, this is my choice. MY choice. It was my partners CHOICE. Choice makes the partnership a little bit easier. A little more positive.

It is clear that general education teachers were grateful to be allowed choice where their special education peers were not, and yet the special education teachers came in and did their jobs well within the context of co-teaching team, despite inequitable treatment. The general education teachers were describing a 'marriage' of co-teaching with high hopes and sense of full choice. The special education teachers described their entrance into co-teaching as "fake" although they grew to appreciate their new partners. The general education teachers noted that because of choice, there was a willingness for partners to work together and, when needed, work through some challenging circumstances present in a co-teaching environment. Angelica discussed her experience with her co-teaching partner and the challenges they faced, especially when it came to stage time and frustration with change. Though, when the demands of everyday teaching and the diverse population set in, they struggled to connect. But she mentioned their mutual commitment to the class and their mutual acknowledgment of wanting to make the experience work. Even though co-teaching is challenging, especially as the first experience for both teachers, Angelica discussed the role choice played in their ability to work through difficulties, citing that they had some agency over their co-teaching situation, in that both she and her partner choose to volunteer in the co-teaching and choose each other, so the difficulties they faced in the partnership were easier to face because they weren't forced to be there and teacher with each other. They wanted to.

I think choice really helped. Like anytime you given a choice, your given a choice and you have more ownership over it. Obviously, I would still do it if it was mandatory. But, like I said, we both wanted to be there. We both chose each other so it helped us work through some issues we were having. I think our willingness and you both being determined to make this work. We want the other person to become, you know, better and you know it's better if we can do it together.

Choice was cited as playing a key role in fostering positive relationships and the willingness to work with partners. Also, communication between partners was really key and something each person heavily relied on. Katherine stated, "We are constantly interacting. From the moment she walks in. We want to talk and share and reflect. We are both committed to making this work." Five out of six teachers suggested that communication was strong in the relationship, due to the fact that both teachers chose to be in the partnership.

Choice and the Special Education Teacher

Although the special education teachers who participated in this study unanimously stated that they didn't have much of a choice when it came down to co-teaching, they all expressed that they had input and choice in who their partners would be. Interestingly enough, all special education teachers, despite their "fake choice" to participate in co-teaching, expressed that their experiences with their partners and in the co-teaching environment were generally positive.

The interview responses of the special education teachers when discussing choice began with the clarification that they didn't really choose to participate. However, each special

education teacher positively described the impact of choice of partner on their relationship with their respective co-teachers .

Veronica was clear about her feelings on choice in the implementation of the co-teaching initiative. "Choice- I think it's essential. My partner volunteered to do this. And I think that has totally affected how things have gone with us. It's going really well." Several of the special education teachers mentioned that choice of partner gave them some agency over their working environment where they previously felt undervalued as resource teachers. This idea of agency or power impacted the individual experiences of co-teaching positively. Colin stated:

> I'm happy who I got. I think every time you have choice- you feel that you have some agency in what you've done and what you're going to do. You're going to have a more positive outlook which is going to set the tone for the whole year. So, obviously, choice is going to matter.

Additionally, special education teachers discussed how they believed their experiences would have been impacted if they were not only mandated to co-teach, but also forced to work with partners that they did not choose. Andrea stated:

> I could foresee if I was partnered with someone who I didn't choose, or they didn't choose me and our personalities didn't fit and our teaching styles didn't fit together, I would have had a completely different year.

The positive experience of choice of partners for the special education teachers also impacted their perception of the willingness each person in the partnership brought to the co-teaching relationship. Like the general education teachers, five out of six

special education discussed the importance of the willingness of their partners to work with a new and more challenging population of students.

In summary, both special education and general education teachers cited choice as positively impacting their co-teaching experiences in similar ways. The positive relationships described by all of the participants, as well as their discussions about how to work through challenges speaks to how choice impacted the commitment to their partnership and to the students they were teaching. Teachers also discussed how choice impacted the communication between partners as well as empowered them to be a change agent over one's working environment, especially among special education teachers.

Co-Teaching Roles

Of the 12 teachers interviewed, ten expressed that the roles in the classroom were largely based in equality. Two special education teachers said that they felt like they were coming into the general education teacher's classroom and it was "their" classroom. Both special ed teachers said that even though they felt like they were the ones coming into the general education teachers' domain, they didn't mind their somewhat reduced roles as main teachers. Both special education teachers indicated that they had very positive relationships with their partners and the dynamic worked in their classrooms and respective partnerships. It may have been that both teachers did not have a clear understanding of their roles in the classroom and that the boundaries between roles were blurred.

However, those two experiences did not echo those of the rest of the co-teachers. When asked to describe their roles in the co-teaching partnership, special education teachers used positive language to describe their roles, like: "equal roles", " partnership" "mutual respect",

"good team", "balance each other out". Interestingly, the special education teachers generally acknowledged the content area expertise of their general education partner and how they were willing and happy for the experience their partners brought to the classroom. However, the roles were generally described as equal or collaborative. It might be that, although not stated by the special education teachers, that they recognized their own expertise in what Marilyn Friend (2016) calls "SDI" - specially designed instruction. SDI knowledge and pedagogical expertise are parts of the content expertise of special education educators. No one expressed distaste or frustration with their roles in the partnership.

General education teachers also expressed the generally equal roles in the partnership. One teacher expressed the evolving roles of their co-teacher, giving more "stage time" to their special education counterpart over the course of the year, suggesting that their roles "evolved to a more equal partnership". The rest of the general education teachers described their co-teaching roles, using language like "pretty collaborative", "definitely co-equal", "we both do everything", "mutual discussion and planning", "collaborative effort across the board", "we definitely teach together." Bob said of the split of responsibilities, "We're literally co-teachers. We share the classroom. I think it's worked out really well. And the work load? We split it. For the most part, we split it. So, it's 50/50." John said of the roles in his partnership "we said there should be no lead teachers and that's our personal belief."

The language used by 11 of the 12 co-teachers to describe the relationships and the roles were largely positive and collective. Every co-teacher, throughout their interviews, discussed plural possession of the classroom, workload, and students. Teachers used the words "our" " we" " us" to describe their experiences. It' is notable to mention the words used to describe the relationships are words like " equal," " collaborative," " 50/50," "mutual respect," "honesty,"

"willingness," "communication," "evolving," "together," " good dynamic," "fun," "works," "
positive," "happy," "lucky," " enjoy" and "success". Each of these words have been used at
least three times throughout the interview data in describing the co-teaching relationships.
Clearly, choice played a central role in the positive perceptions of the co-teaching pairs at Park
High School.

Student Impact

The existing research suggests that co-teaching or inclusion has mixed results for the
impact on student academic achievement and social growth both for students with and without
disabilities (Salend, Garrity, Duhaney & McLeskey, 1999; 2007). In this study, teacher
respondents identified how they believed co-teaching impacted students in their classrooms.
Again, the reviews of co-teaching and its impact on students were mixed and complex.
Generally, teachers believed co-teaching positively impacted students in many ways. However,
teachers also expressed concern with student placement and reaching the higher-level learners
with adequate rigor.

What are the benefits?

Twelve out of twelve teacher respondents indicated that co-teaching could be good or is
benefitting their students. The benefits named in the interviews ranged from removing the stigma
of special education to relating content to students' lives. Six benefits emerged in the review of
the teacher transcripts. Teachers indicated that more content, higher expectations, relatable
content, examples of good relationships among teachers, deeper student engagement, and better
behavior were the main benefits to students in a co-teaching classroom. These findings are
consistent with the literature that although student achievement results are mixed, researchers

notes that co-teaching provided academic and social benefits such as increased cooperation, better behaviors, increased socialization, and inter-student collaboration (Drietz, 2001; Carlson, 1996; Frisk, 2004; Hardy, 2001; Hazlett, 2001; Trent, 2001).

Teachers indicated that there are students who have been in resource room, for many years, who need to be challenged more, suggesting an inequitable experience for students in resource in terms of rigor in comparison to their peers in the inclusion. Co-teaching gives access to a more rigorous academic environment for special education students with mild to moderate disabilities, thus helping prepare them for careers or college. Students with more involved disabilities often need the transition services and daily living curriculum not offered in the co-teaching classroom.   Veronica described the co-teaching environment:

> I think we are helping kids manage academic skills really well. We are making things relevant as much as we can while keeping it all content-driven. We are really mastering skills while asking them to pull out information and apply it to other things. So, skills and content at the same time, where resources was more focused on life skills.

Veronica's discussion of how the co-teaching environment was helpful to building skills the success of students in college and career readiness. Co-teaching not only provides a more rigorous curriculum but is focused on skill-building.

In addition, several teachers discussed the removal of the stigma of the resource room as a social benefit to students, impacting their self-esteem and social experience in high school. A few special education teachers recalled that their students who were formerly in the resource

room as positively striving to achieve in the co-teaching classes. Others reported students fitting into the fabric of the larger school community as a benefit. Zeek said:

 I see how much kids enjoy the dynamic of the co-teaching classroom instead of being relegated to their own little resource world. I think they definitely benefit. They feel like they belong and fit in. I see it in their confidence they're building in the co-teaching class.

Andrea similarly said that she thought that co-teaching helped her special ed students challenge themselves, while helping them feel that they weren't working through the stigmatization of separation in the resource room. She said:

I just think that every year we are building higher and higher expectations. Rather than keeping them in a resource class and for that to kind of just, the students would make comments like 'Oh ,we're in resources so, it's fine." They just have this stigma that this is the way it should be. It's nice to pull them up and out and shake them up a bit.

Eight teacher participants and one administrator discussed student engagement and achievement as two benefits in the co-teaching classroom. John said of the students in his co-teaching class, "I don't know what it is, but the kids are really pushing themselves. They are all achieving. Even the kids who were struggling, now are doing better." Likewise, Marie, the Director of Guidance, described her observations of the impact of co-teaching on students grades, also indicating the positive impact on self-esteem and belonging to the larger school community. She stated:

There is absolutely a positive impact on students. And when I look at the grade of

the kids- now- do the kids feel better? I think they do. I really do. I think that, um,

special ed. students especially feel that they're part of a bigger body of students

and that really makes them feel so much better. Their self-esteem is raised

tremendously.

Teachers' perceptions of the positive impact of co-teaching on students included the positive relationship between teaching partners, the differences of teaching styles with in a classroom, the differences in personalities and expertise in the partnership, and the ability to serve more students. Andrea stated, " You know, the idea is, 'are we reaching everyone?'' I mean, how could we not? You know? Everyone who needs something from us, we're able to do that because there are two of us." All in all, the perceived positive impact of co-teaching on students, especially students with disabilities, are consistent with the body of research. However, co-teaching is not the panacea for all students with disabilities. As previously stated, students with more severe disabilities would benefit from functional daily living curriculum and transition services. Colin stated, "It (co-teaching) is great in theory, but it's not for all of our students. Some kids are really struggling. And I swear to you, they are never going to pass the PARCC, go to college or live without assistance, no matter how much inclusion skill building we do."

No resource, now what?

Although teachers indicated the generally positive impact on students, six out of six special education teachers, and two administrators, discussed how co-teaching is not the right placement for all students with disabilities. Park High School, while attempting to serve the 23% of the students with disabilities, no longer has the "safety net" of resource and has limited the LRE to one setting- inclusion with co-teaching. If students are not able to succeed in a co-

teaching environment, there is nowhere for them to go. All six special education teachers discussed the need for at least one section of resource room support per grade level. Because co-teaching cannot be a "one-size fits all" educational environment for all students, there was concern that some students, specifically some students with disabilities, were getting left behind in the co-teaching classes. Colin said:

> Co-teaching is beneficial to some, So, like in resource, some students were lacking the skills or motivation or behavior to be successful in inclusion, so, they got punted to resource. They're not cognitive, they don't belong in MD (Multiple Disabilities) but they also did not- because of their low IQ or their low skills or what not- they COULD NOT handle a inclusion environment. Those kids still exist. Those kids are failing miserably right now. And we have no place for them. They are just not cutting it in inclusion. They need a resource room. So, those kids are the ones we're not serving. Those ones who are just high enough and just choosing not to be in inclusion, those are the ones we are serving. We are serving the low skills, low comprehension. We are getting somewhere with them.

Although Colin's attitude was not entirely shared by the special ed co-teachers, they agreed that there needed to be an educational environment offered for every level of student ability. The argument is that by eliminating resource rooms, it's "sink or swim" for some of the most challenged students with disabilities which is not fair or equitable. Therefore, some of the students formerly placed in resource rooms were failing in the new co-teaching classes because of no fault of their own, but because the school narrowed the LRE to a single setting which might not reflect the breadth of their needs.

What's the impact on the higher-level student?

During the interviews, five out of the twelve teachers discussed their concern about the rigor for the highest performing students in the co-teaching class. Given the diverse abilities of students in a co-teaching class, the higher performing students were often left with a lack of challenging tasks or material resulting in boredom in the class, as reported by teacher participants. Veronica explained the situation for higher performing students in her co-teaching classroom. She stated:

> I think for the higher-level kids, it's tough. They've already got it and we let them
> sit there and read a book. It just stinks that we cannot challenge them enough bit I
> think for the most part, we are grabbing what middle and bottom tiers. But, the
> higher level kids are essential to it- if it wasn't for them the how thing would be
> dragged down to resource. They (administration) were talking about tracking
> those kids out-it wouldn't be inclusion- one giant resource program.

Andrea, along with four other teacher participants, expressed her commitment to work on further differentiating the instruction in the following year, in order to challenge the higher performing students appropriately. She stated:

> That is something that I definitely want to work on next year, with my partner.
> Because, the higher level students- would get bored, or would get side tracked
> because or they were done already. You still want them to challenge themselves.
> Keep them engaged, keep them on task, keep them challenged, while reaching all
> the other levels that we have.

Although co-teaching seems to have largely positive effects on the majority of students in the co-teaching environment, the talents and needs of both the lowest performers and the highest performers may not be effectively addressed. The ability to differentiate instruction, at all levels, is essential to maintain the rigor and support for all learners. Continued professional developmental around differentiation should be offered by administration to benefit all learners within classrooms.

Efficacy and the Co-teaching Experience

In order to understand the concept of collective efficacy as it pertains to the teacher participants and their motivations to co-teach, I used and collective efficacy survey adapted from Goddard & Hoy (2003). I received 12 anonymous surveys from all 12 teacher participants. In addition to the survey, I was able to observe two co-teaching pairs during their common prep time to record interaction and examine my observations for elements of the partnership. Lastly, when coding the interviews, I found that several respondents discussed the value of the collective effort, willingness, expertise and experience in the co-teaching classroom. Using the collective efficacy survey as an anchoring piece of data, I was able to extrapolate more information about the teacher participants' sense of ability to be successful not only as a teacher but also as a member of a team, to meet the needs of a diverse population of students.

Collective Efficacy through Interview Responses and Observation

Collective efficacy, according to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, is defined as a group's confidence in its abilities to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The concept of collective efficacy was much more observable in the structure and organization of the study. The interview questions for teacher participants were intended to delve into the co-teaching

experience leading to a natural discussion of combined effort of the co-teaching pairs. In their responses, several teachers discussed the mutual effort and the perception of success in the co-teaching environment. Zeek described his perception of collective efficacy and discussed the strengths of the co-teaching in the classroom. He stated:

> We do a good job of it- relating to the students. We're good at bringing the content to their level and relating it to their lives. We know what their interests are and it's great having two adults in the room with two different types of experience. Because maybe if I'm not catching their attention, he steps in and is like 'Oh, here's a different way of doing it.'

Andrea also discussed her motives and how she perceived collective efficacy with her partner as it impacted her experience and the experiences of her students. She stated:

> I know for myself, I want to do a great job. I want to be a really influential teacher. And I think the two of us can really make that happen. I definitely think two minds are better than one. Where she stumbles, I pick up. Or when I stumble, she does. Sometimes, your just by yourself and in your classroom and you don't know how to explain things differently or how to deliver the message to the students. And you know, with two people in the room, it's like almost 100% of the time you are reaching everyone.

During the course of this study, four teachers (two pairs) gave me permission to observe their co-planning period in order to collect more information about the relationships among co-teachers, the division of labor and interactions overall. In early June 2016, I was able to observe Andrea and her counterpart, Katherine, and Angelica and her counterpart, Christina. Both pairs

demonstrated a camaraderie and a system of shared responsibility, suggesting a confidence in one another to get the job at hand completed.

Andrea and Katherine had their common planning time in the middle of the day. They sat facing each other in the teachers' lounge, one on the couch and one at the computer. The two chatted about the two classes they just taught, what worked and what didn't. They discussed the division of grading and began to grade papers from their classes. As individual student papers came up, each teacher asked for the other's input on what is fair, not for everyone, but Andrea tended to ask about general education students' papers, to make sure she was grading fairly, and Katherine asked about the special education students' papers to also make sure she was being fair. They asked for each other's input and suggestions of what to look for. Throughout the grading process, their ease with each other in terms of questions, shared concerns, and points enjoyment were visible. At one point, Andrea asked Katherine about a student who was having an issue with the concept being taught. " _____ is really struggling still. What else should we do?" There was a 10-minute discussion as the pair brainstormed and came up with a plan together. As the period came to a close, they were joking with me about their dysfunction. This pair not only seemed to have a great rapport and relationship, but they also seamlessly shared the tasks associated with their co-teaching assignment. They were both mutually invested in the discussion of delivering instruction and modified grading for individual students. They had confidence in one another to successfully grade, plan, and improve instruction for the following lessons.

