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ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPECIAL
AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

CATHERINE BENSON

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

LITERATURE REVIEW: ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE
COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Catherine Benson

MAY 2022

APPROVED

Advisor's Name: Meghan Cavalier, Ed.D.

Program Director's Name: Katie Bonawitz, Ed.D.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my husband, Mike, for giving me constant encouragement throughout this writing process. He supported me and held me accountable to my writing through tired days after work and vacation days when I didn't feel like doing anything academically related. Thank you to my brother, Nate, for being my greatest inspiration throughout my career in special education. After graduating with my Bachelor's, he told me I would go back for my Masters after some time off. I told him he was wrong, yet here I am completing my Masters. I also want to thank my thesis advisor, Meg Cavalier, for providing me with guidance through the months leading up to completing this project.

Abstract

Professional educators at all levels of education in the United States are responsible for assisting students in achieving academic success and preparing for employment. Teachers today are tasked with meeting the academic needs of both general education and special education students in various settings. Teachers strive to provide students with well-designed lessons, innovative teaching methods, procedural competence, and practical instruction. General and special education teachers must work together to meet the needs of their students. However, facilitating guidance for the two groups of teachers to collaborate falls on the administrative level of responsibility. This literature review explores the state of collaboration between general and special education teachers primarily in U. S. schools, the role of administrators in supporting that collaboration, and identifies some barriers to effective collaboration.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This review of the literature will provide suggestions on how administrators can move general and special education teachers toward effective collaboration. Special education is more successful when there is strong cooperation between general and special education educators (Hernandez, 2013). The effectiveness of collaboration between general and special education teachers relies on their ability to work together as equals. While general and special education teachers must work together to ensure that each student's needs are met and that each teacher's goals are achieved, they often have vastly different teaching styles, philosophies, and personal objectives, which can make collaboration challenging (Youngs, Jones & Low, 2011).

There are a variety of ways to achieve effective collaboration between general and special education teachers and a key component to meet this goal is the strategies that school administrative leaders can provide to both groups of teachers. Some strategies include opportunities in the following areas: professional development, engaging in dialogue around educational practices, establishing clear expectations concerning roles and responsibilities, establishing trust with their colleagues, developing learning communities with shared goals, and nurturing continued collaboration (Landeever, 2010).

In 1986, Dewey et al. presented an approach for effective collaborative teaching between general and special education teachers, which included five strategies. The first strategy was cooperative-teaching. The second strategy was parallel teaching. The third strategy was a general education teacher as a mentor. The fourth strategy was consultation with a special education teacher. The fifth strategy was utilizing a special educator as a specialist in small group work (as cited in Hildebrand, 2018).

Alternatively, in 1997, Hasbrouck and Christen introduced an approach called peer coaching that was found to be effective by both general and special educators. This strategy involved teacher collaboration to create lesson plans that were specifically designed for individual students in their class. The research suggested that school administrators can play a role in supporting effective collaboration between general and special education teachers by providing resources such as time, training, curriculum materials, professional development opportunities, and ongoing staff development programs (Hasbrouck & Christen, 1997).

Rationale

The process of instruction occurs in different settings in line with the different educational requirements of the learners. Teachers have a significant responsibility to identify the content intended for learners, deliver that content, and positively impact their learners' future. As such, teachers design their instruction depending on the type of learners they instruct. Special education students receive instruction dependent on what is considered the least restrictive environment (LRE) for their learning recorded in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (Brendle et al., 2017; McLeskey et al., 2011). Therefore, special education students may receive their instruction in a center-based setting with a special education teacher, in a general education setting with a general education teacher, or a combination of both of these settings (Da Fonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017). Special education students who experience instruction in a general education setting participate in whole group instruction and learning alongside neurotypical students. Special education students who experience instruction in a center-based classroom may receive specialized instruction alongside non neurotypical students, aided by paraprofessional staff. Additionally, students encounter general education curriculum when in the general

education classroom and specialized instruction that may or may not align with the curriculum of the general education classroom. Encouraging collaboration between the special and general education teachers is a critical step in refining the quality of teaching and learning experiences for teachers and students (Morgan, 2016).

Collaboration is a method that permits two or more professionals to jointly present their mastery of skill to develop a *shared* mastery of skill (Mofield, 2020). Collaboration includes acts of consultation, sharing instructional strategies, peer-coaching, and joint decision-making driven by student data. Mofield (2020) described collaboration as a “key element to professional learning” (p. 21). Teacher collaboration is also considered a method that produces valuable outcomes for student education. Encouraging collaboration between general and special education teachers is an important step in improving the quality of education. This research analyzes the ways school administrators can support effective collaboration between general and special education teachers.

Investigating this gap will address how school districts can fulfill the need for support in collaboration for teachers. The collaboration between these two groups of teachers is important to educate students and equip them with the requisite skills to join the workforce and solve real-life problems.

Definitions of Terms

Administrators

An educational administrator, also someone, perhaps, in a supervisor role (department chair, TOSA) , is someone responsible for ensuring that their institution's students and teachers have a safe and productive learning environment (Cobb, 2015; Narayan, 2016).

Center-Based Classroom

As defined by the Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning, "center-based learning" refers to when teachers gather materials for a single topic area in a single classroom setting. Based on the type of material or activity, the centers are arranged. Pretend play, reading, painting, and science can all take place in various classrooms within a single school building (Brendle et al., 2017).

Co-teaching

A collaborative approach to teaching that requires the partnership and shared expertise of a general education teacher and special education teacher (Friend, 2011; Hernandez, 2013). In a more broad sense, two or more teachers deliver content to a shared group of learners. These groups of teachers gather with the sincere purpose of working together to execute effective practices for the outcome of successful student learning (Morgan, 2016).

Effective Collaboration

People working together to accomplish a common goal is known as collaboration. Studies have shown that working in groups motivates people and improves their performance. People who collaborate on assignments are more engaged, less fatigued, and more productive

than those who work alone on the same project. When people work together as a team, they can accomplish things that no one person could (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014).

General Education Teacher

Classroom teachers who are expected to be knowledge experts of curriculum (Howard & Potts, 2009).

Individualized Education Plan

The plan or program established by the child's family and/or authorized advocates to ensure that special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities in elementary and secondary schools.

It includes:

- Disabled students' participation and progress in the school's general curriculum,
- The child's eligibility for any and all relevant services,
- Accommodations that support school success for the student,
- Annual educational goals and objectives that can be measured (Al-Shamarri & Hornby, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2017e, July 12).

Professional Development

Formal or informal experiences that continue the advancement of skills, knowledge, and ideals (Feldman, 2017).

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Formation of a professional environment designed to promote purposeful discussion and exchange of ideas between groups of individuals. Teachers have the opportunity to share expertise and learn from each other (Kyena & Gustafson, 2020).

Special Education Teacher: An educator who is specially trained to provide individualized instruction for a child with a disability so he or she can achieve his or her expected educational outcomes (Da Fonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017).

Statement of the Question or Topic

The guiding research question for this thesis is as follows: How can school administrators support effective collaboration between general and special education teachers? Three relevant themes have been identified in the literature. First, it is vital to survey teachers' perspectives and misconceptions of their role in collaboration. Second, it is essential to evaluate strategies and methods general and special education teachers use to collaborate. Third, it is imperative to identify what barriers and challenges teachers face in effort to collaborate that can only be supported by administration.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews various methods and resources used by general and special education teachers to achieve effective collaboration. In order to locate the literature for this thesis, searches of ERIC, JSTOR, and Academic Search Premier were conducted to research resources of administrative support. Various search terms were used to locate relevant studies and generally followed the format of "administrative support + teacher collaboration." Studies were collected from the available literature that focused on general and special education teacher collaboration outcomes, which included the presence of administrative support and teacher attitude towards the collaboration process. Cooperative teaching is unusual in that it focuses on direct collaboration between general and special education instructors in a classroom for the bulk of their time, as opposed to prior techniques (Feldman & Schechter, 2017). On an equal basis, teachers who are part of a high-performing team will participate in all aspects of lesson planning, instruction, and evaluation. The primary responsibility of general education instructors is to follow the school district's mandated curricula. To accomplish successful cooperation, time, support, resources, monitoring, and dedication are required. It is vital that district, building, and classroom leaders collaborate to establish effective cooperation practices. Collaboration skills, instructional styles, topic areas, disability, and accommodation should all be taught to teachers (Feldman & Schechter, 2017).

Chapter II is organized as follows. Effective collaboration between general and special education teachers is explained, resources needed for effective collaboration, and the role of school administrators in supporting effective collaboration. The chapter concludes by reviewing barriers and limitations to effective collaboration.

What is Effective Collaboration?

Effective Collaboration

Collaboration between teachers plays a major role in student achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2004). In fact, most would argue it might be the sole factor because studies show teacher collaboration greatly contributes to improved student learning outcomes and school improvement (Morgan, 2016). However, defining effective collaboration and its vital components seems to be where research findings vary widely.

Morgan (2016) found a common theme of collaboration, which included, but was not limited to: co-planning, informal meetings, formal meetings, and co-teaching. Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) agreed and pointed out that collaboration is often viewed as synonymous with co-teaching, but went on to make the same distinction that co-teaching is one part of collaboration. Morgan described collaboration as the combined effort of two parties working toward a mutual goal and that to achieve effective collaboration, the process itself must be viewed as a continuous practice and not an end goal. Morgan (2016) described effective collaboration differently than some of the research conducted by others. The difference Morgan presented focused on the social aspects of collaboration. It is a practice between individuals who gather to collaborate with sincerity and genuine desire to improve student outcomes versus those who gather with physical presence but without sincerity. Overall, genuine collaboration is a social complex that impacts not only the relationship of those collaborating, but the overall community of the school.

Lakkala, Galkiene, Navaitiene, Cierpialowska, Tomecek, and Uusiautti (2021) described effective collaboration as ‘team teaching’. The research found that team teaching was composed

of two or more teachers working together that have made the effort to build a strong relationship. The author noted that to develop such a relationship, there are two levels teachers must connect on. One development of the collaborative relationship involved the execution of shared responsibilities: planning, implementing, and assessing the teaching of diverse students. On another level, the relationship called for teachers to value one another's voices, thoughts, and opinions. Teacher's need to reflect on one another's personal views, expectations, and exercise equal communication (Lakkala et al., 2021). Together, these levels of components build a relationship that promotes flexible and reflective teaching, valuable discussion, and overall effective collaboration.

Similarly, Friend and Cooke (2013) described effective collaboration as an effective tool. The authors agreed that the role of collaboration calls for each individual feeling their opinion and thoughts as valued in the relationship, but provided a more detailed description of a collaborative relationship. Research found that successful collaboration is the voluntary joint effort of two equal parties. These parties join together identifying as being on the same level, meaning it is not one as the teacher and the other the 'helper' or 'assistant', but two separate parties as equals in the relationship. These parties share mutual goals, shared responsibility in decision making, take shared accountability, share resources, and value one another's expertise.

While Goddard, Miller, Larson, and Goddard (2010) comparably described collaboration as successful when teachers join together to share knowledge, share resources for knowledge, and plan instruction to improve student outcomes, they focused more on administrative support. According to Goddard et al. (2010) the combined effort of teachers and school leaders is a key component to achieve effective collaboration.

Approaches to Achieving Effective Collaboration

Co-teaching Method

Non-neurotypical students are increasingly being integrated with neurotypical counterparts in general education classrooms to achieve the goal of inclusion for all students (Morgan, 2016). Students with and without impairments are now taught by general and special education teachers working together in the same classroom. The term "co-teaching technique" refers to collaborating with educators (Brendle, Lock & Piazza, 2017). Cooperative teaching, sometimes known as collaborative teaching, is a paradigm that may be used to fulfill the needs of individual students in an inclusive setting.

Students with special needs may benefit from the expertise of both general and special education professionals when the group of teachers work collectively in the same classroom (Alghazo & Alkhazaleh, 2021). Because of this, to meet the needs of all students, all forms of co-teaching need the involvement of at least two professionals who work together in the classroom. All co-teaching models concentrate on the knowledge of each professional in the context. Even though these specialists are all from the same subject, the degree of knowledge each teacher possesses in addressing students' requirements might be compared to a multidisciplinary approach. In addition, co-teaching places a lot of attention on the interaction between the instructors in the classroom. As part of this process, the teaching team must establish a standard knowledge of classroom procedures and a clear grasp of classroom teacher roles (Friend, 2011).

Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) described a co-teacher individually as one who is aware of themselves, knows their partner, knows the students they are serving, and ‘knows their stuff’. A teacher who knows themselves, is aware of any preconceived notions they are bringing into a collaborative relationship and is willing to acknowledge those notions. A teacher who knows their partners, knows the vision and goals their partner holds and their preferences of teaching style. A teacher who knows their students, recognizes their profile beyond an IEP. The teacher recognizes a student’s abilities, interests, and how that student views themselves. A teacher who ‘knows their stuff’ understands more than the content they are teaching. The teacher also knows the classroom routine and how to translate strategies across various content.