I met with Christina and Angelica during their 6th period common planning time. They had a similar rapport and discussion as the previous team. In their classroom, they sat facing each other, Angelica in a student desk, Christina in her teacher desk. The conversation began

with light-hearted quips. Along with their ease in talking about how to serve students, the teams had an easy rapport that included a shared sense of humor and enjoyment of working together. Christina made the comment to me that " She's always like this" while she laughed. When it came down to doing work, the two discussed who would do what during the period. It was decided that Christina would organize the class into reading groups and Angelica would plan the concepts to cover for the next two days. The conversation was collaborative, as Christina asked for Angelica's input on the reading groups for students and Angelica discussed with Christina if she thought they were being too ambitious with the timing and amount of content. The collaboration was equal, respectful, and fun. Both appeared to lean on the expertise of the other in order to plan and execute the best lessons for their students.

During both observations, there were a few things that emerged to suggest a high level of collective efficacy among pairs. Both pairs asked their partners for advice and/or input on the individual task they were working on, suggesting that each of the four co-teachers had confidence in their counterpart's opinion and wanted their input. Secondly, the division of labor that each pair had, seemed to play to the individual strengths of each teacher. For example, Angelica, the content area teacher, would plan the content and Christina, the special education teacher, determined the pacing. However, there was deference to each teacher's expertise in their discussion. The observations gave a window into collective efficacy in practice and beyond the survey. Here, the practice of co-teaching, when given choice, shows teacher partnerships built on willingness to make the experience successful for both students and teachers, belief in each other's expertise, and mutual respect.

Collective Efficacy Survey: What the Participants Really Think

The most telling and illustrative piece of evidence of where the participants stood on their collective efficacy was the survey. The survey, adapted from Goddard and Hoy (2003) with permission (see Appendix), is an eighteen-question survey that the teacher participants completed anonymously and voluntarily. Many of the questions not only give clear insight into the collective efficacy reported by the individual partners in the co-teaching teams, but also allowed me to observe the respondent's own belief in their abilities to be a contributing member of the team to meet the goals of co-teaching. Again, all teacher participants completed and returned the surveys. The following is an analysis of the responses (See Table 1).

All participants unanimously responded "Strongly Disagree" to the following statement: *As a team, we don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning*. This response indicates that, as a team, they were equipped with the skills, knowledge, expertise, and willingness to meet the needs of all students. This response clearly indicates that collective efficacy was present in every member of every co-teaching pair.

Likewise, teachers responded to the statement: *We have what it takes to get the children to learn* . Four teachers responded that they strongly agreed; eight responded that they agreed. The fact that every teacher participant believed they had what it took to help students learn and could do it as a team, once again shows collective efficacy and the recognition of it in each of the individuals in co-teaching pairs.

One of the questions on the survey stated: *My co-teacher and I truly believe every child can learn.* Of the 12 respondents, three strongly agreed, four agreed and five somewhat agreed. Likewise, in response to the statement, *As co-teachers, we are confident we will be able to*

motivate our students, two strongly agreed, five agreed and five somewhat agreed. Along the same line of questioning, when asked *As co-teachers we are able to get through to the most difficult students,* two strongly agreed, three agreed, six somewhat agreed, and only one somewhat disagreed. The responses from these three statements demonstrate that 11 out of 12 teachers shared the belief that they had the skills and competencies as a co-teaching pair to meet the needs of their students.

The next set of survey responses had more mixed responses about collective efficacy. In response to the statement: *If a child doesn't want to learn, as teachers we give up,* nine teachers strongly disagreed, one disagreed, 1 somewhat disagreed, and 1 somewhat agreed. 11 out of 12 teachers disagreed that, as co-teachers, they did no give up on students who were unmotivated or missing the competencies to learn. The responses suggest that the teachers in this survey are committed to meeting the needs of their students, even the most challenging.

Also, teachers responded to the statement: *If a child doesn't learn something the first time, we will try another way.* Seven teachers strongly agreed, three agreed, and two somewhat agreed. All teachers agreed that they were committed to trying to have all children in their co-teaching classroom learn. This shows the willingness to work towards a common goal, regardless of setbacks.

Another interesting set of responses came from the statement: *As co-teachers, we are skilled in various methods of teaching.* Seven teachers strongly agreed, four teachers agreed, and one somewhat agreed. All teachers stated that they were largely capable of teaching a diverse body of students with the collective skills they had as a co-teaching team. The responses of the following survey statement were somewhat consistent with the above: *We are well-prepared to teach the subject we are assigned.* Seven teachers strongly agreed, four agreed, and one

somewhat agreed. Again, all teachers felt at least somewhat to very prepared to teach a diverse group of students and had the skills to do so. Also, the responses to the following statement were a near consensus, *As co-teachers we do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems*. Nine teachers said they strongly disagreed and three teachers said they disagreed. Once again, all teachers disagreed with the statement, meaning that they believed they did have the collective skills to deal with disciplinary issues that come up in a co-teaching class. However, the following statement had more variance in the answers - *We fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods*. Nine teachers strongly disagreed; two disagreed; and one somewhat agreed. I am not sure about the outlier here, but this may be a reflection of one's feelings about one's co-teaching partner.

Table 2

Triangulation of Survey Data of Collective Efficacy

Survey Questions	Response Scale and %	Interview Codes linking the quotes and the survey questions	Representative Interview Data
As a team, we don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning	*Agree:* 12---100%	Efficacy, collective efficacy, teacher relationship	"We know what we are doing." - Bob
We have what it takes to get the children to learn	*Agree:* 12---100%	Collective efficacy, Teacher Relationship	"With two people in the classroom, it like almost 100% of the time you're reaching everyone?" - Andrea
My co-teacher and I truly believe every child can learn	Agree:12---100%	Teacher Relationship, Choice, Collective efficacy	"We are both committed to this- we signed up and we both believe the other one is a resource"- Amy
As co-teachers we are able to get through to the most difficult students	Agree:11---92%	Challenges in Co-teaching, Student Placement, Collective Efficacy	"It's definitely been challenging, but sometimes you see a kid who was in resource get it. And they do, even higher level stuff. And when they do, that's when you realize this can work." -Christina
If a child doesn't learn, as teachers we give up	*Disagree:* 11---92%	Teacher Relationship, Collective efficacy, Roles	"She tries as many strategies as she knows, then I do my thing. It's like we know we have more fire-power…"- Katherine
If a child doesn't learn something the first time, we will try another way	*Agree:*12---100%	Challenges of co-teaching, Roles	"She's been doing this for 20 years, so, when I come in, she might not have seen these kind of kids before, so I can modify and see if they get *Hamlet* when I work with them in a small group."- Colin
As co-teachers, we are skilled in various methods of teaching	*Agree:*11---92%	Teacher relationship, roles, division of labor	"Sometimes we use the computer, sometimes we are break out into small groups, sometimes we do different groups based on levels. He takes one and I take the other. We get it done."-Zeek "Sometimes I am doing it one way and she's doing it another. And some of the students like the way I do it and some like the way she's doing it."- Andrea
We are well-prepared to teacher the subjects we are assigned	*Agree:*12---100%	Collective efficacy	"I mean, we're all highly qualified and I know he knows what he's doing. And so do I." -Jack
As co-teachers, we do not have the skills to deal with disciplinary problems	*Disgaree:*12---100%	Teacher relationship, Roles, Impact on students, Challenges of co-teaching	"I think discipline has been challenging. But, it's like good cop, bad cop. He plays good cop, sometimes, and I play bad cop and vice versa. The kids know, so it's gotten better." - Zeek
We fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods	*Disagree:*11---92%	Collective efficacy, Teacher relationship	"Ant the co-teachers are doing a fantastic job working together. They have competencies that overlap and some that don't but, they are working well together on the whole. And the kids benefit."- Mike

Survey Questions	Response Scale and %	Interview Codes linking the quotes and the survey questions	Representative Interview Data
As co-teachers, we are confident we will be able to motivate our students	*Agree:*12---100%	Collective Efficacy, Teacher relationship, Impact on Students, Personality	"We're like a comedy routine! And they're engaged. They like seeing us interact. Even if they don't want to- they pay attention."- Andrea

Summary

In examining the responses to this survey and using interview as further evidence, the twelve teacher participants clearly indicated that in many areas, they as individuals and as partners believed in their own and collective efficacy. All of them stated that they believed that they had the skills, confidence, and will not to give up. Eleven out of twelve believe that they had the skills to get through to even the most difficult students and would not give up until they broke through to the students. These are powerful statements of collective efficacy. Combined with the stated motives to become teachers and to sign up for co-teaching, as well as evidenced by the interview data pulled to triangulated the survey data, it seems as though the teachers in this study believed in themselves as educators to meet the needs of their students and were further fortified by the skills and confidence in their co-teaching partners.

In juxtaposing the responses to the surveys and the anecdotes from the interviews about individuals and their relationships with their partners, it appears that teachers in this study not only had a very positive experience in the co-teaching classroom, but their willingness to work together, through challenges in the classroom and in the relationship, through partnerships of mutual respect and good communication, demonstrate that the ability for the teachers to choose either participation and/or their partners played a major role in their experience, their collective efficacy and their overall satisfaction with their co-teaching experience. Almost all of the teacher participants said they would like to co-teach again. Four indicated that they would like to co-

teach with their own partners again. Three out of six special education teachers discussed their desire to co-teach again, but also to teach at least one section of their own class, while general education teachers were allowed to..

Administrative Influence in Co-Teaching

In my conversations and interviews with teacher participants and administrators, there were a few areas of disconnect with regards to the perception of co-teaching. On the one hand, across the board, teachers and administrators believed that choice for teachers was very important. Yet, they only allowed choice for half the teachers. They stated they believed in choice, but at the micro level of action, they mandated teachers, reinforcing the top down approach often found in K-12 education administration. Also, the common planning time was decisively an important support that the administration considered fundamental to the success of the teams, as did the teachers. However, the elements of communication, support, and student placement within the co-teaching classes drew very mixed and sometimes conflicting conclusions, even among administrators.

Goals and Motivation for Co-teaching

According to the interview transcripts of Janice, Superintendent of Park High School, there were a few reasons cited for the removal of resource rooms and the implementation of the co-teaching program. She spoke of low PARCC scores among the special education students as the primary and most frequently mentioned reason in her interview. She mentioned, as an additional rational, that due to the lack of rigor in the resource classroom, taught by special education teachers lacking the qualifications, the PARCC scores were very low. Janice stated:

I realized that our academic scores were not where they needed to be, and, in terms of, teaching students I quickly saw that, we had resource teachers that did not always share the content area information to the level that the content experts in general ed people had- and these students that were in resource were responsible for raking the PARCC- and so they didn't have the opportunity to hear the vocabulary as it is taught by somebody how's a content expert? Ok? We were definitely not meeting the needs of the special ed population.

Furthermore, Janice made a few claims that were not supported by all of the data. For example, she claimed that the students in the resource room classes were required to take PARCC. According to discussion with the Director of Special Services, 85% of special education students who were previously in resource classes were not required to take the test or the scores were not taken into account for a graduation requirement, as per their IEPs or 504 Plans. Secondly, Janice claimed that the resource room teachers were not content experts. That claim is erroneous. Every special education teacher employed at Park High School was highly qualified in their content area at the time of this study. Every special ed co-teach had a degree in their content area, was certified in their content area, and had special education certification. Therefore, it was unclear as to why these positions, not supported by data, were used to justify co-teaching and the removal of resources. Janice also suggested that co-teaching was more of a "real-world" experience for our special education population and the job of the school was to prepare the students for the real world. Stating that resource classes were not representative of the "real-world," Marie, the director of guidance and Mike, the director of special services, echoed Janice's motives to remove resource rooms and set up co-teaching as the PARCC scores were low and there was a perceived lack of rigor in the resource classroom.

Mike discussed why the resource classes were being eliminated and co-teaching was implemented, all at the discretion and decision of the superintendent, without his input, once again, exhibiting the power structure of who has power to and who has power over which individuals, even in administration. It appeared through Mike's responses that, on some levels, the decisions over special education were made in a silo, by the superintendent, without input. He described the input he had in the implementation and initial decision-making process. It was clear in the interview, that Mike was kept out of all decisions about special education students. However, he did discuss what he believed to be the goals and motives in implementing co-teaching and doing away with resource classes, and they were consistent with the expressed goals by the superintendent - to improve PARCC scores and provide a more rigorous environment to assure students have the preparation to be successful in the "real-world." Mike expressed dissatisfaction with the decision to remove resources to improve PARCC scores for the most needy population. He stated, "The quest, I think, um, unfortunately was more driven, by PARCC scores and the problem is I don't like test scores dictating what we provide as education." Mike's frustration in using PARCC as the rationale for eliminating all resource was anchored in the special education law; as he stated:

> Well, the code (special education code) requires a full continuum. So, you need to
> provide everything, the escape route (resource), the easy route, the gen ed route.
> So, what [Park] is trying to do is dicey in that we aren't providing all pathways
> for special ed students by removing resource.

Janice addressed the "risk" in removing resource rooms, suggesting she knew it was a controversial decision. When I further asked her about the students with disabilities who were struggling in the inclusive, co-taught classrooms, she said, " I hesitate to open up a resource

room, because I don't want to be going back [to]the mentality of a safety net, a resource room being a safety net. A classroom is a good safety-net if it's a good classroom." This reference to resource room as a 'safety net' does not reflect federal law IDEA which specifically describes a continuum of services for students with disabilities. The inclusive classroom may be the ideal start point, but the LRE concept is recognized because some students might need different supports and environments.

Interestingly enough, both Janice and Mike mentioned the financial burden that the school district was facing, and both alluded that co-teaching provided a cost-effective measure to provide more rigor in the classroom, with more students in a classroom. Resource classes were capped at ten, while general education classes were capped at 27. According to Mike, the director of special education, "Providing students with two teachers in a classroom, kept the student/teacher ratio down on the state report card."

Ultimately, improving PARCC scores, improving rigor, providing students with real-world instruction, and fiduciary responsibilities emerged as the motivations of the administration to transition Park special education students from a resource room program to inclusive, co-teaching classes. Whatever the myriad reasons, co-teaching appeared to be understood as a concept the administration was largely behind philosophically.

Administrative Motivations for Choice

In most of the research on co-teaching, one of the most salient findings is that teachers should be given the choice of participation. At Park, in the planning and implementation of the first year of the co-teaching program, the administration allowed teachers to choose to participate and/or select their partners. I was interested in understanding what made the administration make

that decision, given that they had right of assignment for all of the instructional staff. I came to understand from my interview with the Director of Guidance, that there was a co-teaching expert called in from a neighboring district, that implemented a co-teaching program in her home district. Janice asked the co-teaching expert to speak to the administration about what to expect and how to implement the new program. One suggestion, consistent with the existing research, was to allow teachers to volunteer. So, when I asked Janice why she decided to send out a survey, she said that she wanted to know what teachers' thoughts were on co-teaching, she wanted to gather information and see who was "brave enough" to take on the challenge. Janice went on to say that with a new initiative, she wanted teacher-buy in to the co-teaching program, and that was why she allowed for choice. When I asked her why she allowed teachers to choose their partners, she discussed an organic partnership, again referring to the "marriage" of co-teaching partnerships. She reflected on her own experience in the classroom and used that to make the decision, stating:

> I really did not think it was revolutionary or unique to allow people to, to make a
>
> choice of who they were going to work with. I'm going to be a room with
>
> someone for this amount of time, ya know. See if you can find a partner that could
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> work with you and then build from there. I think part of it too was because I was a
>
> teacher for 22 years, I know what goes on in classrooms. I know what happens
>
> when personalities of adults don't match the need each. That effects kids.

 Lastly, Janice expressed how she believed choice impacted the experience of the co-teachers, " I think that choice, it took away so many issues that could have arose," an observation expressed by many co-teachers, as well. Janice's embrace of choice on at least some level, along with her

comments drawing on her own experience in the classroom, demonstrated that she understood that the relative success of the new co-teaching initiative may have hinged on choice.

Mike discussed his view of the decision to allow teachers to have choice suggesting that staff had "investment" in the new co-teaching program because they were allowed choice of partner and/or participation. He addressed the general education teachers' attitudes, discussing how surprised he was that they were so receptive to having another teacher in the class and a different population of students to teach. He attributed the general ed teachers' positivity to the concept of choice. Again, the idea that teachers had investment in their assignments was addressed at length in the teacher interviews and every teacher said choice or partner and/or participating positively impacted their experience.

Maria discussed what the co-teaching expert talked to the administration about in terms of implementation of co-teaching, like, having a survey, co-planning, choice of partner, and choice of participation in order to buy-in to the goals of the co-teaching initiative. She stated that the take away points of the co-teaching expert's advice for implementation was:

> This is not a punishment, it's a choice. You had to make sure that they [teachers] bought into the fact that it was partnership and who they want to work with- Not everyone is cut out to work with everybody else. So, if you have an academic relationship with somebody- why not put those two people together?

When asked how she thought co-teaching was going, as the first year came to a close, choice was the main reason she believed the first year was successful. Marie stated, "I think choice made people feel validated and I think that when people feel validated and feel heard, they'll do much better."

Marilyn, supervisor of humanities, shared the same philosophy about choice. She discussed her perception of the teachers involved and how choice played a role. She discussed the success of the co-teaching program in relation to teacher choice and thereby willingness to commit to doing what is best for the students. She said:

> I think it's successful because of the people involved wanting to do what's best for the kids. It's the teachers. I think the willingness of people to be like "Alright, let's try to do something here" I think willingness is what it's all about.

Marilyn's identification of willingness of teachers to meet the needs of their students in a new and challenging environment, touches on the efficacy of the teachers involved and mirrors many comments and insights by the co-teachers interviewed about their relationships, as illustrated by Zeek's commentary, " We are both working here for the students. We're using all we got."

Implementation of the Co-teaching Program

In my interviews with all participants, both teachers and administrators, shared the sentiment that the co-teaching initiative was put in place very quickly. In conversations that I had with two other directors of special services at schools with co-teaching programs, both said the program implementation should take about 2 years of planning and preparation. Park High School sent out a survey in January of 2015 and began co-teaching in September 2015. Janice admitted that "what's happening here is happening so quickly" and the co-teaching program was identified as one of those things. Marylin Bethesda said the implementation was very rushed and "slapped together". "I would have liked to seen it formed before people got involved -but, I supposed sometimes you just have to jump off the cliff." This sentiment was echoed by all of the teacher participants in this study. The initiative was quickly and carelessly implemented.

Special education teachers felt that after their meeting with the superintendent, where Janice told them they were not qualified to teach their content areas and they would be co-teaching in the Spring of 2015, everything having to do with co-teaching happened so quickly. The feedback from the teacher participants, in general, was that the entire co-teaching initiative was rushed and went into effect too quickly. Teachers suggested that it would have been helpful to the students and the teachers if the administration decided to implement co-teaching and eliminate resource rooms one grade level or subject at a time, with a gradual restructuring of the curriculum into units with resources for the co-teaching pairs to modify and to add rigor.

In terms of informing parents of both special education student and general education students, the administration fell short. Mike Peterson went to each of the sending districts to inform rising 9th grade parents of the changes in their students' educational environment. He was met with much resistance from the sending districts' Child Study Teams (CST).

> They weren't happy about the change to inclusion. But, I had to sell them. For the parents, I basically asked them what their child needed. And I set up a plan to provide all of those services to the students in a co-teaching environment.

For the parents of special education students already enrolled at Park High School, it was a different task. According to Mike, of the 200 or so IEP meeting scheduled, where parents were to be informed about the changes, only about 40 or so parents showed. "And my CST had to talk to the parents. Most were receptive. I would come into the meeting and ask the parents about what their concerns were. They were mostly upset that the students would have different teachers." Mike shared that he assuaged any fears by telling parent that the students would have the same teachers they had for resource, in a co-teaching classroom. "We only had an issue with 2 sets of

parents. And we resolved it. In both cases, the students were given the services they needed and the parents signed off on it."

For general education parents, the administration made the decision to not inform parents. General education students were randomly placed in co-teaching classes by Marie and only when students showed up to their classes on the first day and saw two teachers, they were aware that there was something different. Several teachers addressed questions about the two teachers with their classes. Christina described the discussion as touchy.

> We basically told them that two teachers are better than one and the school was combining classes. We didn't want to raise hell with the inclusion kids and we didn't want to call out the IEP students.

Teachers were given no guidance on how to handle the situation. Two general teachers described how they said that they felt like they couldn't discuss the new co-teaching program with the kids. Katherine said she felt like she was "sort of told not to bring attention to [co-teaching]". When I asked directly how she was "sort of told" she mentioned that when she brought it up in a department meeting, she was told to "not make a big deal about it" with the kids. Andrea said that "we want to be honest with the students, but we were basically scared to say anything too bold." The teachers often expressed a feeling of fear of punishment by the administration when anything was done or said that displeased them.

Administrative Communication with Co-Teaching Staff

Eleven out of twelve of the teacher participants expressed concern over the lack of administrative communication and involvement with co-teaching. Almost every teacher participant said "communication? What communication?" in response to the request to describe the communication between teachers and administration. Colin discussed his frustration at the lack of communication and perceived lack of value he felt as a special education teacher and a co-teacher. He stated:

> There's no communication between the administration and the faculty. None whatsoever. There's no trust in leadership. I don't feel the administration views us as anything special or important. I feel like were just replaceable cogs and it doesn't matter who's in the classroom.

Colin voiced his frustration by discussing the meeting where the special education faculty were told they would no longer be resource room teachers because of their lack of content expertise. Likewise, Zeek described what his perception of the communication between the co-teaching faculty and administration was as "pretty much non-existent"; he also suggested the need for feedback from the administration on the co-teaching pair performance as a necessary form of communication, " I mean, I guess we didn't get that much [communication]from them. And no feedback. I guess that would be a good thing too, because we want to know if what we're doing works."

To the point of administrative advocate in charge of co-teaching, nine of the teacher participants expressed a frustration that the co-teaching teams had nowhere to bring their

concerns, issues or questions about the new program, strategies, or best practices, as the administrative team refused to name someone as head of co-teaching. Angelica suggested:

> We should have someone in charge of co-teaching. I just wish maybe, if they had someone who's familiar with co-teaching and was a supervisor who was always available- Who's overseeing our program? There's no chain of command.

Mike was the acting and unofficial administrative advocate, but was refused the title, leaving co-teachers without leadership. "The problem that I have now is that I really feel that I should be in charge of co-teaching. And it's not really endorsed that way- So, there's this ambiguity of who's in charge. And I think part of the ambiguity is control." Mike petitioned the administration for more communication with the co-teaching teams and has advocated for the pairs. He attempted to keep communication consistent with the co-teaching teams, but was identified by the teacher participants as the only administrator to attempt to do so.

Dr. Janice Carmelo discussed her philosophy when implementing a new program, noting that a new program has to be "messy." She also used the newness of the program to justify her lack of communication with the co-teaching staff. She stated:

> I felt like I gave you all the freedom not to worry about observations and to explore this new experience. Not to have administration checking to see what model you're using, how are you doing this, how are you doing that. As long as kids were being educated the only way you can learn something new is to have it messy. But, change is messy! So, I've stepped back and let everybody get messy with their thing this year.

Admittedly, Janice did not mandate observations or provide any feedback and took a "hands-off" approach, leaving the co-teachers feeling very isolated and without an administrative advocate officially in charge and overseeing co-teaching. Janice's comments indicated her removal from the day-to-day operations of the co-teaching, suggesting she was helping the co-teaching teams "get messy" so they can figure it out themselves. She discussed that the traditional oversight of the teams was not something she was interested in doing- just as long as "kids were being educated," she seemed fine with her lack of involvement at any level with the co-teaching teams."

Administrative Supports

Throughout my research, I was interested in the concept of proxy efficacy which is the reliance on others to act in one's interests to secure desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977, 2000). This concept allows for the understanding of co-teacher's perspectives of the administrative support of co-teaching. Also, proxy efficacy lends itself to exploring the motivations of administration in implementing choice in co-teaching, as allows for the understanding of the interplay between teachers' experiences in co-teaching and the administrative goals in the implementation of co-teaching. Aside from choice, the administration provided co-teaching teams with some supports in order to help prepare them for the new programmatic implementation. First, the administration made the choice to follow the recommendation of the co-teaching expert, to give each co-teaching team common planning time. The superintendent also hired a Professor-in-residence from a local university to assist the co-teaching teams with their practice. Between March and June, there were three professional development opportunities outside of the school that were available to some, not all, of the co-teachers; one was a workshop run by co-teaching expert, Marylin Friend. The administration also organized small groups of

teachers to travel to other districts that had co-teaching programs in order to gather information and find out from other co-teaching teams what works and what doesn't. Despite the very short timeline set by the administration for implementation, they provided several opportunities to prepare the teachers for the new challenge of co-teaching. The review of the administrative supports was mixed, with one exception; common planning, which was discussed by the participants as extremely helpful to the success of the co-teaching team. However, the majority of teachers felt that the supports provided did not help prepare them to take on the challenges of co-teaching.

Common Planning

In my interviews with the teacher participants, all teachers said that the common planning, sometimes called PLC, co-teaching prep period, or common planning was fundamental to the growth and success of the co-teaching teams. Marie said of common planning:

> You have to have that common planning time! You have to be able to talk about it. It was really tough to schedule, actually a nightmare. But, the teams needed it, or else there isn't going to be meaningful interaction and reflection between two people, and it would bleed into the classroom and impact the students. We had to have it. Really!

Mike and Marilyn also agreed that common planning was essential to the success of the co-teaching teams, and both noted the increased camaraderie between co-teaching partners.

The teacher participants had a lot to say about the importance of common planning to the success of their co-teaching experiences. All teacher participants noted how essential common

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planning was to the success of co-teaching team. The administration's decision to schedule common planning time for teachers was the most valuable support provided to the co-teaching teams, according to the interview data.

Professional Development, Professor-in Residence- Why Bother?

I was curious to find out if the teachers felt supported given the attempts by the administration to help the co-teaching teams transition into the classroom. Ultimately, 10 out of 12 teachers felt that the administration attempted support, but most of their attempts were without value. Two major supports the administration provided for the co-teaching teams were three professional development opportunities before September 2015 and a contracted consultant from a near-by university called the Professor-in-Residence (P-I-R) to help teachers transition into the co-teaching environment. The PIR proved to have almost no value for the teacher participants. The professional development was considered of little value to the teachers. Andrea described her thoughts on administrative support as lacking in value, especially regarding the P-I-R and the professional development. She said:

> I feel like there was a mild attempt to support us, you know, professional
> development. I really didn't gain anything from that. I feel like they got us a P-I-
> R, I don't really know what that did for us. We didn't really see her. We kept
> telling her "Come to our class, give us feedback! Just Come!" and she never
> came. We needed more support in the classroom. Ya know, weekly feedback
> from administration. Or hold a professional development once a month with your
> partner. You know, more hands on, more strategies. And not strategies like "Oh
> you could do parallel teaching." Don't tell me things that I could read. Like teach
> me things that I can actually use.

Andrea's comments were synonymous with nine other teacher responses. Ultimately, the professional development opportunities were a waste of time; the PIR was not present and provided no feedback; and the teams and individuals felt that they needed more communication, feedback and support from the administration.

In contrast, Jack and Bob both voiced general contentment about the administrative supports provided. As cited early, Johnson said the administration provided them with all the supports that they needed, including professional development and common planning.

> They did as good a job as they could with the directive from the superintendent. I think as far as the director of special ed and director of guidance and department heads, I think they were very adaptive and lenient towards what we were trying to accomplish. They gave us all the resources we needed. That being said, it was put in place in a very short amount of time, it put a tremendous amount of pressure on the teachers.

It is worth noting that after both of these interviews, I made Research Comments (RC) mentioning the seemingly "canned" responses of the interviewees. I thought in each interview, Johnson and Hamilton were telling me what I wanted to hear and, moreover, not trying to be critical of the administration or say anything controversial. I say that, as it has been my experience in conversation predating the interviews, that both felt differently about the administrative supports among some other topics covered in the interviews. Interestingly enough, Jack did allude to the fact the co-teaching initiative was put together quickly and that because of the fast turnaround, he and presumably his partner felt pressure to perform well and to be successful as a team. It was difficult to perform as co-teachers, with a new prep, a new partner, a new student population, and little support and training in a short amount of time.

Proxy Efficacy and the Survey Responses

There were two questions on the collective efficacy survey that specifically targeted the perceived proxy efficacy at Park High School. The results from the proxy efficacy questions on the collective efficacy survey were mixed and supported the interview responses of the co-teachers regarding administrative supports. In response to the statement *The quality of administrative support here really facilitates the co-teaching and learning process,* ten out of twelve teachers responded that they either strongly disagree, disagree, or somewhat disagree. Only two teachers responded that they somewhat agree with the statement. Similarly, the responses to the following question were also mixed; *Co-teaching teams need more training to know how to deal with these students*, eight teachers responded either strongly agree, agree or somewhat agree. Four teachers responded that they somewhat disagree or disagree. Overall, the teacher participants did not feel strongly supported by the administrations as evidenced through their perceived lack of communication, professional development lacking value, no feedback and unclear role of the professor in residence.

Table 3

Triangulated Survey Data Proxy Efficacy Questions

Survey Questions	Response Scale/ %**	Interview Codes Linking the interview quotes with survey questions	Representative Interview Data
The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes co-teaching very difficult	*Agree:*8---66% *Disgaree:*4---34%	Lack of administrative support, Proxy Efficacy	"You know you can get the material and literature about co-teaching, but without experiencing it, training is useless"- Jack
The quality of administrative support here really facilitates the co-teaching and learning process	*Disagree:*10---83% *Agree:*2---17%	Lack of Administrative support, Proxy Efficacy	"I don't think there has been any support at all. Professional development was completely useless."- Colin "The administration did as good a job as they could. They gave us all the resources they needed"- Jack
Co-teaching teams need more training to know how to deal with these students.	*Agree*: 8---66% *Disagree:*4---34%	Lack of Administrative Support, Administrative Communication, Proxy Efficacy	"We needed more feedback from the administration or give us materials that we can access ourselves to help us out."- Angelica "We needed more training from the administration, more support, professional development. "- Andrea

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the ways in which teachers experienced co-teaching when given choice and how self and collective efficacy and administrative supports influenced their experiences. In order to fully understand each teacher's experience, it was important for me to understand what motivated them to become teachers and what motivated them to sign up for co-teaching. Participant narratives highlighted each teacher's backstory giving insight into their personal beliefs, principles, as well as influences, motivators and view of current employment.

Their individual narratives gave context to and grounds the findings of this study, especially regarding collective efficacy of co-teaching teams and their experience in co-teaching when given choice, as well as their perceptions of administrative supports through the co-teaching process. I present that individual narratives in chapter five.

Exploring each teacher's story and examining their experiences in co-teaching allowed me to see how deeply choice affects teachers' experiences, in the way they feel valued, in the agency they feel they have in their work, and their positive co-teaching relationships. The connection between choice and efficacy began to emerge as teachers demonstrated the faith they had in their co-teachers' abilities, their perceptions of their own abilities, and in their co-teaching partnership. Teacher narratives also demonstrated how administration can positively impact co-teaching teams, by allowing for choice, common planning periods, or negatively impact co-teaching by lack of communication, no chain of command, and poor professional development.

Lastly, this chapter demonstrates that teachers, regardless of the negative impact of lack of administrative support, had very positive experiences co-teaching, due to choice and efficacy of the teams and the institution. All teacher participants said that they would like to co- teach again and with their chosen partner.

CHAPTER V
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Participants

According to Creswell (2009), purposeful sampling best helps the researcher understand the case being studied. Park High School, in 2015-2016, had 12 co-teaching teams, 24 teachers in total, with 16 of the 24 volunteering to participate in the collaborative model. Of those 16 who volunteered, 12 met the participant criteria of : 1) voluntarily participated / signed up on survey, 2) were working with their chosen partner, 3) were present in the building for the training, discussions, and professional development on co-teaching (not out on leave), and 4) were experts??? in one of the core content areas (English, Math, Science, History). There were also four administrators who agreed to participate in this study.

Six general education teachers volunteered and fit the above criteria. They taught English, History, Math and Science. There were six special education teachers who volunteered to be a part of this study and fit the above criteria. The ages of the 12 teacher participants ranged from 27-61; six were female; and six were male. As the researcher, I did not participate in this study, nor did my co-teaching partner, due to biases and undue pressure on my partner. At the time of this study, the participants had teaching experience ranging from 5 years to 31 years. Two teachers had graduate degrees, five were in school working on their graduate degrees in education or education leadership; and all highly qualified (certified) in their content area according to NCLB (2001) regulations. Only one teacher had prior co-teaching experience and it was in another district. Each teacher had little training on co-teaching prior to this study and their employment at Park. Some teachers had coursework in their education classes covering the

inclusion strategy. The school provided three professional days for training, using a Professor in Residence from a neighboring university to avail herself to the co-teaching teams for observations throughout the year. The administrators who participated in this study were the Superintendent, the supervisor of humanities, the director of guidance, and the director of special services. At the time of the study, the superintendent was ending both her second year in district and as a superintendent; the director of guidance had 15 years in district; and both the supervisor of humanities and the director of special services had 20 years in district.

It should be noted that, while interviewing the participants, many expressed a feeling of fear when discussing the administration. Recently, the staff began feeling that the culture of the school had become more punitive and during my interviews, I had to assure teachers of their confidentiality and anonymity. Some of the interviewees' responses, especially when concerning questions about the administration, often began with some trepidation by the participant. Two participants, in particular, had very clear negative opinions in some of our previous conversations throughout the year, but were very positive about the administration's communication and supports of co-teaching on record, during the interview. I was unclear how to address the obvious disparity in their responses and what I knew to be their real sentiments, when not participating in a study.

In a case study, the researcher is responsible for generating a picture of the case, then producing a portrayal of the case for other to see (Stake, 2005). As the researcher, I attempted to understand the participants and to do so is to also understand their journey to becoming an educator and to examine how their motivations and experiences may have shaped the findings of this study. I used the data I collected through interviews, survey responses, and observations to create a descriptively rich narrative on each participant, in order to flesh out their background

story and help understand educators' motivations and experiences. Researcher comments (RC) reflect my thoughts before and after the interview process and provide a structured method of addressing my own biases.