Practicing Self-Awareness

Self-awareness of one's pedagogical techniques is also helpful in fostering teamwork. Self-awareness is achieved through gaining an understanding of one's pedagogical methods. Teachers need to question assumptions and views held about their work to gain perspective. It is easier for educators to improve student learning outcomes when reviewing their assumptions and ideas about their activities. The importance of this comes into play when diverse viewpoints join together to discuss ideas on how to improve teaching for children. Teaching methods that individual instructors have perfected may be shared with others. When teaching students with disabilities, Fisher, Frey, and Thousand (2003) found this crucial. The authors discovered that successful inclusion necessitates the integration of diverse viewpoints on teaching techniques during cooperation. To come up with answers to the challenges faced by students with disabilities, it is essential to have a variety of viewpoints available. Educators can better meet the unique requirements of students' needs and the limitations imposed by their disabilities when

other points of view are represented. Developing a sense of self-awareness in one's teaching practice comes from examining one's prejudices and ideas. Students will benefit from educators questioning their preconceptions about teaching and learning. This perspective is essential to collaboration because it allows for a wide range of ideas to be brought together to meet the needs of students (Cornelius & Gustafson, 2020).

Interpersonal Skills

When it comes to successful teamwork, strong interpersonal skills are an important trait for teachers to possess (Morgan, 2016). Cobb (2015) conducted a meta-analysis study that examined 19 studies focused on the administrative role for nurturing an inclusive and collaborative school environment. The studies analyzed primarily took place in the United States and ranged from the year 2001 to 2011. The study found that principals typically had three main responsibilities. The first responsibility was to promote inclusive programming. The second responsibility was to facilitate staff collaboration. The third responsibility was to foster parent engagement. Overall, the 19 studies examined placed emphasis on the importance of collaboration between teachers. Cobb (2015) shared that principals identified interpersonal skills as an important teaching characteristic to achieve collaboration because staff need to work well face-to-face. The capacity to work well with others is a function of each person's attitude, beliefs, and behavior. It is not dependent on individuals personally liking one another (Friend, 2000). Positive attitudes, professional competency, shared perspective, dedication, respect, and open communication all contribute to achieving a collaborative atmosphere (Hernandez, 2013). Without these qualities in a team member, it hinders problem-solving in the collaborative

process. Teachers' mutual regard, trust, and ability to communicate with one another are also jeopardized, contributing to competitive attitudes (Morgan, 2016).

Training

There are various approaches to collaboration (Mofield, 2020). Consultation, co-planning, and co-teaching are only a few of the ways in which cooperation is practiced. According to Alghazo and Alkhazeleh (2021), creating ways to learn and share information is an important part of a collaboration. On the other hand, Ricci and Fingon (2018) argued that collaboration can be fostered through district-wide training and a model of cooperation. Mofield (2020) also brought up the need for coaching in collaboration. Educators benefit from coaching because it allows them to better grasp their objectives and how to solve problems.

According to Da Fonte and Barton-Arwood (2017), the best place where this collaborative-style of teaching should be taught is in the teacher-training centers. Currently, teacher-training centers have one setting where both groups of teachers undergo their training. Mofield (2020) noted that teachers frequently focus on learning the curriculum they will teach, the professional ethics they have to follow, and the results they should be focused on achieving.

Lakkala et al. (2021) conducted a study that investigated teacher training for teachers outside of the United States. The intention of the study was to evaluate how schools utilized teacher methods beyond the focus of teachers learning classroom management. Four schools were selected that had broad experience with inclusive education. To collect data, researchers of the study conducted interviews with students and teachers from each school. Of the four schools, one school, in Austria, stood out among the rest for its training. After the lesson day ended, the training school dedicated at least two hours a week for teacher training that focused on the

organization skills of individual students' work. Separate from organization training, once a week, a school council meeting was held for teachers in training to gain skills in handling conflict with others.

Similarly Ricci and Fingon's (2018) study looked at how future general and special education teachers are taught to collaborate. Student impressions of collaboration between general and special education professors were examined while students took part in co-taught classes given by the two professors. The study involved 59 university students. Participants were recruited based on their position as students in the general education and special education instructors' courses, respectively. It was decided to use a Collaboration Self-Assessment Tool (CSAT) to assess participants' ability to work collaboratively. A Collaboration and Co-Teaching Belief Survey (CTCB) included open-ended questions about participants' perceptions of collaboration as well as evaluations of actual co-teaching sessions. Students were tested on a variety of measures, such as the CSAT and open-ended replies, at both the start and end of the semester. In the course, students noted an increase in their awareness of the importance of working together. Throughout the course, general and special education professors worked together to model effective collaboration tactics and approaches for the group of students. The general and special education professors modeled co-planning, co-teaching, co-assessing, communication, and flexibility. The study found that students benefited from the collaborative model and gained perspective of recognizing the importance for collaboration (Ricci and Fingon, 2018).

Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2004) conducted a study that investigated the strengths and weaknesses of pre-service training for teachers. The purpose of the investigation was to gain

understanding concerning the perspective special education education teachers held toward collaboration with general education teachers. Research from Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2004) indicated that teacher training should include at least four components. The first component was training should provide teachers with education in both knowledge about collaboration and the skills required to practice collaboration. The second component was training should provide teachers with collaborative training that promotes collaboration in a shared curriculum. The third component was training should have content that is well thought out and covers a variety of topics, including conflict resolution. The final component was training should focus on positive student outcomes. Teachers need training on documenting student behaviors and progress monitoring. Teachers need to know how to use data collection to plan instruction and share valuable information with parents and other teachers (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2004).

Coaching

On the other hand, Mofield et al. (2020) argued that training was not enough to build the skills needed for teachers to collaborate with one another. Mofield et al. (2020) shared that both general and special education teachers would benefit more from continued professional interactions of feedback or ‘coaching’ following a session of training.

Sharing Information That Concerns Students

A teacher should be aware of the student group they are working with and communicate learner characteristics. When servicing students with disabilities, all instructors should be aware of the specific aspects of the disability, not only the special education teacher (Jones, 2012). Jones shared that teachers needed to know about students' learning methods, behaviors, strengths, limitations, and the details of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to guide

personalized teaching. Teachers could better understand the needs of their students when access to student-specific information was available, including the success and failure of implemented accommodations. Having a deeper understanding of each student's learning style helps the instructor tailor the learning experience for each one. With a better grasp of these learning characteristics, instructors may work together to devise methods for delivering and monitoring teaching tailored to their particular student group (Jones, 2012).

Feldman and Schechter (2017) conducted a study that investigated the supportive and hindering elements of the professional learning community (PLC) at Friendship School. The study examined the PLC surrounding autism students in the special education program. Feldman and Schechter conducted 84 interviews and 18 observations over the course of two years that included administration staff, teachers and other classroom professionals like speech-pathologists. Feldman and Schechter believed the degree of information needed to effectively support a student is too high for one professional to hold alone. To effectively address the requirements of students, Feldman and Schechter (2017) believed that instructors should collaborate with one another on the “full range of existing information” (p. 5).