The following narratives are organized by co-teaching pairs, of which there were ten. The last two teachers did not have partners participating in the study.

Teacher Participants

Angelica

At the time of this study, Angelica had been a general education teacher at Park High School for six years. She is a native of the tri-state area and comes from a family with many educators. Her grandmother, three aunts, and three cousins are all educators. However, the most influential person in her decision to become a teacher was her 10th grade English teacher. She loved her teacher and decided she wanted to do the same thing. Before entering into the field of education, Angelica attended a local, private college, majoring in education and English. Upon graduation, she secured a teaching position in an urban, private high school in North Jersey. She taught 9th-12th grade English at this high school for 7 years. When the school was forced to close, Angelica applied to many other high schools in the area, both private and public. She went on several interviews, but received no job offers. In October of that year, she received a call for an interview at HVHS. The position was to replace a veteran teacher who was retiring suddenly. So, after the interview, Angelica was offered the full-time teaching position, starting Nov. 1. She has worked in this position ever since.

Angelica has expressed a love of teaching, even after 13 years. She loves the students and her subject area is a medium to connect with students and the real world. She is seen by students and faculty alike as kind, fun, and well-respected teacher. When the administration sent out a

survey to assess which faculty member would be open to co-teaching, she replied "yes" and when prompted on the survey, she wrote her top two choices of possible co-teaching partners. She expressed that she did not really know what co-teaching was and also, she did not know she was actually signing up. Angelica said that she said "yes" because she "thought it would be fun" and "wanted to be helpful to the students and my co-workers". She has the attitude that she'll do whatever she has to do when it comes to her job.

> RC: (Pre-Interview) Angelica is a dear friend of mine. She has a very interesting perspective on co-teaching. More positive in the end, but in our previous conversation, her sentiments on co-teaching throughout the year were a mix reaction- some days were good, some days were a struggle. Specifically, there were issues with her co-teaching partner.

In her co-teaching partnership, Angelica has suggested that although she is working with her friend and colleague, it's challenging. She mentioned that being friends first was great, but is a "double-edged sword" when it came to the power struggle in the classroom. It was hard for Angelica at first to relinquish power and share the stage, in spite of her volunteering and her chosen partner. She did mention that choice and to be chosen as a partner made it easier to work through things and not just give up. She said she was more committed to it then if she was just assigned the task and partner. However, she really enjoys co-teaching with her partner and would choose to co-teach again if she could be with her current partner.

> RC: In previous conversations about co-teaching, Angelica seemed exasperated at certain things that her partner did. During the interview, she seemed more at peace with the issues she faced in co-teaching and with her partner, as they were behind them. I think that also, during the interview, she was uncomfortable discussing the

specific issues with her friend and co-teacher. Maybe the discussion of such issues made her feel disloyal or that they were behind them and she was positive about co-teaching presently. She also expressed that she was surprised at her negative reaction to sharing the stage. She is much more comfortable with her partner sharing the responsibilities and roles now.

Angelica is a well-respected and well- liked teacher at Park High School. Her colleagues see her as a positive and hardworking presence in the building. She is known for being a fierce student advocate and always having a smile on her face.

Christina

At the time of the interview, Christina has been a teacher for five years; all of those years she has worked at Park High School. Christina is originally from the tri-state area, but, moved to Florida with her family when she was a junior in high school. She finished high school there and went to a local college in FL for her undergraduate degree in English and minored in hospitality services. She graduated and then worked at Disney World for the next six years in hospitality where she met and married her husband, also originally from the tri-state area. She and he husband started a family in Florida, staying at home to raise their child for the next 6 years, until they moved back to New Jersey to be near family. Christina is not a stranger to education, as she has three aunts who are all teachers and had a major impact on her decision to become a teacher. She made the decision to go back to school for education after working as a substitute in the school district where she lives. She enrolled in a local private college to work on her Master's in Special Ed. She earned her K-12 English Certification and she landed a maternity-leave replacement at Park while she was finishing her certification for special education. A special education teaching position

opened up at Park High School; she applied, interviewed, and got the job. Christina is finishing her 5th year at Park.

Christina worked as a resource teacher for the last four years and gladly signed up for co-teaching. "I just agree with the concept in theory and in practice." She was happy to put down a few teachers she would like to work with and was assigned to one of them. She talked about her insecurity in the classroom with the co-teacher even though they chose each other. "I took more of a backseat in that classroom. I have never- my insecurity became a challenge for me." She did not, however, like all of her special education colleagues, have any idea that resource would be completely removed from the course offerings and the special education staff would be required to be co-teachers. She, like the rest of the special education department, were told of this change to their job description at a "very tense and insulting meeting" with the superintendent.

Christina self-described her struggles initially in the co-teaching classroom as a "power-struggle" and dealing with her own "insecurity with the level the content was being taught." However, after several tough conversations with her chosen co-teacher, she feels like it was a good experience and good for the students.

> RC: She was open and honest about her difficulty sharing the stage with her co-teachers and was willing to talk about the difficult conversations and self-realizations that she came to. She discussed being one of the newest teachers in the school and dealing with that insecurity in the co-teaching partnership.

Christina did mention that there were times that she felt like she wasn't doing enough in the classroom. However, she and her co-teacher worked through a lot of tough conversations and lots of communication. She was generally positive about her experiences and was clear that she thought that co-teaching was beneficial for the students, especially IEP students. She expressed

her desire and excitement to continue working with her partners, even if one didn't choose her. She said that it would be better to continue working on the relationship for another year than starting again with another co-teacher.

Anthony

At the time of this study, Anthony had been a general education teacher for 22 years. Anthony is a native of the tri-state area and attended a state college in New Jersey. When he was in college, Anthony played football and decided that he wanted to be a coach. He thought about his coaches from high school and decided that the best path to become a coach is to become a teacher. Anthony graduated with a degree in education and history, with a minor in sports management. He immediately started looking for a job. Within a few weeks of graduating, he was interviewing at several different high schools in the area. He was looking for a high school that was strong in academics and in football. He was interviewed and was higher at a local high school to teach and coach football. Anthony worked at this high school for two years and then subsequently left. He was looking for a better football program. Shortly after his departure, he applied and interviewed at Park High School with the head of the history department and the athletic director. He was hired to be a teacher and assistant football coach. This was his first and only teaching experience. Anthony was involved in the football program in one capacity or another for 17 years. He has stated that he loved teaching his subject and loved coaching. For the last several years, he has coached football in a different district and has decided to stop coaching all-together so he can watch his son play high school football.

Anthony is fair in the way he treats both students and faculty. He is known to grade judiciously, give students a second chance and to listen to faculty and staff with reserved deference. He does not often express his opinions on things, but when he does, co-workers and administration

listen. He has a candid and honest nature about him and was quite happy to share his experiences. Anthony has admitted that, before his experience, his understanding of co-teaching was a teacher running the class with in-class support. This understanding developed out of the "co-teaching" model at his pervious school. Anthony did not co-teach at his previous high school and his first and only co-teaching experience was at Park High School. He stated that he filled out the survey for co-teaching and volunteered because, "after 22 years, I was bored. So, I looked at it as an opportunity to change it up and do something else." Anthony admitted to being open to teaching with whatever teacher would be interested.

> RC: I have had preliminary conversations with Anthony over the last year about
> co-teaching where he has expressed to me how challenging it is but how having
> another competent and willing adult in the room has been great- eased the burden,
> so to speak.

Anthony has expressed very positive reaction to his co-teaching experience this year. He stated that choice of partner and voluntary participation played a big role in his experience with his co-teacher. Choice made the challenges they faced, easier. He was especially positive about the relationship with his co-teacher and how they get along, operate as a united front, and work better together than by themselves. He mentioned that the Director of Special Services mentioned that he and his now co-teacher have similar teaching styles and might be a good match. Anthony said that he took the Director's suggestions and both he and his co-teacher chose each other through the suggestions of the Director.

> RC: Anthony was extremely open to discussing co-teaching and his experiences.
> He generally had wonderful things to say about his partner, their roles, and how
> well matched they were.

Lastly, he expresses concern over the administrative implementation of the program. He talked about the importance and value of co-planning, however, he, like many other interviewees, was sharply critical of the administration's role in the co-teaching initiative, especially concerning the lack of preparation for teachers and the lack of communication between the co-teachers and administration.

Veronica

At the time of this study, Veronica had been teaching for six years. She is a native of Pennsylvania and grew up wanting to be a teacher. In high school, she had an influential AP US History teacher who was inspirational. Veronica decided that she "wanted to be THAT teacher". Veronica went to school in Maryland at a large state university where she minored in history and majored in education with a focus on special education. She did her student teaching in Maryland and decided that getting certified in K-12 was most beneficial for employment opportunities, but she really wanted to teach on the high school level.

After graduation, Veronica moved with her significant other to the tri state area where he was offered a job and she began applying for secondary special education jobs. She interviewed at Park High School for a resource teaching position and was offered the job. She has been teaching at Park High School ever since. Veronica is well-respected, forthright, and hardworking.

> RC: Veronica was excited to talk about her co-teaching experience. Her interview was dynamic, and she was insightful and seemed to answer honestly. She was forthcoming about her pros and cons of co-teaching and what she would like to change.

She signed up for co-teaching with the understanding that it was "two teachers teaching at the same time". She thought co-teaching in an inclusion classroom would be a great idea because

the students would be challenged more and she would get to teach a higher level of content then she had been able to in resource, "I would be teaching the higher level of content while also helping a populations that I am really loving to help." Veronica had generally very positive things to say about her partnership, a partner whom was suggested to her as a good match by the director of special services. She was open to working with anyone and was happy for the suggestion. "It's going very well." She did report that after filling out the survey, she along with her other special education colleagues were told that they would no longer have their own classes but be co-teachers. She was not happy about the way in which they were told that resource classes were no longer an option. Again, she suggested that at the end of the day, the special education staff had to co-teach, even though she believes they all generally believe in the benefits of co-teaching, as not all students belong in resource.

Veronica suggested that student placement was a challenge; some students do not belong in co-teaching either because they were not being challenged; something she and her partner were committed to working on; or they were struggling so much, resource classes would have been a better placement. "I think the mid-level students are really benefitting from the content and discussion and higher-level thinking because we offer that- it's just the ones that are barely honors and they one's that are just out of resource and struggling in inclusion."

Lastly, it should be mentioned that Veronica's opinion of administrative support was mixed. She suggested that common planning time was significant to the improvement of the co-teaching teams "common planning or whatever we call it, common planning time- it's huge." However, she suggested that professional development and the Professor in Residence were "a complete waste of time." These sentiments on common planning time, PD and the PIR were shared by most of the participants.

Bob

At the time of this study, Bob had been teaching high school for 30 years. He is a native of the tri-state area and has been at Park High School for 20 of those 30 years. He attended a state college in the tri-state and played football. While in college, he decided that he wanted to become a coach and believed the best way to do that was to become a teacher in high school. He majored in History and minored in education. Soon after graduation, he came back to New Jersey and applied to the local high school which was looking for both a history teacher and football coach. He interviewed at a local urban high school where he was offered a position as a full-time history teacher and assistant football coach. He taught and coached at this school for 13 years, only leaving after the football program's funding was cut and he was let go as a coach. He then applied to Park and, knowing the athletic director, he was called for an interview and was offered the position of history teacher and head football coach. Although Bob initially went into teaching in order to be a coach, he stated "But, to be honest, I fell in love with teaching and then thought, this is probably the best job for me." Bob is no longer a coach with the football program, however, he coaches indoor track.

Admittedly, Bob had no real frame of reference of what co-teaching was. As he filled out the survey, he responded that he would be interesting in co-teaching because "I just thought it would be a good idea. It would be fun, it'd be fresh. And I knew I'd be working with a good teacher so, it would be a different approach after 33 years." Although at the beginning he said he was a bit nervous to be in class with another colleague as he had his own class for 33 years, he said it has worked out really well with his partner and his general attitude towards co-teaching is positive. In terms of Bob's perceived responses to the interview questions, it appeared to me he was not

entirely interested in being honest or forthcoming, but rather he appeared to give me the answers that he thought were "right."

> RC: Bob was a bit difficult to dig deeper with, he seemed not to want to further explain himself and his attitudes and experiences. I felt like I got the bare essentials from him. He didn't seem too invested in the interview. He gave a few "canned" responses either because he was not really interested (will be retiring in the next two years) or because he didn't want to cause any trouble for himself or someone else.

In spite of Bob's lack of forthcoming answers, especially about the administrative implementation and support, his actual answers demonstrated somewhat of a vague agreement that there was support, "Well, they've been giving us whatever help we needed. You know, there were workshops at the end of last year and there was stuff during the summer. So, I think they, they gave us what we needed."

> RC: I was nervous to press Bob more than a bit in his responses. I felt like he was doing me a favor and was aware of that and the time the interview was taking up. In retrospect, I would have liked to ask him more specifics about his thoughts on administrative support.

Bob, overall, was quite positive about his co-teaching experience. He was open to working with whomever, so he asked the Director of Special Service his thoughts on a partner and Bob took his advice. He expressed that he felt that students really benefited from two teachers in the classroom and would absolutely like to co-teaching, with his partner is possible "That would be optimal."

Zeek

At the time of this study, Zeek had been a teacher for five years. He is a native of Delaware and comes from a family of teachers. Zeek discussed his desire to become a teacher at a young age, due to the influence of his mother and two aunts who are all teachers. In high school, Zeek volunteered to work in the local elementary schools as an intern and discovered his love of teaching. He decided that he wanted to work with students with disabilities because he has a sister who has severe learning difficulties and wanted to not only help her, but help students like her. Zeek attended a local state school and majored in special education and minored in history. Upon graduation, he was certified as a teacher of students with disabilities and his content area. He and his significant other moved to New Jersey where her family was from to look for jobs. Zeek began applying for any special education jobs he could find and soon was offered and interview at Park High School. Zeek was offered a resource history position and has been at Park for the last five years.

Zeek's understanding of co-teaching came from the extensive course work he completed in his undergraduate preparation. He understood the different models and expressed that he agreed with the concept in theory and generally in practice. "I was excited for [co-teaching]- I knew it was going to be good for the kids to kind of not be in that stigma of 'Oh, I'm in a resource class' or 'It doesn't really matter what I do'" He did express however, that he didn't know he was going to be losing the opportunity to have his own resource class when he signed up. Zeek also mentioned that he was the "lowest man on the totem pole" so, even though he was asked who he'd like to teach with, he said "I guess I had input, kind of. But, I don't think it would have really mattered what I said. But, I knew my co-teacher before and asked for him so, that kind helped."

Also, it is important to mention that Zeek was the last person to agree to participate in this study. He asked for clarification several times about the confidentiality of the study and his answers. He was concerned about his somewhat precarious status as the last teacher hired issues.

RC: Initially, Zeek seemed to be hesitant to talk with me but after what appeared to be peer-pressure by his co-teacher or assumed peer pressure to participate (which I was completely unaware of until the interview), he was willing. He was initially a bit guarded then he opened about the apparent "fake choice" so many of the other special education teachers were talking about.

Zeek seemed to think the partnership with his co-teacher was a true split in responsibilities and their communication. He discussed that, as partners, the common planning time really helped them build their relationship and made them teachers better for the students. He also suggested that choice was important to avoid conflict and personality issues with the co-teaching pairs.

Lastly, in terms of the administrative supports, Zeek was again hesitant to be forthcoming about all of his thoughts, but he mentioned the great help that common planning time was but, other than that "They've done random stuff, like PDs and stuff like that. But, it hasn't been hands-on. I don't think, as it was initially supposed to be." Once again, Zeek's attitude about the administrative supports mirrored those of his co-teaching colleagues participating in this study.

Katherine

At the time of this study, Katherine has been teaching for 11 years. As a native of the tri-state and the local community, Katherine grew up in the sending districts of Park and still lives in the community. She went to high school at Park and has been deeply invested in the school since childhood. She was a student-athlete at Park High School and upon graduation attended a large college in New England where she continued to play sports. Her decision to become a teacher is

rooted in her experience in high school with her teachers. "I had really good teacher and I was really involved in school. I had a really good experience so, I wanted to come back here and do the same thing for the students." Katherine studied English and Education in college and graduated with degrees in each. She knew she wanted to work at Park and quickly was hired as an English teacher and head soccer and basketball coach. She has been coaching and teaching here ever since.

Katherine believed that co-teaching was "teaching with someone hand-in-hand with shared responsibilities." She signed up on the survey for co-teaching because she felt it was going to be a good experience "as long as I could pick my partner." She suggested that teachers who don't get to choose to participate or their partners was not something she wanted, so she volunteered in hopes that she would get the partner she chose. She put down two names and was assigned both special ed teachers for two different level classes. Then, one of those teachers was promoted to administration and she was reassigned to only one co-teaching position. "I found out that I wasn't working with both of my chosen partners in August before school. It was a bit of a shock".

RC: Katherine's experience was one that demonstrated the lack of commutation with the administration and the co-teaching teams. She was preparing all summer to work with 2 teachers at two different levels. However, she was able to be flexible and recover. She made it clear that working with her chosen partner was great. However, she expressed feelings of frustration about the administration's seeming lack on concern about the time she spent with her second partner preparing a new prep and anger that she wasn't told until long after the decision was made and right before school.