Professional Development

As previously mentioned, Ricci and Fingon (2018) believed teacher training was a viable approach to achieving collaboration between general education and special education teachers. Idol (2006) presented findings that aligned with this thought as well. However, the research conducted by Idol (2006) focused on the inclusion of special education students in four schools and how professional development could support better inclusion. It examined how the special education services were provided, teacher attitudes toward inclusivity of special education

students in the general education classroom, and teacher attitudes toward collaboration. The study found that the schools utilized resource rooms for special education support, learned that general education teachers had a positive attitude toward including all students in the classroom, and discovered that teachers expressed value in collaboration. Additionally, the study found that professional development was considered a needed component to successful collaboration (Idol, 2006). Teachers felt professional development was needed as a model for how general education teachers could better include students with disabilities in the classroom.

Professional development is a task that works to meet the needs of teachers through meeting level requirements, expanding content knowledge, developing curriculum, and motivating best practices for classroom instruction and behavior management. The intention behind professional development is to positively impact behaviors of teachers and in turn, have an effective impact on learning and student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Positive Interactions

One of the most vital components to achieve effective collaboration is effective communication and for general and special education teachers to communicate positively with one another. Both parties must have positive attitudes, which in turn will nurture a more productive environment for all teachers (Alghazo & Alkhazelah, 2021). Lakalla et al. (2021) reported that positive interactions between teachers fosters positive outcomes, in turn, nurturing a working environment based on trust. Having such a positive environment will foster collaboration among teachers (Smith & Leonard, 2005). Similarly, Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) listed positive relationships with other teachers as an essential component of strong

collaborative partnerships. Morgan (2016) echoed this thought with the note that she found teachers can have different personalities and teaching approaches, but still have positive relationships.

Dialogue Around Educational Practices

Cobb (2015) found that dialogue around educational practices promotes collaborative relationships. The author reported that when teachers meet to collaborate, the two parties are able to exchange and build on one another's ideas, in turn, developing more creative and innovative strategies to design and implement instructional content (Mofield, 2020). Scruggs et al. (2007) found similar results that indicated teachers felt they learned from one another's expertise when meeting and collaborating. Cobb (2015) noted that when general and special education teachers met for planning sessions, they not only recognized the responsibility to practice collaboration, but recognized the value of gathering and exchanging resources and ideas.

Trust With Colleagues

According to Friend (2018), some of these other realities included the idea that collaboration is simple and comes naturally to people. Many people have expressed concern about the difficulty of initiating and maintaining collaboration and the amount of time and effort it requires. A collaborative partnership is built on the foundations of mutual trust, respect, and the capacity to work together to achieve common objectives. Similarly, Mofield (2020) stated that every successful partnership is a foundation of mutual trust. It is critical to foster trust between coworkers since that trust may impact how coworkers engage with students and one another.

Morgan (2016) conducted a study to evaluate the best practices of effective collaboration. Findings indicated that trust was viewed as one of the most important elements in fostering a collaborative relationship between groups of teachers. Other features of a collaborative relationship with trust are caring individuals who provide one another with honest feedback. It may be uncomfortable, but taking that risk of speaking openly with one another is a step that encourages trust (Mofield, 2020).

Clear Expectations Concerning Roles and Responsibilities

According to Mofield (2020), several features have been shown to help foster productive relationships amongst general and special education teachers. Participant abilities included sharing information about pupils, being well-versed in curriculum, being self-aware, and having strong interpersonal skills. In addition, the collaborative team should include a variety of viewpoints and be able to operate within the confines of clearly defined responsibilities throughout the process (Henderson, 2018). Education professionals may use this information to analyze and improve their talents in the collaborative processes.

Cobb (2015) conducted a study that investigated the role of principals in fostering an inclusive community concerning school culture. Cobb found that teachers called for clear expectations from the principal. Teachers shared that even with the time available to meet and collaborate, they are still in need of direction on what structure to follow during collaborative meeting sessions to utilize time most appropriately.

Similarly, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) mentioned that general and special education teachers were concerned with the understanding of their respective roles. Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) conducted a research evaluation of 32 original reports from teachers reporting

their perspective of role responsibility in co-teaching. The researchers shared that general education teachers believed focus should be on planning curriculum for the range of the year as opposed to a placed focus on the individual students. The special education teachers believed the focus should be on a wide range of roles, including pre-teaching material to students, explaining content to groups of students, and giving feedback to students. A common theme noticed by researchers was a classroom dominant attitude of general education teachers and an assistive position of special education teachers.

Morgan (2016) found that teachers reported the need for clarity of role responsibility. Teachers felt that it would be best to establish roles at the beginning of the school year. Ideas from the teachers of expectations in their respective roles and responsibilities should include a workload that is distributed evenly, a shared responsibility of gathering materials and resources for content, and a shared responsibility in planning instruction.

Administrators as Collaborators

School administrators' roles as instructional leaders are examined depending on the achievement of their student population (Cobb, 2015). To ensure the success of all students, school officials have challenged their staff's daily routines. Administrators rely on team members' talents and specialties to be influential leaders in a learning environment (Berry, Daughtery & Weider, 2009). Leaders in the school need to understand the features that foster practical teacher cooperation and the role within it (Goddard, Miller, Larson & Goddard, 2010). This section explains the role of school administrators in a joint effort with teachers.

School principals' perceptions of how to execute leadership roles were examined in a study by Kovacs (2018). This qualitative study looked at how principals think about and carry

out responsibilities as part of the team of effective leaders within their schools. The investigation focused on data from interviews and small focus groups from two schools. Three primary themes of school administrative responsibility emerged from the data analysis: caring for teachers' needs, encouraging teamwork among teachers, and inspiring positivity. Findings showed that principals played an important role in encouraging teachers to work closer together. Principals also encouraged teachers to reflect on the teaching practices being implemented. As a result, principals helped to create healthy professional environments that fostered collaboration.

School district leadership has the role of assessing the existing gaps in education and valuing teacher collaboration. Mofield (2020) found that administrators "were key to dismantling unspoken assumptions on the roles and responsibilities of gifted education teachers and general education teachers" (p. 27).

Act as Collaborators

Leadership team members are critical to fostering a productive work environment in schools. When this group takes action, it demonstrates excellent leadership qualities, good interpersonal skills, and the capacity to discern educators' needs for support. Leadership in schools is just as important as teaching in that it requires a deep understanding and awareness of the school's educational environment (Swartz & Triscari, 2011). Once problems have been identified, school administration has the responsibility to find solutions.

Prioritizing and communicating ideas with instructors is essential to reaching the goal of collaboration (Friend, 2000). Administrators work together effectively when members of executive leadership have comparable attributes as instructors and a shared vision (Cobb, 2015). Principals, like instructors, are expected to appreciate diversity, respect others, and feel at ease in

administrative positions (Friend, 2000). All team members should have strong interpersonal skills, good communication and understanding of their jobs, a positive attitude, and teamwork competence.

Students benefit when leadership teams are proficient in the practice of teaching and problem-solving (Cooper & Bray, 2011). Like instructors, administrators should have a firm grasp of the curriculum and show competence in designing lesson plans that take into account the needs of various types of students (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003). Influential educational leaders engage with students, faculty, parents, and staff to resolve issues unique to areas of responsibility. By working together with general and special education teachers, school administrators can show support and build bridges between the parties (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003).