Katherine's overall experience was positive, and she believes that co-teaching does benefit the students, both general and special education. She suggested that she would like to continue to

work with her because, "it can only get better. And starting from scratch is not something I want to do."

Andrea

At the time of this study Andrea had been a special education teacher at Park High School for 6 years. She is a native of the tri-state area and attended a local public university. Andrea was the first member of her family to graduate from college. In high school, she met a teacher who ran a special program for students with disabilities. This teacher ran a restaurant in the high school that employed special education students. These students were in charge of the day-to-day operations of the restaurant that served students, faculty, and staff of the school. Andrea volunteered her time to work with the students and was inspired by this teacher's commitment to students with disabilities. Andrea attributes her desire to become a special education teacher to this experience.

Andrea completed her student- teaching experience at Park with her now co-teaching partner. Upon graduation, she earned dual degrees in special education and English. She quickly started interviewing around the area, but was thrilled when a special education position opened up at Park High School, a school she was familiar with. She applied and was offered the position of resource English teacher for all grade levels. For 5 years, Andrea has had her own class of 6-10 special education students in a self-contained environment. Andrea was made aware that the school was doing away with resources class completely after she filled out the survey on co-teaching. She thought, when filling out the survey, that if the school was moving to a co-teaching model, she would be teaching resource and working as a co-teacher. However, Andrea, like the rest of the special education teachers, was informed that they would no longer have their own classes and only work as co-teachers in a meeting in early April 2015. In the meeting, the Superintendent cited

the special education teachers' lack of expertise in content area and lack of rigor in the resource classes. Andrea was insulted and a bit taken-aback by the complete removal of all resource classes, as well as the manner in which the Superintendent handled that meeting. It is important to note that every special education teacher in this study is highly qualified in their content area. Andrea suggested that special education teachers were given the "fake choice" of volunteering for co-teaching, as they were going to have to co-teach anyway, unbeknownst to them. However, she did mention that her ability to choose her partner made it easier to deal with and was important to the day-to-day challenges of the classroom.

> RC: Andrea has been generally positive about the co-teaching experience, especially when it comes to her partner. She strongly believes that co-teaching benefits students because both teachers are committed.

Andrea is well-respected by faculty and staff as one of the most committed and enthusiastic special education teachers in the school. She is known as a major advocate for students and will not shy away from speaking her mind in a forceful, yet respectful way. With Andrea, what's right for the students is the right way to go. Andrea was clear that she believes that the positives of co-teaching outweigh the negatives. She also made it clear that resource classes were not challenging all students and that co-teaching challenges more special education students than a resource class. However, she did not believe that all resource classes should be removed completely. She said that some students just do not belong in co-teaching, but due to the removal of resource classes, some are struggling so much they won't make it.

Lastly, Andrea was clear about her criticism of the administrative implementation. She believed there is little to no communication from administration with a "mild attempt" at providing support for the co-teaching teams, citing co-planning as a major help to her and her partner. She

also stated that there is no chain of command for co-teachers to follow if there were issues to be dealt with. His last sentiment about co-teaching was to have the opportunity to co-teach again, because she sees value in it and enjoys it, but also, to have her own classroom as a resource teacher, not only because she misses it but, for the students who really don't succeed in the challenges of the co-teaching environment.

John

At the time of this study, John had been teaching for 12 years. He is a native of the tri-state area and went to a local regional high school where he played sports. He attended a local public college and decided to major in math and education. His desire to be a teacher stemmed from a combination of his experiences with his 5th and 11th grade math teachers who really inspired him and his desire to become a coach. Once he graduated with a dual degree in math and education, John applied to many schools. He finally interviewed at a local high school where he was offered a math teaching position and an assistant coaching position. John worked at the local high school for three years and, due to cuts, he did not receive tenure and was let go after three years. He began looking for employment elsewhere, and was called in to interview at Park for a math teaching position. He was pleased to be offered the position and was looking forward to working as an assistant football coach and head track coach. He has been a coach and teacher at Park for nine years.

John's idea of co-teaching stems from his experience at the high school he previously worked at. He had a special education teacher in his room who "acted like an aide and I was the lead teacher." Signing up for co-teaching was something he decided to because he "thought it would be awesome to get someone with special ed experiences to help." He "jumped at the

opportunity." John's view on choice of volunteering and choice of partner was influential in his experience- "it was big- mandating people who don't want to be put together don't work."

> RC: John has the reputation of not being the easiest personality to work with. He is seen as rigid and stuck in his ways- his way or the highway mentality. I was struck that he volunteered and was so positive about choice and co-teaching.

John was thrilled to work with anyone, but put down a few names. He was paired with one of his choices. He has generally very positive things to say about his experience and suggested that "everyone working towards a common goal" in the classroom make co-teaching impactful for students. "Kids who were struggling are doing better and no one is failing."

John suggested that the administration did offer PD and suggested the common planning was important, but pointed out the lack of chain of command and lack of communication between administration and the co-teaching staff.

Lastly, it must be said that John really seemed initially hesitant in the interview, in that he wasn't sure if he should really express how his experience in co-teaching was. As the interview went on, he seemed to gain more confidence in the confidential nature of the interview and opened up more. He was, however, still a bit guarded throughout, especially when it came to discussion of the administration and implementation of co-teaching.

Jennifer

At the time of this study, Jennifer had been teaching for 31 years. She has worked at Park High School from the beginning of her career. Jennifer is a native of the tri-state and was always motivated to be a teacher for as long as she can remember, "either that or a stewardess." She attended a high school in New Jersey and went on to a local public college to study education. Once in school, she realized there was a need for special education teachers, so she switched her

major to special education and English. She said that teaching special education really played on her upbringing as an adopted child of a loving couple. "I really needed my parents and these kids, these kids were forgotten and they really needed me." She loves her students and made it clear that they inspire her to be better every day. She said she was getting tired and is thinking about retiring, but volunteered to co-teach because she had a feeling, she was going to be asked to do it any as the veteran member of the special education department. She also said that she didn't care who she worked with because she could work with anyone. Her understanding of co-teaching is from her studies in school, where "it used to be called inclusion- same thing, different name like everything education." Jennifer seems tired and resigned to the fact that she's on her way out. Also, she expressed anger at the administration's treatment of the special education teachers.

> RC: Jennifer recounted the reaction to the meeting with the superintendent where the special ed staff was demoralized and insulted. She said there were tears and rage about the doing away with resource, suggesting that teachers didn't come into the profession to co-teach but to have their own classroom.

Jennifer operates under the do-what-your-told mentality. Although, her criticism of the implementation of co-teaching is that it "was shoved down our throats." She suggested that the administration has no communication with the co-teaching teams and that student placement is a problem. She suggested that students should be more appropriately placed and doing away with resource classes completely is a mistake for some students who struggle in co-teaching classes. She said she was compliant, but was upset that she wasn't going to have her own classroom like she had for 30 years. Her co-teaching partner is known to be difficult to work with, but she signed up to work with him because she knew she could as well as help the students. Her experience with her co-teacher was generally positive, although she noted that her co-teacher was in charge and

she took more of a back seat because she didn't want conflict and she could help the kids one-on-one. She really doesn't want to co-teach again because she wants her own classroom where she feels she can have more of an impact. However, she would agree to it if she could have her own class again.

Colin

At the time of this interview, Colin had been teaching for 21 years total and 11 years at Park High School. He is a native of the tri-state area and went to college at a state university in the area. He originally went to school as a journalism major and played football. He got injured in football and, in his sophomore year, he realized that "the only way I was going to stay in sports was probably as a coach." Because he was already two years into his journalism track, he switched his major to English and decided to become an English teacher. After college, he graduated with degrees in English and Education and began applying for teaching jobs with open football coaching positions. He interviewed and was hired at a regional high school in the area that was a powerhouse in football and taught there for 5 years. The coaching staff changed, and Colin decided that he was not interested in continuing to grade 5 page research papers every weekend so, he decided to go back to school. "I thought, phys. Ed. or special ed. So, I picked special ed, knowing that my paper workload would be drastically reduced." Colin left that school and applied and was offered a head coaching position and an English teaching position at another local high school. While he stayed at this local high school, he went back to school and got his certification in special education. He stayed at that school for five years and then began looking for special education teaching positions and coaching positions. He applied to Park and was offered a special education teaching job, as well as an assistant coaching job. He has been a special education teacher at Park for 11 years, 10 of which he ran a reading program for students in a resource classroom. This was

his first year ever co-teaching. Colin is very well-liked among the faculty. He had a good understanding of the concept and practice of co-teaching based on his course work. He seemed agreeable to the whole co-teaching program. He did sign up on the survey to participate, but did so because he said he figured he would be required to anyway, so he answered yes to be compliant. He likes his partner and likes that she chose him, suggesting that it makes the whole challenging implementation of everyday teaching a lot easier. He has, however, expressed his deep displeasure at not being told that the administration was getting rid of his reading program.

> RC: In our previous conversations, Colin was positive and seemingly agreeable to the whole idea of co-teaching. He has expressed his concern about how programs have been implemented or cut with little communication, especially concerning his reading program

Colin has expressed his support of the co-teaching initiative as important but has also been vocal about the illegality of removing resource classes as an option for some students. In several special ed meetings, the staff has reported his expressed anger and frustration over some students who don't belong in co-teaching and really need resource. He also has been very critical of the administration. "I don't think there has been any support all. I feel that we're replaceable cogs and it doesn't matter who's in the classroom."

> RC: Colin seems to have no faith in the competence of the administration. I was surprised at his negative commentary regarding the lack of communication and lack of concern of the administration. He does, however, seem content with his assignment and likes working with his partner.

Colin also expressed concern that none of the special education teachers were told when they signed up for co-teaching, that they would not have their own classes. He seemed to think

that when he signed up on the survey, he was going to co-teach and also have a resource class. That was not the case and made clear to the special education staff in a meeting run by the superintendent who expressed her displeasure with the lack of qualifications of the special ed staff and used that as her justification for doing away with resources classes entirely.

Jack

At the time of this study, Jack had been teaching for 10 years. Jack is a native of the tri-state area and went through the public school system in a local community not far from Park. In high school, Jack was a student-athlete, noting that his favorite subject was history and his sport of choice was basketball. Upon graduation, Jack got a basketball scholarship to a private college in New England where he played for four years. In college, he knew he wanted to coach so, he chose to study history and education, aware that the best way to stay a coach is to become a teacher. After graduating with a degree in history and education, Jack returned home and started applying to schools. He interviewed and subsequently was hired at an alternative high school for young people with behavioral issues. He worked as a history teacher and basketball coach there for five years. Here, he was exposed to co-teaching and this informed his understanding of it.

Jack said that after five years, he started to burn out, as the job at the alternative high school was very demanding. He started to apply to other schools and reached out to his coaching colleague, the head basketball coach at Park. Mr. Charles assisted Jack in getting an interview for a history teaching position, which he was then offered. Jack took the job knowing he would be able to be the assistant basketball coach for Mr. Charles and his very well-respected basketball program. Jack has worked at Park as a history teacher and basketball coach for five years.

It should be mentioned that although Jack seemed to happily agree to be interviewed, his answers did not feel entirely authentic. He seemed to give "canned" answers as if those were the

answers that he was supposed to give or that he was too guarded to be honest about administration and the challenges of co-teaching.

> RC: Jack told me what I wanted to hear. His responses sounded in authentic to what I understand his perceptions of co-teaching are, based on previous conversations. His trust in the confidential nature of the study or the fact that he is suspect of me make his responses hard to interpret.

Jack, like one other teacher, gave answers, especially about the administration that did not match up with his previous conversations with colleagues. He did, however, sign up for co-teaching because he had seen it work before in his previous school and he thought it would be fun. "I thought I could be successful at it." Jack was more open about his past experiences and his positive relationship with his co-teacher than anything having to do with the administration.

Janice

At the time of this study, Dr. Camelo was finishing her second year as superintendent at Park. This position was her first experiences as a superintendent, however she had 25 years of educational experience in various roles in an urban district neighboring Park. Janice is a native of the tri-state area and decided in college that she wanted to be a teacher. She attended a local public college and graduated with a degree in elementary education. She interviewed and was offered a position of elementary teacher upon graduation from college. Janice worked as an elementary school teacher for many years before she went back and got her Master's degree in educational administration and earned her certifications for principal and superintendent. She had hoped of working in and administrative role in the district she was working in as a teacher. Janice transitioned out of the classroom to be a supervisor and then the teaching coach of the district for

six years. She enrolled and completed her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from a local private university and then was hired as a school principal in the same district. Dr. Camelo started applying for superintendent jobs and in the Fall of 2015, she was hired as a first-time superintendent at Park.

Dr. Camelo's vision, as presented to the Board of Education and to the faculty and staff upon her employment, was to systematically restructure the school financially and programmatically in order to battle the 2% funding cap and to compete with the local tech school who received a multimillion-dollar grant and is attracting many of our students and thereby, their tax dollars.

RC: Janice is very pragmatic and is, from my experience motivated by money, saving it and making it. I know, as it is public knowledge, that she is responsible for fiduciary "benchmarks" that she presented to the board upon her interview (i.e. cutting and starting programs) for which she earns performance bonuses each year in meeting those benchmarks. The programs that she has started appearing to be poorly planned, poorly executed and then immediately sold as up, running and successful to the public and the board of education. Teacher are complaining that there is almost no preparation for their new assignment, some of which have only been give 2-3 weeks to prepare a new preparation, all in the name of "new pathways" and to compete with the local technical school. I wonder what Janice's justification for co-teaching will be. I know from conversation with the director of special services that is largely a money saving venture.

Janice made a name for herself by "saving" the district money by all but eliminating out of district placement for students with needs that we as a district can meet ourselves. She has started a MD program (multiple disabilities), and offered Park High School to "house" services of

a local county's ABA program so as to not only to gain financially through the cost of renting the space at PARK but also, she is saving money by using the in house ABA program to serve students from our sending districts and districts all over the region. By defraying costs of students with disabilities, Janice's 2015-2016 budget line item for Special Education and Related Services saved almost two million dollars for the district. The total expenditures equaling 4, 193, 108 and the net cost of 2,159, 919 (NJDOE, 2016).

Janice's stated justification for implementing the new co-teaching program appears to have three reasons. She stated in her interview, and as reported by special education staff in the meeting she held to announce the removal of resource classes, that the special education staff lacks the appropriate content knowledge to teach the resource students with rigor. "In terms of , um, teaching students, and, and I- I quickly saw that in the resources, the way we were set up, we had resource teachers who did not always have the content area information to level that the content experts in the general ed people had." She suggested that because, in her estimation, the special education staff was not qualified enough to teach content on their own, the students PARCC score are impacted. "But, based on what I observed, based on the um, the scores, students in the resource room were responsible for taking the PARCC- and so they didn't even have the opportunity to hear the vocabulary as it taught by somebody who's a content expert. Ok?"

> RC: It became clear to me that Janice was either unclear about the requirement of a highly qualified teachers are or she did not know the profession education and certification of her special ed staff. Every special education teacher in the school are highly qualified in their content area and most have a second degree in the content area.

Janice also mentioned that resource classes do not prepare our students for the "real world."

Also, Janice suggested that she chose to allow teachers to choose to participate because she read the research and she "wanted to make the marriages work." When asked why she wanted to allow us to use a survey she stated, "I needed to some information gathering to see who would be brave enough to want to do what they needed to do and GROW as educators." She also suggested that "choice took away so many issues that could have arose." She suggested that she allowed for common planning as a reward for the volunteers and that she provided PD and a professor-in-residence to assist co-teachers in the implementation, consistent with her district message, Janice suggested that she wanted more PD for us but "we are in the middle of a budget issue and don't have the money for it." Janice's discussion of the administrative supports provided in the first year and her insinuation that they would not be continued for the second year of co-teaching demonstrated the financial constraints the district was undergoing, as well as the lack of continued commitment to the co-teaching teams.

Marie

At the time of this study, Marie had been an educator for 46 years. She is a native of the tri-state area and a member of the local community. She was raised in one of the sending districts and has worked as an educator in some capacity in the community for the entirety of her career. Marie began her career as a K-8 teacher after graduating college with a degree in education. She taught middle school for 20 years in sending district, while she earned 2 master's degrees at a local university, one in education leadership and one in counseling. She transitioned to an administrative position in 1999 in the district she was working in. Marie was a curriculum supervisor for two years and then was approached by the then superintendent of Park to apply for the position of director of guidance. She applied and was offered the position. She has been the director of guidance at Park for 15 years.

Marie suggested that the co-teaching initiative was an opportunity to provide better opportunities for special students. She suggested that resource room was stigmatizing, and she echoed the concern for lack of rigor, "Having kids in resource room was so stifling. The expectations weren't there- because they didn't get homework and they don't have do papers. But, co-teaching allows the students of all levels to rise to occasion." Also, she mentioned PARCC scores were in need of improvement the special education population.

Marie explained that, in terms of the survey and how the administration decided to allow teachers to choose to participate and their partner, there was a speaker who was an expert on co-teaching that came to talk to the school administration, and she came from a local urban district and she instituted co-teaching in the district. This speaker suggested the survey in order to get teacher to buy in. "Like having a survey, having teachers have input as whether they want to try this. Understanding that co-teaching wasn't going to be a punishment, that we weren't going to like, just put you in there and if you make it- you make it. No, you were going to get plenty of support." Marie said that choice was so important for buy in and choosing a partner who has the same style or perspective on education that you do is important. She discussed collective efficacy in the process of choice as positively impacting teachers and the students.