Since school leaders are expected to help teachers, it is necessary for school leaders to facilitate opportunities for professional development (Morgan, 2016). Teams of teachers are able to work together toward a common objective, when school leaders show a solid commitment to professional development. Educators can get complacent if they do not maintain and expand knowledge in their field. Cobb (2015) argued that it is the responsibility of administrative staff, like principals, to organize professional development activities for school teachers. In the field, leaders must be ready, willing, and able to develop their workforce (Swartz & Triscari, 2011). This can only be accomplished by providing teachers with the necessary resources, such as access to opportunities for ongoing professional development (Cobb, 2015).

As collaborators, leadership teams also need to work tirelessly to ensure that information is shared. To ensure that everyone is kept up-to-date on progress toward objectives, school leaders should regularly share all relevant information and provide professional development opportunities for employees (Cobb, 2015). Keeping everyone in the loop will help maintain progress toward shared objectives via cooperation.

Through the use of embedded case studies, researcher Killion (2016) was able to identify elements that contribute to the development of capacity in collaboration between general and special education instructors. There was a strong sense of togetherness among the colleagues because all students were held to the same high standards. One of the objectives of the study was to identify key indicators of school accomplishment that could be utilized to build the students' capability in a way that would result in positive outcomes for all students. Other features, such as shared leadership and support for collaborative practices, showed significant heterogeneity, despite all of these schools having strong collaborative communities with high expectations for all students. These schools' capacity to collaborate effectively was examined by Killion for some of the factors that contributed to or impeded their ability to do so.

Administrators Role in Supporting Effective Collaboration

As discussed in Chapter One, research suggested that school administrators can play a role in supporting effective collaboration between general and special education teachers by providing opportunities to exercise several strategies.

Provide Opportunities for Shared Planning

Shared planning, also referred to as co-planning, takes place when administrators create opportunities for general education and special education teachers to work together (Cobb,

2015). It typically includes time for teachers to share their expertise and resources to map out curriculum with one another (Brendle et al., 2017). Shared planning is considered the initial step in building effective collaboration. Individually, teachers possess their own instructional delivery styles, philosophies, and personal objectives (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014). The term ‘planning’ itself may not be interpreted by both parties in the same way. The expectation for shared planning is for both parties to respect the time they meet, to come prepared, and to stay focused. Shared planning provides both groups of teachers with the opportunity to meet and discuss their goals so they may develop a mutual vision and nurture their ability to make joint decisions (Brendle et al., 2017; Lakkala et al., 2021).

Howard and Potts (2009) referred to shared planning as a ‘marriage’ between general and special education teachers; it is also a time to discuss difficulties of their situation, to identify potential difficulties of planning instruction, and to develop a plan for facing those challenges. Similarly to Williams, the authors noted that shared planning requires time for planning as a vital factor. Additionally, Howard and Potts (2009) supported that both groups of teachers must agree on the expectations of meeting and how the time is utilized.

No matter the style of collaboration structure that is practiced, successful collaboration requires planning time (Landeever, 2010). Mofield (2020) reported that many teachers emphasized a need for shared planning time. To support the relationship of shared planning between general and special education teachers, school administrators must provide opportunities of adequate time for both groups of teachers to schedule frequent planning sessions. Opportunities for shared planning provide general and special education teachers space to engage in discussion, ask questions, hear and exchange ideas, encourage one another, and

confront assumptions (Mofield, 2020). After reviewing 32 qualitative studies on co-teaching in classrooms that serve students with and without disabilities, Scruggs et al. (2007) found that the administration contributes a significant role in addressing teacher needs, such as planning time.

Provide Opportunities to Share Curriculum

Administrators can provide opportunities where general and special education teachers can collaborate on their curriculum design. It is important that teaching professionals create curriculum that meets requirements and student needs (Brendle et al., 2017). General education teachers are considered the experts on content and can help identify standards and how they relate to the curriculum. Special education teachers are considered the experts on identifying how the content can be broken down into smaller parts. General and special education teachers must join their expertise to design the curriculum (Howard & Potts, 2009).

The curriculum created by the teachers together is built to determine the appropriate accommodations and modifications for students and implement them into the delivery of instruction (Brendle et al., 2017). To support collaboration between both groups of teachers, administrators can encourage their staff members to attend professional development workshops or conferences, which focus on curriculum design and collaboration skills

Provide Opportunities for Professional Development

One of the most important factors that help in creating positive communication and therefore collaboration between teachers is professional development (Alghazo & Alkhazleh, 2020). Idol (2006) conducted a study to evaluate how special education services were provided in eight schools with well developed special education programs. By way of interview, Idol interviewed numerous staff and stakeholders. The staff involved included principals, assistant

principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders, resulting in a total of 125 interviews. Results from the interviews showed that teachers felt a high level of support from school principals but that more professional development was needed in several areas.

One area that called for more professional development was a consistent curriculum designed by teachers. Due to the separate settings where general education and special education take place, teachers delivered different curriculum. Even within special education, resource programs that focus on pulling students out of the general education classroom for instructional support delivered curriculum that varied from other teachers. Because there is differentiated placement of students depending on severity of disability, students received inconsistent curriculum instruction. Teachers felt that more professional development would support alignment across different settings as to how teachers designed content, delivered instructional content, and most appropriately modified for special education students (Idol, 2006). Kaplan and Owings (2004) reported that an administrator will thoughtfully invest in the development of school educators to encourage change and grow the quality of education and learning.

Provide Model for Collaboration

According to Lavendar (2010), when teachers utilize a specific model and procedures to guide the collaboration process, students can improve academic achievement. Unless there is a structured model for collaboration between special education and general education teachers, “they may only share information about students instead of planning instructional interventions for students” (p. 17).

In a study conducted by Sharpe and Hawes (2003), researchers discussed a training model called *Applied Collaboration*. This training model involved a session of professional development that centered around general and special education teachers who were gathered in groups to identify mutual goals, discuss mutual goals and exchange ideas to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The training, led by one special educator and one general educator, provided a few collaborative strategies that were deemed easily applicable and simple to implement. Researchers explained Applied Collaboration by its five steps. The first step was for the general and special education teacher to meet and identify the standards needed to be addressed in the student's learning. The second step was for both teachers to discuss the student's needs and what resources would help support those needs. The third step was for both teachers to decide which accommodations would be set in place to support the learner and to establish what responsibility each teacher held concerning accommodations. The fourth step was for both teachers to monitor the impact of accommodations and provide feedback to one another. The fifth step was for both teachers to decide how a student would be assessed. Overall, the model of collaboration was designed to help teachers work closer together (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003).

Mofield (2020) used the Integrated Curriculum Model as a core model of interaction between general education teachers and special education teachers. Special education teachers were asked to work alongside general education teachers to progress content learning by presenting content in a different way and connecting content to an overarching theme that involved deeper level thinking. Special education teachers practiced co-teaching with general education teachers, which involved collaborative planning, decision-making, and assessment design. Over the course of four and a half years, the two groups of teachers met once a month to

discuss methods of collaboration. During monthly meetings, special education teachers discussed perceived effectiveness of chosen methods and were introduced to other methods to try for collaboration. Overall, both sets of teachers expressed perceived benefits from using the Integrated Curriculum Model. Special education teachers noted a perceived growth in competencies concerning differentiation and general education teachers noted a perceived growth in identifying student needs.

Provide Opportunities to Nurture an Inclusive and Collaborative Environment

School leadership is vital to the success of collaborative practices. No matter the style of collaboration structure that is practiced, successful collaboration requires administrative support (Landeveer, 2010). Administrators influence the school culture and are a necessary component to provide a supportive work atmosphere (Cobb, 2015). Dearman and Alber (2005) suggested that administrators must provide an environment that enables teachers to consistently review materials and resources together. Consequently, teachers will build the foundations of effective instruction. Kohm and Nance (2009) discussed how administrators can foster an environment that supports collaboration by sharing leadership responsibilities with teachers and providing opportunities to develop the skills for collaborative problem solving. Brinkman and Twiford (2012) shared that when administrators open communication and dialogue between teachers effective collaboration can be formed.

Additionally, administrators can provide opportunities for fostering inclusion, by creating spaces where general and special teachers can gather to share general pedagogical knowledge as well as specific resources for effective teaching. A school's approach toward inclusion sets a fundamental tone of expectations (Cobb, 2015). This strategy helps them to establish

relationships so the two groups of teachers can build a community with one another. The creation of an inclusive community environment fosters trust between teachers. Along with trust, when both groups meet regularly, it helps them develop common goals and visions so that they can see how their roles are connected (Morgan, 2016).

Provide Clarity of Role Responsibilities

School administrators have two responsibilities to play in directing collaborative teams, as Minnett (2003) stated. Teachers and administrators help the teams by setting up specified blocks of time for team planning at school. When it comes to teamwork, school administrators should set and express clear expectations for their team members and model the behaviors they expect from them in their meetings with other members of the team and the whole building. It is up to administrators to establish collaboration time where everyone has an equal chance to engage equally. Kohn and Nance (2009) suggested that school administrators should provide and communicate clearly defined roles and responsibilities for team members and model the expected behaviors during team and building-wide meetings. Protocols must be put in place to help instructors work together more effectively, as Brendle, Lock, and Piazza (2017) suggested. Developing roles and duties, creating trust, and establishing a common goal are just a few tasks that may be part of the team's approach (Tannock, 2009).

A study by Youngs, Jones, and Low (2011) interviewed general and special education teachers from 10 school districts in Michigan and Indiana and found inconsistencies concerning defined roles and responsibilities. Special education teachers shared that general education teachers received more explicit direction of role responsibilities from administrators. This is the result of administrators having a better understanding of the scope of general education

standards. Consequently, special education teachers developed a dependence on general education teachers to understand appropriate responsibilities. Based on research findings, Young et al. (2011), argued that collaborative teams must establish individual roles and responsibilities, shared planning time, and a schedule to keep in communication to be successful. If responsibilities are unclear, it may impact how employees feel about the work. An inclusive atmosphere may be more effectively promoted by cooperating instructors who are aware of their respective duties and objectives for pupils (Tannock, 2009).

According to Idol, Nevin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb (2000), collaboration is how individuals with various experiences collaborate to solve mutually specified challenges. Instead of focusing on the connections and interpersonal abilities among the people that work collectively, Idol et al. stated that groups cooperate to solve issues, which adds a new element of responsibility to the interaction.

Barriers for General and Special Education Teachers to Collaborate

Time

Time is one of the most critical resources general and special education teachers need to collaborate (Mofield, 2020). Unfortunately, mutual planning time and conflicting priorities are practical challenges for both parties (Lakalla et al., 2021). Sometimes teachers have different schedules that prevent them from meeting, like one teacher being available to meet in the morning while the other teacher is only available to meet in the afternoon. Other times, teachers have similar schedules but different priorities that are time sensitive, like IEP meetings, evaluations, data meetings, and other time constraining responsibilities. Cooper and Bray (2011) argued that these barriers lead to ineffective collaboration.

Similarly, Morgan (2016) found that school teachers reported time to plan as a significant challenge to collaboration. Without time for regularly scheduled meetings, teachers felt their leadership roles did not feel equal, they were stepping on each other's toes, and did not have a clear understanding of shared responsibilities. Administrative recognition of teachers' desire for time to meet is essential to fostering a collaborative environment. Teacher collaboration would be supported by a regular time allocation set up for cooperation in the school day. According to Mofield (2020), time for mutual planning should be structured in the schedule and this can be organized and supported at the administrative level.

Lack of Understanding

Collaborating effectively requires a thorough comprehension of the school's curriculum. Being familiar with the school's curriculum is essential for instructors working together to comprehend the expectations established by the school district for students' educational progress (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003). Teachers who know their school's curriculum inside and out can tailor their lessons to match the specific requirements of each student.

According to Fisher, Frey, and Thousand (2003), not all teachers are aware of their school's curriculum. Leading to a shortage of understanding of what is anticipated in the general education program, exceptional education instructors leave preparation programs feeling unqualified to teach in the general education curriculum. As a consequence, the dynamic between general education and exceptional education instructors becomes imbalanced, making it difficult for them to work together effectively. General educators viewed special education teachers as glamorized teaching assistants, according to Voltz, Elliott, and Cobb (1994). They

also found that special educators did not feel they were fulfilling their roles in working collaboratively across education settings when this expertise was seriously lacking.

Insufficient Training

Lee, McKenna, and Shin (2015) studied a comparative analysis of qualitative studies on the co-teaching experiences of preservice special education and general education teachers. The researchers described co-teaching as a common approach when it comes to working with students that have special needs. However, despite the fact that co-teaching has the potential to be extremely effective, there is frequently a disconnect between theory and practice in the classroom. The goal of this study was to examine preservice teachers' experiences with co-teaching in order to better understand this gap and to propose potential solutions for improving teacher training and service delivery (Youngs, Jones, & Low, 2011). According to a survey of 11 studies, both special education and general education preservice teachers discovered that co-teaching strategies offered them the opportunity to collaborate and connect with one another. Putting co-teaching into practice, according to both parties, is difficult due to the fact that personality plays a significant influence in the process. Additionally, preservice special education teachers claimed that they lacked topic mastery, but preservice general education teachers reported that they required additional training in the area of providing accommodations and modifications to students with disabilities.

Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) reported that a large population of general education teachers feel underprepared leaving teacher training programs concerning the perspective of inclusivity of students with special needs in classrooms. Teachers were unsure of how to appropriately provide accommodations and modifications for students that needed them.