Marie mentioned that planning time was also a suggestion taken from the co-teaching speaker that Janice agreed to. Both choice and common planning time are only going to be implemented for the first year. In the future, Marie said Janice mandated that right of assignment be used to fill in the need for co-teaching teams and that there isn't enough time or money to give all co-teachers a common planning prep.

RC: Marie was candid with me- more relaxed and forth-coming than I thought. She

was so positive about the teachers who volunteered and expressed her desire to keep

the teams together each year. She did mention that she chose not the "over-think"

placing resource student and high performing general ed students in class. She

suggested that she just let the computer randomly assign the students to each co-

teaching class. This may explain why so many teachers reported that there needs to

be a real strategy in place for student placement.

Lastly, Marie seemed to think that the co-teaching teams were given a lot of support and that they were generally happy with their experiences. She was so positive about Janice's allowance for choice and co-planning time and expressed disappointment that she couldn't schedule that for next year.

Mike

At the time of this study, Mike had been in education for 35 years. He is a native of the tri-state area and went through private school for K-12. He attended a private college in New England and earned a bachelor's degree in special education. Mike traveled the world after college, living out of the country doing odd-jobs wherever he could find them. He returned to the area when his parent became ill and began a master's program at a local university where he earned a MA in special education. He began working at a private, therapeutic school in the area as a teacher and continued school to earn a second degree in counseling. Mike worked as a teacher for seven years at the school when he then became the principal. He was a principal for ten years, and after a serious health incident, he decided to change jobs. He applied for the position of director of special services at Parkin 1996 and was hired. He has worked at Park in the same capacity for 20 years.

Mike is a well-respected administrator who is seen by staff as approachable and operates from a place of compassion, for the students and the staff. It was made clear in previous conversations, that Mike was not asked, counseled, or included in the planning or implementation

of the co-teaching initiative. He was not even told ahead of the meeting that the superintendent held when she told the special education staff they were ineffective, and resource classes were a think of the past. However, Mike insisted on being involved in the support and the actual pairing of the teachers. He was the liaison between the special education staff and the general education staff and also the co-teaching pairs and the administration.

> RC: Mike is generally unfiltered and talks without a lot of reflection. He appears to be very positive about the co-teaching, specifically the pairs, although he did not have much say in the transition to or implementation of. I think he was forced to make lemons out of lemon aid.

Mike expressed that his understanding of the impetus of the co-teaching initiatives was largely due to PARCC scores. He also enforced the perception of the superintendent that resource classes were not rigorous enough and was not preparing students for the real world.

> I think the altruistic part of eliminating [resource] was to push these kids harder to try and do better. Which I think is very, very good, um motivation to do this [co-teaching]. The problem is, I don't like PARCC scores and test scores, uh, dictating, uh, what we provide as education.

Mike expressed that co-teaching was also important for special education students not to be stigmatized. "I think with the inclusionary model, behavior improves, kids feel more comfortable and they mostly rise to the occasion." However, he suggested that doing away with all resource runs counter to the special education code - "Well, the code requires a full continuum, so you need to provide everything." When it came to choice, although Mike was not asked to weigh in he was very positive. He stated:

You know, the fact that the general ed staff were asked to volunteer. The fact that

all staff were allowed to have investment and choice- …if you don't have

investment- your motivation isn't there.

When discussing his special education staff and being chosen by general education teachers

he said " how nice to be selected by people? How nice to be in a room where somebody

wants you?"

This sentiment was expressed by every special education teacher interviewed, who

although they weren't given a choice to participate in co-teaching, they were pleased to be chosen

by their general education co-teacher. In reflecting on the feedback he has had from his special

education staff, Mike said that his staff feels wanted and the general education teachers were so

welcoming, accepting, and grateful for their special education co-teachers.

Lastly, Mike discussed the ambiguity of the chain of command. He expressed that he was

in a precarious situation, as the superintendent made him reapply for his position this year and she

took away his tenure. It has been made clear to Mike that his continued employment as director of

special services is not certain, which was only compounded with the message sent when he was

clearly and purposefully excluded from the planning and implementation meetings on co-teaching

with the other administrative staff. In spite of the work environment that he is in, Mike expressed

his desire to be the person of record in charge of the co-teaching teams.

Marilyn

At the time of this study, Marilyn had been in education for 35 years. As a native of the tri-

state area, Marilyn knew from a young age that she was going to be a teacher. She went to parochial

school for her K-12 education and loved her teachers. Also, her aunt was a teacher and she was

inspired by her stories about teaching. After graduating from a local, all-girls parochial high

school, Marilyn attended a local, private university and double majored in English and education. Upon graduation, she applied to her alma mater and was hired to teach English. She taught there for 13 years before she started burning out. She decided to switch careers and applied for an administrative position at her university alma mater, where she worked as head registrar for 10 years. While working, she earned two master's degrees from that university, one in education leadership and one in English. Marilyn decided that, after her time at the university, she missed teaching. She saw the job opening in the paper at Park High School for English department head and applied. She interviewed and was hired as a pseudo-administrator, still teaching three classes while running the English department day to day. She was in this position at Park for 19 years. Last year, with the hiring of the new superintendent, there was an administrative reorganization. Marilyn had to reapply for her job which was renamed supervisor of humanities. She applied and was offered the job. Marilyn has been supervisor of humanities for one year. She is known throughout the school as a no-nonsense but fair administrator who has a sharp wit and is an advocate for her teachers.

In terms of her part in the planning of the co-teaching initiative, Marilyn mentioned that she was part of preliminary conversations, but the planning and decision making was all done without her input. This coincides with what Mike said about the exclusion of key administrative staff members in the decision making. Marilyn said that she inserted herself when it came to voluntary participation "I certainly was a participant in trying to urge the administrators above me to involve the teachers who wanted to be involved. As opposed to teachers who were just assigned roles a co-teachers without any, uh, buy-in for it."

Marilyn's philosophy of choice is really simple "if teachers are happy with what they do and they're competent in what they do, then the result is that that kids get the best kind of education

that they should get." Choice is important across the board for Marilyn. Co-teaching is also something she agrees with, philosophically and believed that the superintendent wanted to make sure Park High School was serving the students in order for them to participate in the world in a meaningful way.

Marilyn commented on the administrative supports that were put in place to help teachers, not sure if they were helpful, but suggested that it was made clear that in the implementation of this new initiative with so many challenges "we need to be more prepared to support them [teachers] and give them everything we can do for them to get there."

In the interview, Marilyn commented on the challenges that are emerging. She mentioned that doing away with resource classes and having some students in 12th grade being in an inclusive classroom for the first time, is challenging for the teachers and students. Also, student placement is another challenge she discussed, suggesting that

> We have to pay better attention to the balance of regular ed kids in those classes
> and meet their needs more definitively…the balance is unequal but, again, it's a
> learning curve, not everybody is a success story, but I think there are more
> successes then failures.

Marilyn was clear that she thought the co-teachers in her department were doing a great job. She also commented that the pairs, as she observed them, were collaborative and collegial.

Summary

In a single- case, case study, the "thick" description of analysis, allowed for a deep look into the motives and experiences of both teachers (Table 1) and administrators (Table 2) in this study (Stake, 1994). These narratives, constructed from the interviews, documents

and observations completed, highlight the interpersonal relationships, trends, and contradictions found among all 16 participants. These narratives also helped to connect ideas found in the literature to my research questions (Maxwell, 2004). Many of the teachers had overlapping attitudes, experiences and sentiments regarding their motives, how they got into teaching, their thoughts on co-teaching and their thoughts on the administrative implementation of co-teaching and the supports supplied. The administrative participant narrative seemed to uncover some contradictory motives, as well as some feelings of being left out of the process by the superintendent. These narratives provided rich descriptions of the story before and during the experiences of the participants of the phenomenon of choice in co-teaching.

Table 4

Summary of Teacher Participants

Teams 1-5	Years/Teaching	Content Area/License	Most Frequently Occurring Interview Codes
1.Angelica	13	English/HQ	Choice, Roles, Lack of Administrative Support, Lack of Communication, Student placement
1.Christina	5	TOSD/ English HQ	Positives of Co-teaching, Challenges of Co-teaching, Lack of Administrative Support, Student Placement
2.Anthony	22	History/HQ	Choice, Positives of Co-teaching, Roles, Common Planning, Lack of Administrative Support, Lack of Administrative Communication
2.Veronica	6	TOSD/History	Roles, Positives of Co-Teaching, Lack of Administrative Support, Lack of Administrative Communication, Student Placement
3.Bob	30	History HQ	Choice, Motives to Co-teaching, Roles, Common Planning, Positives of Co-teaching
3.Zeek	5	TOSD/ History HQ	Roles, Challenges of Co-teaching, Lack of Administrative Communication, Lack of Administrative Support, Student Placement
4. Katherine	11	English/HQ	Choice, Roles, Positives of Co-teaching, Relationship, Lack of Administrative Support
4. Andrea	6	TOSD/ English HQ	Motivation to Co-teach, Roles, Positives of Co-teaching, Lack of Administrative Communication, Lack of Administrative Support, Student Placement
5. John	12	Math HQ	Choice, Positives of Co-teaching, Common Planning, Lack of Administrative Communication, Lack of Administrative Support
5. Jennifer	31	TOHC/ Math HQ	Roles, Student Impact, Lack of Administrative Support, Lack of Administrative Communication, Student Placement
*Colin	21	TOSD/ English	Choice, Student Impact, Lack of Administrative Support, Lack of Administrative Communication, Student Placement
*Jack	10	History/ HQ	Choice, Positives of Co-teaching, Roles, Common Planning, Student Impact

*Co-teaching partner did not participate in the study. HQ= Highly Qualified, TOSD= Teacher of Students with Disabilities licensure, TOHC= Teacher of the Handicapped licensure

Table 5

Summary of Administrative Participants

Participant	Position	Years in District	Motivation for Choice	Motivation for Program	Perspectives on support	Perspective on implementation
Janice 1st year Superintendent	Superintendent	2 years	- wanted teacher 'buy-in"	-Lack of rigor in resource -Special ed staff was not qualified -PARCC scores -Budgetary restraints	Very supportive	Positive
Marie	Director of Guidance	15 years	- why not put two teachers who get along and want to teach together	-Lack of rigor in resource	Very Supportive	Positive
Mike	Director of Special Services	20 years	-attempt to get teacher 'buy-in'	-PARCC scores	Not Very Supportive	Positive
Marilyn	Supervisor of Humanities	20 years	-happy teachers, better educational experience for students	-Prepare students for the real world	Not Very Supportive	Positive

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Chapter Six focuses on a discussion of research findings and implications for practice. It begins with a brief summary of the purpose of the study, research questions, methodology, theoretical framework, and methodology. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research on teachers' choice in co-teaching.

Overview of the Study

Co-teaching is a strategy in special education that allows for the blended expertise of both general education and special education teachers to share responsibilities of improving participation, rigor, and performance of a diverse group of students (Murawski & Dieker, 2008). However, in practice, the co-teaching environment, anchored in mutual commitment from each teacher cannot be produced by one teacher alone; the co-teaching environment can prove to be very complex. Research indicates that teachers who have choice to participate in co-teaching is key to the success of the strategy (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2008; Grill, Moorehead, & Bedeseem, 2011; Kohler- Evans, 2006). However, due to lack of time, training, financial resources, and personnel issues, most co-teaching teams have been forced into the co-teaching assignment and thus, the partnership deals with a myriad of issues that negatively impact the success of the co-teaching environment. Those teachers who do choose to participate in co-teaching bring certain characteristics and knowledge with them, especially self- efficacy to be successful in the co-teaching environment (Friend & Cook, 1995). Research indicates that teachers who participate in co-teaching tend to have a higher level of self-efficacy and skills to meet the needs of all the students in their classroom (Bandura, 1977; Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008).

This study centered around why both general education and special education teachers chose to participate in co-teaching and what relationships they have forged with their partners in order to create an effective learning environment. This study also sought to understand teachers' perception of choice and efficacy in their co-teaching classroom as they work to meet the needs of all students. Lastly, the study explored the motivating factors of the administration to provide teachers with the choice of participation in co-teaching. The research questions that guided the study are as follows: 1) What motivates teachers to participate in a voluntary co-teaching program? 2) How does choice of participation and choice of partner influence teachers experience of working in a co-teaching environment? 3) What are the perceptions of general and special education teachers regarding how their self and collective efficacy influences their co-teaching experience? 4) How do the administrative decisions on co-teaching influences teachers' experiences of co-teaching?

Theoretical Framework

Glasser's Choice Theory (1998) and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977, 2000, 2001) were used to analyze teachers' experience of choice and efficacy in the co-teaching environment. Choice Theory, building on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggests that all choices are to satisfy the basic psychological needs. When people have choice there are increased motivations, feelings of autonomy, a sense of belonging and power (Assor, Kaplan, Roth, 2002; Barazan, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Glasser, 1998; Olutayo, 2012; Patall, Cooper, &, Wynn, 2010; Reeve, 2006; Reeve, & Jang, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000). For the purposes of this study, Choice Theory was used to examine teachers' perceptions of choice in the co-teaching environment as well as administrators' motivations for implementing choice in co- teaching partnerships.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory examines efficacy as defined by people' actions are connected to the belief they hold about what they can achieve (1977, 1997). SCT identifies three kinds of efficacy: self-efficacy, collective, and proxy. For the purposes of this study, I used collective and proxy efficacy. Collective efficacy is more than one individual's shared belief in the group's ability to attain a desired goal. Proxy efficacy is defined as the exercise of collective agency, people pool their knowledge, skills, and resources and act in concert to attain a common goal (Bandura, 2000). These concepts of collective and proxy efficacy were the lenses used to examine teachers' perceptions of self, co-teaching partnership, and administrative support in their co-teaching experiences.

Methodology

The methodological design used in this study was the case study approach, using single-case analysis to examine the case of the practice of co-teaching with choice (Stake, 2005). Twelve teachers and four administrators participated in this study. Participants were purposely recruited. Teacher participants fulfilled the following criteria: 1) voluntarily participated/ signed up for co-teaching; 2) were working with chosen partner; 3) were present in the building for training, discussions, and professional development (not out on leave); and 4) taught one of the content areas (English, Math, Science, History). Administrative participants interviewed were part of the planning, implementing, and/or training of the new co-teaching initiative. The bounded system that the practice of co-teaching occurred at this site was unique in that took place secondary high school, during the first year of implementation and that administration used voluntary participation and choice of partner as policy.

Data were collected in the form of sixteen participants interviews, twelve teacher surveys, and two field observations. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted approximately 45

minutes to 90 minutes.   Field notes and memos were recorded before and after each interview. Four teacher participants were observed during common planning time using observational protocol (Creswell, 2009). Field notes were recorded during observations and memos were recorded before and after the observations. Twelve teacher participants anonymously filled out and returned the collective efficacy survey adapted from Goddard & Hoy (2003).

After all data were collected, I read through all interview data, memos, field notes, surveys looking for initial themes and patterns. Next, I analyzed the data using the two-cycle coding process laid out by Saldana (2009). In the first cycle of coding, I looked for the *initial coding*, beginning to create my codebook. Then I moved the second cycle of coding which was the *pattern coding approach* where I completed my codebook, with emerging themes and began to construct participant narratives (Saldana, 2009). Trends and themes were highlighted throughout the coding process and were displayed in the form of descriptive narratives of each participant which are found in Chapter 5.

Discussion of Findings

The following section discusses the findings within the existing literature on co-teaching. Since the literature on choice and efficacy within the context of co-teaching on the secondary level is limited, findings at times, were also compared to research exploring teacher efficacy and co-teaching at the elementary level. This study sought to explore the role of choice and efficacy in teachers' experiences in co-teaching on the secondary level. Several themes emerged from this study that aligned with previous research on co-teaching. This study adds to the existent literature with respect to co-teachers perceptions of their experiences through rich narrative demonstrating how choice and self and collective efficacy shaped their experiences in co-teaching.

Influence of Internal and External Factors on Teachers' Motivations. In response to the research questions, what motivates teachers to participate in a co-teaching program (teachers' motives) were revealed through narratives showing why they became teachers in the first place and what their perspectives were on co-teaching. While both general education and special education teachers had different motivating factors to become teachers, the responses from each group gave some insight into teachers' self-efficacy. Special education teachers reported their desire to help an underserved population of students with special needs as the main reason they chose teaching. General education teachers described their experiences with one or more influential and/or inspiring teacher in their pasts, and their desire to be inspirational themselves stemming from the impact their teacher(s) had on them. Both general education and special education teachers name the desire to help and the desire to inspire as the main motivators to become teachers.