Additionally, Keefe et al. recognized a correlation between teachers with insufficient training and teachers with negative attitudes toward inclusive education.

Teacher Attitudes

Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) conducted a study that investigated co-teaching in inclusive classrooms and perception of teacher needs. According to their review of previous research, a positive attitude was listed as an essential element of co-teaching. Niles and Marcellino (2019) argued that society's emphasis on independence is to blame for the reluctance of many individuals to collaborate and work together even though there are benefits like using planning time more efficiently.

Mofield (2020) reported findings of general education teachers who felt territorial over their content and teaching methods. Some general education teachers are reluctant to hear feedback from special education teachers. Similarly, Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) noticed a power struggle between the two groups of teachers. Researchers found that general education teachers held a demanding perspective that special education teachers are to take a submissive role in instructional delivery. When some teachers do not recognize the value in receiving feedback, collaboration can become difficult (Mofield, 2020).

Teachers benefited from improved differentiating skills and an increase in student achievement. Insufficient time, organization, and contradictory ideas about what instructors should be expected to do were some of the most common challenges faced by teachers. The majority of general education teachers expressed the belief that students with disabilities "should understand" and "simply do" what the teacher asks of them (Mofield, 2020, p. 25). As a result,

special education instructors stated that they felt that general education teachers lacked empathy and had a territorial attitude toward their teaching methods. Some general education teachers are reluctant to hear feedback from special education teachers. When some teachers do not recognize the value in receiving feedback, collaboration can become difficult.

In the study conducted by Morgan (2016), teachers reported several factors that hindered collaboration, including teacher's attitudes. Due to differences in personalities, teaching style, and work ethic, some teachers found they did not work well together. Teachers did not trust one another and experienced feelings of resistance to let the other have control. Consequently, students navigated the classroom confused because there was no clear leadership on who to go to given a certain concern. Teachers reported the conflict of personalities made it difficult to collaborate.

Similarly Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) found that disagreements between teachers were damaging to teacher communication and relationships. On rare occasions participants reported that their conflict was constructive. The power struggle experienced by teachers suggested a competing attitude was a hindering factor to collaboration.

Uncomfortability

According to Friend (2018), some of these other realities include the idea that collaboration is simple and comes naturally to people. Many people have expressed concern about the difficulty of initiating and maintaining collaboration and the amount of time and effort it requires. A collaborative partnership is built on the foundations of mutual trust, respect, and the capacity to work together to achieve common objectives (Bauer, Iyer, Boon & Fore, 2010).

As a result, individuals in the field of special education and others have resisted attempts to work on this issue.

Teacher's Misconceptions of Role Responsibility

Mofield's (2020) study focused on how general and special education instructors understand their responsibilities in collaboration to meet their students' instructional requirements. For this study, Mofield (2020) surveyed teachers about opinions on sharing resources, planning, and teaching. The presence of special education teachers in general education classes was perceived as an opportunity for the general education teacher to take a vacation from their duties as an educator. Overall, Mofield's (2020) study found that teachers' perceptions of their jobs were uneven. While some instructors understood the value of working together, others had a misunderstanding of what it meant to collaborate in their responsibilities as educators. Planned activities should be more structured and collaborative, as both teachers agreed. Special education and general education teachers need to recognize their unique roles for varied learners as well as their joint obligations. Problems like a lack of differentiated education and students being left in the lurch might result from a lack of clarity in duties (Mofield, 2020).

However, Henderson (2018) noted the fact that plans to collaborate more frequently are implemented without clarity on what collaborative sessions entails is completely meaningless. A failure to place sufficient focus on teamwork can also be a stumbling barrier to success. Goals can be achieved by concentrating on a single project or process and adopting a cooperative working style as a method of doing it. The likelihood of collaborative initiatives succeeding increases when the scope, the focus, and the set of goals are all well defined in advance (Henderson, 2018). Depending on the culture of the organization, some are more effective at

encouraging cooperation than other organizations. Working with people from different cultural backgrounds can be more difficult. There are times when a problem with a function, a team, an individual, or a relationship obstructs collaboration rather than the organization's culture.

In a study by Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007), 400 coworkers in the classroom were polled in terms of co-teachers' attitudes about their non-class time (planning and evaluation) and class time (instruction and behavior management) responsibilities. Results indicated disagreements about their respective class and non-class responsibilities, as well as their attitudes toward these responsibilities, based on their separate roles in the classroom. Researchers found that co-teachers' differing perspectives on their roles in inclusive classrooms could impede the establishment of a collaborative approach to teaching students with and without impairments.

Teacher Attrition

Hagaman and Casey (2017) conducted an investigation on the problem of special education teacher attrition in the field of special education. In this study (Hagaman & Casey, 2017), a series of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) focus groups, composed of 54 participants, were used to explore the perceived needs of new special education instructors in special education. In order to better understand the requirements and tasks of new special education teachers and to uncover any disparities in attitudes, preservice special education instructors, newly hired special education teachers, and school administrators participated in focus groups. The focus groups were provided a series of interview questions regarding support, training, and perceptions of responsibility related to why teachers leave the field. Hagaman and Casey (2017) discovered teachers reported leaving the field for several reasons, but three reasons were

considered the most common. The first reason teachers leave the field was related to stress. Teachers reported that the duties of teaching were stressful, especially with limited support and multiple responsibilities. The second reason teachers reported for leaving the field was due to high caseloads. Teachers expressed overwhelmed feelings being charged with the responsibility of numerous students with different needs and abilities. The third reason teachers reported as a reason for leaving the field was lack of collaboration, support, and cooperation when working with other teachers and administrative staff. Youngs et al. (2011), found similar results through research of challenges faced by general and special education teachers. Youngs et al. (2011) noted lack of role clarity, high demand to meet student needs, and high levels of stress as contributors to teacher attrition. Teacher attrition was described as not surprising and the result of a lack of administrative support.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter is an overview of the literature evaluated in this work. It will also discuss the professional uses of the review as well as its limitations. Finally, recommendations will be suggested for additional research in the field.

Summary of Literature

The goal of the literature review was to examine various aspects of administrative responsibilities as applied to supporting effective collaboration between general and special education teachers. As the usage and defining aspects of effective collaboration has changed overtime to improve collaborative practices, the responsibilities of administrative leaders have grown (Goddard et al., 2010; Sharpe & Hawes, 2003). Some principals have been shown to use collaborative methods that have been used by principals, but there is a need for more consistent implementation of administrative support (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014; Scruggs et al., 2007).

Effective collaboration, a combined effort of general and special education teacher interaction, has been identified as a vital component to student success and implementation of best teaching practices (Keefe, Moore & Duff, 2004). Many researchers have looked into effective teacher collaboration, necessary resources, and noted that school administrators play a significant part in supporting and facilitating teacher collaboration (Goddard et al., 2010; Scruggs et al., 2007; Sharpe & Hawes, 2003).