General education teachers reported more pragmatic reasons for co-teaching, centered on their own teaching experiences moving forward. General education teachers reported that trying something new, growing in their craft (Austin, 2001), and their in adequacies in meeting the needs of special education students in their classroom The general education participants expressed feelings of inadequacy dealing with students with special learning needs are consistent with the literature on concerns of general education teachers in a co-teaching classroom (Friend & Cook, 2008; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Schumacher & Deschler, 1995). Several teachers expressed the opportunity to have a special education teacher assist in the classroom with students with special needs as a motivating factor to sign up to co-teach. Special education teachers reported that although they agreed with co-teaching philosophically, there were three main reasons they wanted to participate in co-teaching; 1) co-teaching would provide a higher

level of content for students so they would be challenged more than in a resource setting; 2) students would no longer carry the stigma associated with resource while inclusion classroom would improve self-esteem and sense of belonging, and 3) students would be more engaged in the content and it would be more relatable to their lives. These motivations of special education teachers are in line with many of the findings of a co-teaching model on the continuum of LRE when compared with a resource room model (Austin, 2001; Dieker, 2001; Fontana, 2005; Klinger & Vaughn, 1999; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2001; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). Teachers' motives to co-teach, especially those in special education, indicate that teachers believe what Bandura (1998) would describe as "judgements of one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (p.). Teachers' motivations were key to understanding their sense of collective efficacy and ultimately how they perceived their experiences working with a partner; co-teaching with choice.

Student Impact and Co-Teaching. Findings from this study indicated that participants felt that co-teaching, in their experience, positively impacts students. All participants described that co-teaching was a good experience for all students, but specifically for special education students. Although the existing literature is unclear as to whether co-teaching, as a strategy, is beneficial, the participants addressed several ways that they observed co-teaching to benefit students (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Murawski, 2006; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Salend, Garrity, Duhaney, & McLesky, 1999, 2007). Teachers indicated that more rigorous content gave special education students in particular, an opportunity to learn new competencies and skills that they were not getting in resource. Andrea and Veronica both discussed the ability to present

more rigorous content in the inclusion, co-teaching classroom. Veronica discussed how the resource room dealt primarily with life skills but in co-teaching:

> I think we are helping kids manage social studies skills really well. We are making things relevant while keeping it all content-driven. We are working with maps and graphs and study skills and application. We are really mastering skills while asking them to pull out information and apply it to other things. So, skills and content at the same time. While resource was more a focus on life skills.

Veronica's comments go to the heart on one of the motives behind implementing co-teaching at the administrative level; allowing students with disabilities greater access to a more rigorous curriculum, and real-world environment.

Also, teachers discussed how higher expectations of students, special education students in particular, allowed for the opportunity for students to challenge themselves beyond the skills-based content of resource room. There was a perceived deeper level of engagement among all students reported by teachers, citing two teachers in the class with two approaches and two sets of perspective as the reason for increased engagement. Teachers reported a sense of belonging and de-stigmatization among students who had previously been relegated to a resource room (Fontana, 2005). The director of guidance reported higher levels of student achievement, especially among special education students in terms of grades (Hang & Rabren, 2009; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2001). Lastly, teachers believed that students were able to see positive and respectful teacher relationships modeled in the co-teaching classroom. In sum, teachers observed academic and social benefits for students in their classes, as is consistent with the existing literature (Carlson, 1996; Drietz, 2001; Frisk, 2004; Hardy, 2001; Hazlett, 2001; Trent, 2001).

The Impact of Choice on the Co-teaching Experience. With respect to research question two that focused on how choice of participation and/or choice of partner influence teachers' experiences of working in a co-teaching environment, using the lens of Glasser's (1998) choice theory, this study found that participants believed that choice positively impacted their co-teaching experiences, supporting the implications of the research by Kholer-Evans (2006), Friend (2008), Cook and Friend (1995) and Grillo, Moorehead and Bedesem (2011). Given the little research that exists on teachers and their voluntary participation to co-teach or their choice in partner, this study's findings fill in the gaps of suggested future research in these areas. The participants in the study described several ways that choice impacted their co-teaching experiences. Special education and general education teachers discussed four ways choice impacted their co-teaching experiences. First, because both partners chose to work with one another, there was a positive impact on the partnership. Secondly, participants described the idea that they had some agency over their working environment, which then allowed them to feel more committed to making co-teaching work (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuff, 2007). Third, participants reported that there was a willingness on the part of their co-teaching partner to work through the challenges and a compromise to achieve a desired outcome for the students (Friend, 2008). Lastly, communication was described as essential and made possible by the fact that both parties had some choice to be in the partnership, thereby they were both willing to discuss, advise, reflect, critique, and compromise in order to achieve the most positive outcome for students.

With respect to how choice impacted teachers' perceptions of the roles in the co-teaching partnership, 11 out of 12 teachers described their relationships as equal or collaborative. Only two special education teachers described their role as secondary in the classroom. This stated

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equality, in the majority of the participants, runs contrary to the evidence in Carson's (2011) study as well as Bear and Minke's (1996) research. Most participants discussed the shared responsibilities of the partnership in and out of the classroom setting in respect to planning, grading, reflection, instruction, and modifications. When discussing their respective roles, each participant used the collective nouns of "we", "us", "our", as well as using words and phrases like "50/50", "equal partnership", and "collaborative" - demonstrating a co-equal relationship. Additionally, participants described their relationships with their co-teaching partners in positive terms such as" mutual respect", "we get along really well", and "having fun." Friend (2008) suggests that ideally, co-teachers should be able to choose their partners. And in choosing partners, they should pick someone that they have already established mutual, professional respect for. This study attributes the positive experiences and shared responsibility of co-teaching to the opportunity for choice by the participants.

Response to Efficacy and Perceptions of Co-teachers. With respect to question three that focused on how collective efficacy influences the experience of co-teachers, this study found that all co-teachers reported collective efficacy as essential to the success of their co-teaching experiences. When teams share a belief that through their individual skills and unified efforts, they can overcome challenges and produce intended results and teams are more effective (Donohoo, Hattie, & Ells, 2018). Likewise, when teachers believe in their combined ability to influence student outcomes and experiences in the classroom, there are significantly higher levels of academic achievement (Bandura, 1993). John Hattie (2016) described teacher's collective efficacy as crucial to influence student achievement. According to a meta- analysis of 1,500 studies, collective teacher efficacy was positively associated with student achievement, student motivation, concentration, persistence, and engagement (Hattie, 2016). Ultimately, when

collective efficacy is present, educators' efforts are enhanced. This study demonstrates that high levels of collective efficacy pertaining to their roles in the co-teaching environment were related to their ability to positively impact students, work together to a common goal, and believe in their own abilities.

Based on the responses of the Collective Efficacy Survey (Goddard & Hoy, 2003), participants in the study overwhelmingly reported belief in their own and collective abilities to meet the needs of their students in the co-teaching environment. In the survey responses, all teachers reported that they had the skills necessary to produce meaningful student learning, such as content expertise, ability to motivate, perseverance, strategies for class management, skills to modify content, and so forth. Likewise, they reported they had what it takes to get through to the most difficult students. Also, all teachers reported that they were confident that they could motivate students as well as have the skills necessary to deal with student behavior, such as behavioral modification strategies. If one's efficacy is based on personal experiences, environmental influences, and learned behavior (Bandura, 1977), then the collective efficacy of the team is significant in the success of the co-teaching environment. These survey responses support the findings by Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2007), Hattie (2016), Tschannen- Moran, Woolfolk, Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (1998), Robbins, (2007), and Donohoo, Hattie and Ells (2018) - that joint experiences, where teachers interact frequently to plan, observe, and evaluate teaching, collective efficacy exists and has a positive impact on the success of the mutual goal. Although there is no conclusive data to make this connection, the narratives, observations, and survey responses allows for the assumption that perceived collective efficacy may be closely related to individual teacher self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

In short, participants in this study found a high and quantifiable level of collective efficacy in relation to their co-teaching choice and experiences. This study added to the existing research in that it uncovered how there may be a link between allowing teachers the choice of partner and/ or choice of participation in co-teaching and their self and collective efficacy. Both choice and efficacy added to the co-teacher's experiences in a positive way.

Administrative Influences on the Co-teaching Experience. In regards to research question 4 that focused on how administrative decisions influence teacher's experiences in co-teaching, this study examined administrative goals and motives to give teachers choice and the supports they put in place for co-teachers. According to the research by Friend (2008), Santoli, Sachs, Roney, & McClurg (2008), and Nichols, Dowdy, and Nichols (2010), administrative support is essential to the attitudes of co-teachers towards their co-teaching practice. When examining administrative motives to give teachers the choice of participation as well as choice of partner, the administrative responses suggested that choice was decided upon to have teacher's "buy-in" to the new initiative in order to positively impact the goals of increased rigor and student achievement in a general education setting for special education students. The research suggests that teachers who voluntarily participate are the ideal candidates for co-teaching, as they see the value in the strategy and have the knowledge and skills necessary to be suited for a co-teaching classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2008; Grillo, Moorehead & Bedesem, 2011).

The support with the greatest impact on the teacher's experiences besides choice of participation and choice of partners, was co-planning time. All teachers noted that co-planning time was essential to the success of their co-teaching experiences. Teachers described co-planning time as a time to reflect on lessons, plan modifications, plan pacing, grade together, and discuss interventions for students. The administration reported that co-planning was given as an

incentive for co-teachers and was planned for the first year of co-teacher implementation. Co-planning as an essential element of the success of co-teaching is consistent with the findings of Friend (2008) and Wolery, Gessler, Werts, Caldwell, and Snyder (2015).

Furthermore, this study noted participants' attitudes towards other administrative supports like professional development, for example, and the Professor in Residence (PIR)were negative. The research suggests that training in co-teaching is essential to the success of co-teaching teams (Manset & Semmel, 1997; Scruggs & Mastropieri,1996). Teachers reported that by and large, the professional development provided on co-teaching was useless and "could have been sent in a PowerPoint over email." The existing research suggests that there is a need for training but for the most part, teachers report the training is "less than they needed" for successful co-teaching (Wolrey et al., 2015). There were two questions on the survey dealing with Bandura's (1997) Proxy Efficacy, how the administration and larger school community provided supports to help co-teachers meet the goals of the co-teaching initiative. The first statement was **the quality of administrative support here really facilitates the co-teaching and learning process.** Ten teachers disagreed with this statement and two somewhat agreed, consistent with the interview data. The second statement was **Co-teaching teams needs more training to know how to deal with students.** The responses were mixed; eight respondents agreed with that statement and four somewhat disagreed. Ultimately, the survey responses indicate that co-teachers largely felt unsupported in the co-teaching process. These findings are consistent with the research stating that training for co-teaching is often not provided or the amount of training is less than the co-teachers need (Nichols, Dowdy & Nichols, 2010; Scruggs, et al., 2007). The administration in this study indicated a lack of financial freedom to provide more training, similar to the research by Werts, Gessler, Wolery, Snyder and Caldwell (2012)

which determined that districts are often unable or unwilling to provide teachers the training they needs because of financial or time constraints.

The PIR was contracted by the school from a local university and was supposed to observe co-teaching teams and provide feedback, but no teacher participant interacted with her in their classroom. The PIR was asked repeatedly to come into the classroom by several participants, but she never came. Ten out of 12 teachers reported that the administration did not do enough to support the co-teachers in this new initiative. Eleven teachers described the communication between teachers and administration as "non-existent." Many teachers discussed that they wanted to have administrative feedback to reflect on their co-teaching practice and better serve their students. There were no administrative observations of co-teaching teams to facilitate feedback. Many participants requested a chain of command, as in an administrative advocate for co-teaching teams to handle issues, do observations, and give feedback. Nevertheless, no administrator was in charge of co-teaching and thus co-teachers in this study reported feeling like they were left on their own with no support in and out of the classroom. The research by Friend (2008) suggests that like the participants in this survey, co-teachers felt that administrative support is found in words but not actions, and administration does not seem to understand the complexities of co-teaching programs, leaving much of the details to the teachers to work out for themselves.

However, in spite of their perceived lack of support by the administration, all of the teachers stated that their co-teaching experiences were positive and 11 out of 12 teachers said that they would like to co-teach again Several participants specifically stated they would only co-teach again if they could work with their chosen partners in the next iteration. This is also consistent with Kohler-Evans' (1997) findings where most teachers did not volunteer for co-

teaching, but saw great value in it and would seek to co-teach again with their current partner. This study found that despite the lack of communications, valuable PD, and chain of command, participants' experiences of co-teaching were generally positive due in part to choice of partner and or choice of participation.

Implications for Practice

The findings for this study provide several implications for school administrators to create a successful co-teaching environment on a school and district-wide level, not only for the co-teachers, but also for the students in the co-teaching environment.

Creating a school-wide cultural shift. According to teacher participants, stakeholders in the community, especially parents, were not informed of the shift away from the resource room option. Parents of students with IEPs or 504s were told of their student's new placement for the following academic year at the end of their annual IEP meeting. However, according to the director of special services, only about 40 of the nearly two hundred parents showed up for the annual IEP meetings. There were not significant objections from the families, but it is not clear if everyone understood the potential affects upon their children's academic program model. Likewise, parents of general education students were not informed of the changes in their classes and were completely unaware of the make-up of the new inclusion classes. There was an effort to reach out to the sending districts to discuss the new co-teaching program and the removal of the resource model. The sending districts' parents and child study team members were largely resistant to the change. Mike, the director of special services, was tasked with the role of mediator, and was to assuage the fears and provide assurances for the parents of rising 9th graders that their students would be provided with all the services they needed. For co-teaching to work, there needs to be a collegial school environment where all of the stakeholders understand the

shift in paradigm and can get on board with the rational and research behind the shift. Changing over to the co-teaching model without transparency doesn't allow for a positive and inclusive school culture (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998). Instead, parents and stakeholders demand answers and grow in resentment without a say or at the very least an understanding of co-teaching. Goals of co-teaching should be clarified and communicated to faculty and staff and should be integrated into the mission of the school and clearly articulated and recognized by all stakeholders.

Along the same line, participants in this study clearly valued being given choice in participation and choice of partner. The result of this study demonstrates that choice can create a positive co-teaching environment with a positive co-teaching relationship where the students inevitably benefit. Administrators should incentivize co-teaching, in that they should allow teachers to volunteer and choose their partners. Having two parties who agree with co-teaching philosophically and are mutually committed to a relationship is ideal and supported by the research (Friend, 2008). Incentivizing co-teaching also means, allowing teachers common planning time. The participants in this study were not assigned a duty, as per contract, but instead given a prep to plan with their co-teacher. If co-teaching is going to be a school-wide cultural shift, more teacher buy-in, through incentives and choice, the better. To that end, participants in this study indicated that they would like to stay with their co-teaching partners throughout the academic years. Many indicated this was because the partnership was so positive, they worked through issues and the "marriage" worked (Friend, 1997, 2008).

Participants in this study overwhelmingly discussed how the removal of the resource room option and subsequent implementation of co-teaching took place in less than a year. Ultimately, teachers perceived the roll-out of co-teaching as "slapped together" and poorly

executed because of the rush. Scruggs et al. (2007) found that teachers believed that co-teaching should not be mandated, but also that it should be imbued into school culture over a number of years with proper training and support for staff. Participants mentioned that phasing in co-teaching and spending one year in training before the implementation would have helped the quality of the co-teaching practice and the overall co-teaching experience. It would be beneficial for administrators to take their time and think through how to plan, implement and continue training staff. Having a supportive infrastructure for staff and students would be important including an administrative advocate for co-teaching teams who could observe, give feedback and mentor co-teaching teams. The participants in this study discussed the lack of chain of command for co-teachers in particular, as no administrator seemed responsible for having jurisdiction over the co-teaching initiative. Having all administration and staff on the same page with the import and goals of a co-teaching initiative would further develop an inclusive and positive school culture, from the top down.

In this study, participants discussed the issue of student placement in co-teaching classes. Many teachers discussed that some students were moved out of a resource room and did not have the ability to be successful in an inclusive, co-teaching environment. Likewise, other teachers discussed some students who were in the top 10% of their classes were in the co-teaching classes and they had great difficulty in challenging the top students, while adequately supporting and modifying for the lowest performing students. That said, the director of guidance admitted to allowing the students to be placed by the random algorithmic process of scheduling software, which may account for the extreme ability levels in co-teaching classes. In order to continue to foster a culture of inclusion in a school, administrators should look closely at student placement in co-teaching class. Although co-teaching involves heterogenous grouping of students of

varying abilities, more forethought and strategy should go into placing students appropriately in sections of co-teaching classes. Also, Park High School completely did away with resource classes and found that there were a handful of students in each grade level who were completely overwhelmed by the co-teaching, inclusion classes. It would be important for administrators to follow federal code for students with disabilities and provide every level of educational environment. Park had subsequently re-established one resource class per grade level for students who needed that educational environment. Having students placed in appropriate learning environments that match their abilities and provide accommodations for equitable learning environments is essential to creating a positive and inclusive school culture.

Ultimately, co-teaching was presented as a positive strategy of support, but it also allowed the administration to consider a significant changing in the special education LRE, while saving money. Although the administration attempted to provide some supports, there was not a lot of follow through or accountability. The PIR was not held accountable for real support to the teams. The administration did no observations of the teams, thus providing no feedback or constructive criticism for teams to grow in their practice. Common planning time which was notably significant to each participant in the development of their team and success in the classroom was only available for the first year of co-teaching.

Despite all the shortfalls in policy implementation, teachers participated in co-teaching in good faith with motives to effect positive change in the classroom. Teachers were resilient and seemed to rely on their partners to keep the students in focus, despite the lack of administrative support and communication.

Improving the depth and breadth of supports. The participants in this study discussed at length the lack of value in the professional development provided by the school administration.

It would be important for administrators to provide valuable on-going professional development to co-teachers and the body of faculty. The administration at Park High School provided three days of professional development for the future co-teachers. That was not nearly enough for teachers to feel prepared teaching in a new environment with a new population of students. Administrators should invest both the time and resources to implement co-teaching by giving their staff the training they need. A suggestion to administrators might be to survey the co-teaching staff several times a year asking for suggestions for professional development and training, so that the co-teaching staff will not only feel more prepared for their co-teaching environment but empowered through valuable and on- going professional development.

The participants in this study discussed the value of a common planning period with their co-teacher. Administrators at Park High School made co-planning time a priority in the first year of co-teaching. In the subsequent years, the administration chose to do away with co-planning due to scheduling restrictions. The existing research suggests that common planning is essential to co-teaching (Austin, 2001; Dieker, 2001; Friend, 2008; Wolpert, 200;). Administrators should invest in common planning continuously to improve co-teaching experience and thus add value to the co-teaching environment.

Participants in this study overwhelmingly wanted to co-teach again and to co-teach with their partners. Administrators should try to keep co-teaching teams together and not change partners year to year. As Friend (1997, 2008) refers to co-teaching as a "marriage," consistency will add value and quality of experience to the co-teaching partnership and thus positively impact the students' learning experience. Each year, a teacher gets better and better and grows in their craft, improving strategies, building on ideas, improving rigor and instruction. Having two people in a committed co-teaching relationship, working on all of those elements to make their

instruction and experience the best it can be for students is ideal. Carson's (2011) study found

that when co-teaching teams were not kept together year after year, they had to rebuild

relationships, often with people they would not choose, and had to re-establish goals,

philosophies, and work out personality conflict. Therefore, administrators should work to

preserve co-teaching partnerships from year to year, to maintain consistency, or at the very least

professionally respectful relationships.

Several participants in this study expressed frustration that they did not have

observational protocol in place for co-teaching teams and were only observed by their respective

department heads. For example, the supervisor of humanities would schedule an observation

with the history teacher in a co-teaching pair. The observation would only cover the history

teacher in the classroom and the post observation would strictly be about their behavior,

instruction, management, apart from their role in an instructional pair. Because no administrator

had a grasp on what they were looking for in a co-teaching environment, many administrators

have no real understanding of the complexities of co-teaching, unless they themselves have done

it (Friend, 2008). There should be training in place for administrators on co-teaching, and

schools should collaboratively develop observational protocol based on clearly stated goals of

the co-teaching program. Co-teaching teams should receive constructive feedback grounded in

the clearly communicated goals of the co-teaching initiative. One way to provide effective

feedback is to have administration complete training alongside staff on co-teaching practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined the experiences of co-teachers and how choice, efficacy, and

administrative support shaped their experiences in the co-teaching environment. More research is

needed to further understand the experiences of co-teachers and co-teaching as a practice. Recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. The participants in the study all had choice in partner and/or choice in participation in co-teaching. This study was one of the first of its kind to examine choice in co-teaching. Participants described choice as a key factor to their positive experiences in co-teaching. To gain a deeper understanding of how choice plays a role in teachers' co-teaching experience, further qualitative research needs to be completed comparing the experiences of teachers who have choice in co-teaching and those who do not. Specifically, I would recommend: an expansion of this study to a multi-case, case study, examining other schools with voluntary co-teaching practices in state and exploring what findings from this study transfer; and a comparative quantitative study on schools that do implement choice in co-teaching and those that do not and what the impact of choice is on student academic achievement. It should also be noted that this study examined choice in co-teaching at the secondary level. Future research on voluntary co-teaching practices at the middle or elementary levels might reveal different experiences and may added to the body of research on choice and co-teaching.

2. This study examined how teachers' self-efficacy and collective efficacy of co-teaching teams influenced the experiences of co-teachers. Though in recent years there have been studies on teachers' collective efficacy (Donohoo, Hattie, & Ells, 2018; Goddard & Hoy, 2003; Goddard, Hoy, Woolfolk & Hoy, 2004; Hattie, 2016;) and teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 2006a; Gursky & Passaro, 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Soodak & Podell, 1996; Tschannen- Moran, Woolfolk, & Hoy,

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2003; Wheatly, 2005), there is little research on the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their collective efficacy and their impact on student achievement. Although this study examined teacher collective efficacy in the confines of co-teaching, it fell short in making the concrete and conclusive empirical connection between self-efficacy and collective efficacy as it applies to the co-teaching environment. A quantitative study surveying general education and special education teachers' self and collective efficacy would shed light on the idea of why teachers do what they do in the midst of difficult policies and practices. It would be interesting to examine the relationship between the constructs of self and collective efficacy as it is tied to the co-teaching practice. Going further, a mixed methods study of the link between self and collective efficacy in the co-teaching practice and the impact of collective efficacy on student academic achievement would uncover a larger picture of how teachers and their beliefs impact students in a co-teaching environment.

3. This study looked at the impact of co-teaching on students as perceived by co-teachers and administrators. One of the stated goals of implementing co-teaching at the research site was to improve student test scores, particularly those scores of students with disabilities. Existing research is mixed and inconclusive regarding co-teaching and its impact on student achievement. However, Tremblay's (2013) study examined the impact of co-teaching on test scores using resource students as a control group resource and co-teaching special education students as an experimental group. He found that the co-teaching model was globally more effective for students with disabilities. There needs to be more quantitative research on how IEP students perform academically in a voluntary co-teaching environment, using longitudinal

analysis to have empirical findings about the academic impact of choice in co-teaching on students with disabilities.

4. This study dealt with teacher's experience in co-teaching. It would be important for future researchers to understand the students' perceptions and experiences in a co-teaching environment. Using qualitative methodology, it would be valuable to compare co-teachers experiences with student experiences in co-teaching classes and compare the experiences of both groups. Although studying children proves to be difficult given the research regulations of IRB, student's voices and experiences are lost to the research, although they are essential to understanding the impact of co-teaching.

5. Lastly, this study specifically examined teachers who were willing to participate in co-teaching. It would important to understand why teachers, specifically general education teachers, did not volunteer to participate in the co-teaching initiative. Understanding the teachers' decisions to not volunteer, through an expanded qualitative case study at this site would help to uncover what makes general education teacher choose to teach in a largely heterogenous environment, without the assistance of a co-teacher.

Conclusion

Findings for this study add to the existing body of research focused on teachers' experiences in co-teaching, by reaffirming as well as identifying dominant themes of choice and efficacy that carry through teachers' experiences in the co-teaching environment. Teacher choice and teacher collective efficacy informed the positive experiences of co-teaching in

important and interesting ways and should be acknowledged by district level and school wide administrators looking to implement or improve co-teaching initiatives. This study not only endeavored to explain, understand and share the stories of 12 teachers given choice, but it also hopes to bring awareness to the understanding of the value teachers bring to their craft through their self and collective efficacy. Also, this study attempts to describe the influence administrative decision-making has on the practice and perceptions of teachers. This study calls for society to re-examine the value teachers bring to the classroom and implore policy-makers and practitioners to value choice for the collective success of co-teaching in schools in the United States.

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Appendices A-D

Teacher Recruitment Flyer

CO-TEACHERS OF PASSAIC VALLEY

COME PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON CO-TEACHING CALLED:
"UNDERSTANDING THE CO-TEACHING EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS: NEGOTIATING CHOICE AND EFFICACY"

PURPOSE OF STUDY: THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO EXPLORE WHAT DRIVES TEACHERS CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN CO-TEACHING AND UNDERSTAND HOW TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY INFLUENCES THEIR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN A CO-TEACHING ENVIRONMENT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS.

ELIGIBILTY: CO-TEACHERS WHO 1) TEACH WITH CHOSEN PARTNER 3) ARE TENURED 4) WERE AT PV DURING 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR

PARTICIPATION: A 45-60 MINUTE, AUDIO-REORDERED INTERVIEW WILL BE SET UP AND CONDUCTED AT A TIME AND PLACE CONVENIENT TO YOU BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE 2017.

RESEARCHER INFORMATION: MARY A. GAROFALO IS A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AT THE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY PROGRAM AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY.

****
ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY OR INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO MARY A. GAROFALO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AT

** NOTE: PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY! ALL CONVERSATIONS WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL. ALL NAMES AND OTHER IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY REPORTS OR PRESENTATIONS. ALL INFORMATION WILL BE SAFELY STORED.

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Administrator,

I am writing to you to ask if you would be interested participating in a study on choice in co-teaching. As you may know, I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership, Management and Policy program at Seton Hall University and I would like you ask you to consider participating in my dissertation research.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the co-teaching environment, when given the choice of participation. As you were a part of the decision making of how to implement co-teaching at PV, I am looking to explore your experiences, motivations and feelings about the co-teaching environment as the first year of the program comes to a close. Your input would be invaluable, as this study will help flesh out the idea of choice in co-teaching from an administrative perspective.

As a valuable contributor to this research, you will be asked to participate in a 45-60 minute interview at a time and place that is convenient to you, between April 2017 and June 2017. During the interview, I will ask questions concerning your perceptions of co-teaching, experiences implementing co-teaching, your thoughts on the challenges and strengths in co-teaching during this process. With your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital audio recorder. Your name, all other identify characteristics and all conversations will remain confidential and will not be used in reports or presentations. The data from your interviews, both digital and paper, will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and will be greatly appreciated. I sincerely hope you consider participating. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

Mary Garofalo
Doctoral Candidate
Ph.D. Program in Education Research, Assessment and Evaluation
Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
Seton Hall University College of Education and Human Services

Appendix A-3

Informed Consent Form

Choice and Efficacy of Co-Teaching

Researcher's Affiliation: Mary A. Garofalo is a doctoral student at Seton Hall University, in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy.

The purpose of the research: The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers' choice of participation and efficacy plays a role in their experiences of co-teaching, as they work to meet the needs of all students.

The research procedures: Participants who sign the consent form will participate in a minimum of one interview between April 2017 and June 2017. Each interview may last up to one hour. Mary Garofalo will conduct the interview and ask questions about experiences, motivations, attitudes and perceptions about co-teaching. Each participant will be asked to fill out a collective efficacy survey during the interview. No one will be required to answer specific questions if they do not wish to do so. The interview will be audio recorded.

Instruments: The researcher will use an interview question script and collective efficacy survey. The questions that guide the interview will focus on understanding teachers' perceptions of their co-teaching experience and how choice has impacted their experiences in their work environment. In addition, interviews with administration will focus on motivation for choice.

> **Teacher Interview Questions**
> 1) What are some factors that you considered when you volunteered for co-teaching?
> 2) What skills do you feel you need in order to be successful in the co-teaching environment?
> 3) What are your greatest challenges in the co-teaching environment? Strengths?
> 4) How do you think the administrative support and decisions have impacted your co-teaching practice?
> **Administrative Interview Questions**
> 1) What was the rationale behind eliminating resource classes for students with disabilities?
> 2) What factors contributed to the decision to allow staff to volunteer and have a choice of partner?
> 3) In what ways do you think the co-teaching teams have been supported by the administration throughout the implementation of co-teaching?
> 4) What is the value of co-teaching at Passaic Valley?

Participation in this research is voluntary and can be ended at any time: Your participation is completely voluntary**.** You may withdraw from this study at any time.

Statement of Anonymity and Confidentiality: Anonymity is not possible because the researchers knows the participants as her colleagues. However, all comments from the interviews and survey responses will remain entirely confidential. No one's name or identifying

characteristics will be used in the reports or presentations. Participants' identities will remain confidential.

Records: The researcher, without any participants' names, will transcribe the audio recordings. To keep the data confidential, the transcripts and survey responses will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. Any computerized copies of the interview material or survey responses will be stored on a USB memory device, which will be stored with the printed materials. After the research is completed, the audio recordings and all material will be destroyed after three years. Only the researcher for this study will be able to access the recordings and transcripts.

Possible Risks: There are little or no anticipated risks of taking part in this research. The measures that the researcher takes to ensures participants' confidentiality means that each individual's participation will not be revealed. Nor will the information provided by any participant be traced to his or her participation.

Benefits: While there are no foreseeable direct benefits, it is anticipated that the results of this research will help improve policy and practice of the implementation of co-teaching in the future.

Remuneration: There will be no monetary numeration provided to participate in this study.

Contact information: Department of Education, Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079. If you have questions about your rights as a human research subject, you may contact the Director of Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research at 973-313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

Consent: To indicate consent to participate in this study, please sign and date this form in the space provided below, retain a copy of the signed form for your records and forward the original to me.
___ I agree to participate in this study.
___ I agree to be audio recorded during my interview.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____
Participant Signature: _____

Appendix A-4

IRB Approval Letter

May 10, 2017

Dear Ms. Garofalo,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved as submitted under expedited review your research proposal entitled "Understanding the Co-Teaching Experiences of Teachers: Negotiating Choice and Efficacy". The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Forms. Make copies only of these stamped Consent Forms.
The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.
Thank you for you cooperation.

In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.

Sincerely,
Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Eunyoung Kim

Interview Protocol For Teachers

What was your understanding of co-teaching before you volunteered?

What was your thought process when you volunteering for co-teaching via survey?

What are some factors you considered when volunteering to co-teaching?

What are you your greatest strengths as a teacher?

What are you biggest challenges?

What about teaching drew you to the profession?

How do you feel about choosing your co-teaching partner?

Why did you choose your partner to pair up with?

What are your biggest strengths in the co-teaching environment?

What are your greatest challenges in the co-teaching environment?

How would you describe your co-teaching relationship?

 How would you describe your roles in the classroom?

How do you feel about the way your co-taught classes operate?

In what ways do you think you meet the needs of all learners-individually in the co-

teaching environment?

How do you feel that as a team you meet the needs of all learners?

How do you feel co-teaching has altered the way you teach or the way you deliver

content?

What skills do you feel you have to be successful in the co-teaching environment?

How do you feel about the way your co-taught classes operate?

What impact does your relationship with your co-teacher have on the classroom

operations?

What would you say the greatest strengths of your relationship are?

What are the greatest challenges you face in your relationship with your co-teacher?

How has your professional relationship changed with you co-partner over the course of your collaboration?

How do you feel about the administrative support of your co-teaching practice?

What supports have helped you with you co-teaching practice?

How do you think the administration has impacted your co-teaching practice?

What would you suggest to the administration to put in place for an optimal co-teaching environment?

How has your perspective on co-teaching changed over the course of the experiences?

Would you choose to participate in co-teaching again?

Would you choose your partner again?

Interview Protocol For Administrators

What was the rationale behind eliminating resource classes for students with disabilities?

What about the inclusion model was appealing to you?

What is your understanding of co-teaching?

How do you feel about the implementation of co-teaching as a fit for PVHS?

How did you decide to allow staff to volunteer for co-teaching as opposed to mandating the change?

How do you think voluntary participation has impacted the implementation of co-teaching?

How did you decide to allow staff to choose their co-teaching partner?

How do you feel allowing the opportunity for choice of partner has impacted the implementation of co-teaching?

How did you decide co-planning time was important to the implementation of the program?

How do you feel about the administrative supports like a Professor-In-Residence and co-planning time has impacted the implementation of the co-teaching program?

How did the reports of other schools' implementation of co-teaching and suggestions of the staff on co-teaching influence decisions to implement programmatic elements?

What do you think has helped the implementation of co-teaching the most?

Do you think the co-teaching teams have been supported throughout the implementation?

How would you characterize the communication between co-teaching teams and the administration?

What do you feel is the greatest strength of co-teaching at this school?

What do you feel is the greatest challenge for co-teaching at this school?

What value do you see in co-teaching at this school?

What are your goals for co-teaching 5 years from now?

What would you change in the implementation of co-teaching?

Appendix C

Co-Planning Observational Protocol

Teacher:_____   **Teacher:**_____

Subject:_____   **Room:**_____

Date:_____   **Time:**_____

Observations	Researcher Reflections
Co-teacher interactions:	
Discussion/ Dialogue/language:	
Behaviors:	
Responsibilities/roles:	

Appendix D

Collective Efficacy Scale

Directions: Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements from**: STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) DISAGREE (2) SOMEWHAT DISAGREE (3) SOMEWHAT AGREE (4) AGREE(5) STRONGLY AGREE (6).**

1. As co-teachers, we are able to get through to the most difficult students..1 2 3 4 5 6

2. As co-teachers we are confident we will be able to motivate their students..1 2 3 4 5 6

3. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers we give up........................1 2 3 4 5 6

4. As a team, we don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning …………………………………………………………... 1 2 3 4 5 6

5. If a child doesn't learn something the first time, we will try another way.........1 2 3 4 5 6

6. As co-teachers, we are skilled in various methods of teaching.........1 2 3 4 5 6

7. We are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach…………...1 2 3 4 5 6

8. We fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods...1 2 3 4 5 6

9. We have what it takes to get the children to learn................... 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes co-teaching very difficult....... 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. As co-teachers, we do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.......................1 2 3 4 5 6

12. We think there are some students that no one can reach...........1 2 3 4 5 6

13. The quality of administrative support here really facilitates the co- teaching and learning process...1 2 3 4 5 6

14. The students here come in with so many advantages they are bound to learn.........1 2 3 4 5 6

15. These students come to school ready to learn................................1 2 3 4 5 6

16. Students here just aren't motivated to learn....................................1 2 3 4 5 6

17. Co-teaching teams need more training to know how to deal with these students............1 2 3 4 5 6

18. My co-teacher and I truly believe every child can learn.................1 2 3 4 5 6

Adapted from (Goddard & Hoy, 2003)