Many studies found that teachers had positive remarks about the practice of collaboration with other teachers. Teachers found it beneficial to join in collaboration to meet the needs of students when provided the opportunity (Goddard et al., 2010; Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014; Idol, 2006; Lakkala et al, 2021). These studies went further to examine the role of administration to support collaboration between general and special education teachers. A

study by Hernandez (2013) found that, overall, teachers were not opposed to collaborating with one another but were not particularly interested. Researchers discovered that teachers felt if more administrative support, such as the opportunity of time for teachers to meet, an interest in practicing effective collaboration would grow.

In comparison, a study by Brendle et al. (2007) findings supported the assumption that administrative participation increased the practice of effective collaboration between general and special education teachers. Brendle et al. (2007) examined the elements of co-teaching and implementing collaborative interactions. Researchers conducted interviews with two special education teachers and two general education teachers. The teachers were asked about past experiences with co-teaching, co-planning, and support from administrators. Findings from the interviews indicated a positive relationship between administrative support and effective collaboration between general and special education teachers. Teachers reported that school administrators planned adequate time for the two groups of teachers to collaborate for one whole day every nine weeks and one half day every two weeks. Researchers discovered that teachers accredited the desire to continue working together in future years to administrative support. However, teachers also noted that while time to collaborate was provided, proper training and guidance to effectively collaborate was not.

Many additional studies indicated a lack of training regarding how to properly collaborate. Teachers expressed a need for guidance and protocol to get the most out of shared time to plan (Conderman, Johnston & Hartman, 2009; Hernandez, 2013; Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007). Ricci and Fingon (2018) described teacher training as a need indicated for effective collaboration between general and special education teachers. Cobb (2015) found that

when administrators provided teachers with adequate teaching training, teachers noticed a growth in professional development and staff collaboration.

Providing clear explanations of roles and responsibilities was another support administrators could provide to general and special education teachers. From the perspective of general and special education instructors, assignment of role and responsibilities is ambiguous (Youngs, Jones & Low, 2011). In the same classroom, regular and special education teachers are supposed to work together to achieve common goals, develop common expectations, make decisions, plan lessons, monitor students' progress, solve problems, and control behavior (Howard & Potts, 2009). However, Brendle et al. (2017) reported that lack of administrative guidance results in conflicting teacher views when it comes to roles and responsibilities. The most common perception of roles by general education teachers was that of the main classroom leader. Special education teachers were viewed as experts to provide modification and adaptation to assignments. Principals have a large number of roles to play, including acting as facilitators of collaboration between general and special education teachers. Principals are responsible for providing clear guidance to general and special education teachers concerning role responsibilities.

Professional Application

Research has shown that there are numerous approaches available to general and special education teachers to build and strengthen collaborative efforts. The real issue is providing general and special education teachers with the opportunity to apply the strategies. To do so, support for teachers comes from an administrative level (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003). Principals serve as visionaries for general education and special education teachers to collaborate. The

principal needs to set the tone for the importance and urgency of collaboration. A principal's attitude, background, and training is considered critical to the success of facilitating collaboration (Cobb, 2015).

Teachers should work together with the administrative support even after they have received training (Morgan, 2016). Teacher training and learning should be an ongoing process (Kovacs, 2018). The continuation of effective professional development showed teachers were better able to implement inclusive practices. It is the responsibility of the principal to help teachers feel included and genuine members of decision making (Cobb, 2015; Lakkala, 2021). Inclusive school environments are created when principals facilitate ongoing professional development, communication, and discussion (Cobb 2015).

Limitations of the Research

This literature review summarized the results of several articles on collaboration between special and general educators. Most research that discussed administrative support between general and special education teacher collaboration involved a limited number of participants. Several studies collected data from a small pool of participants. It was challenging to gather literature that conducted studies using a large population. To counteract this, the researcher attempted to discuss literature with a detailed relevance. A second limitation of the research was that several studies relied on the method of self-administered surveys to collect data. Many studies examined how teachers felt about administrative support and collaboration with other teachers. Oftentimes, teachers rated personal involvement of collaboration as high, while rating other teacher's participation as low. Due to the nature of self-administered surveys, there is a bias that may be reported. A third limitation of the research was that the majority of literature focused

on the teacher perspective. Only one study was found that discussed responsibility to facilitate collaboration between general and special education teachers through the lens of a principal. It would have been insightful to review more perspectives of administrators.

Implications for Future Research

According to the findings of this study and the researcher's first-hand field experience, there is a lack of collaboration amongst teachers, resulting from the ongoing disagreement within the educational system to understand, define, and develop the policies and goals of inclusive education. It is important to define the many obligations and functions that educators in inclusive schools have (Da Fonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017). General and special education teachers should have adequate inclusive education and collaboration training, both before and during their careers. The school atmosphere should be enhanced so that teachers can work together more effectively (Cobb, 2015). Reducing teachers' teaching and administrative workload, decreasing the number of pupils in each classroom, and giving more help from school administration are all examples of ways to improve the quality of collaborative education (Landeaver, 2010).

Future teachers must be prepared to accept the concept of inclusive education and they must be encouraged to collaborate with one another. In contrast, teacher preparation programs are commonly criticized for failing to provide adequate training in collaborative abilities among educators (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, (2004); Keefe et al., (2004). When teacher training programs affirm the existence of segregation phenomena, special and general education instructors are overburdened by the need for collaboration later in their professional lives (McKenzie, 2009). Because of this, special and general education teachers are unable to execute their disciplinary roles and obligations in small groups of students in isolated practices. In a study conducted by

Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez and Hartman (2009), general education teachers perceived themselves to be less prepared than special education teachers when it came to adapting curriculum materials for students with special needs or using individualized assessments to track students' progress over time, for instance.

Conclusion

There is a positive correlation between collaborative teaching methods and improved academic achievement scores among children with disabilities (Morgan, 2016). Based on these findings, there are several ways school administrators can support effective collaboration between general and special education teachers.

First, administrators can provide adequate training to general education teachers so they will be able to understand how best to work with special educators (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014). Second, administrators can create policies to address situations where collaboration may not proceed smoothly or effectively (Blanton & Perez, 2011; Cobb, 2015). Increased collaboration between general and special education teachers has long been key to improving students' outcomes. For example, researchers found that for educators to collaborate effectively, they must have similar beliefs about their roles in schools and classrooms, they must feel like they are part of a larger team, and they must be willing to take risks to improve student learning (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014).

Effective collaboration efforts benefit both educators and students. Collaboration between teachers and other service providers in the school building can result in a shared sense of responsibility for student success and positive school culture (Landever, 2010). Students benefit

from well-coordinated and individually tailored educational support due to this collaboration. Administrators must create and maintain an environment that promotes collaboration to reap these benefits (Blanton & Perez, 2011). Although a collaborative school environment is essential, it should not solely focus on school leaders' efforts. The emphasis should instead be on increasing student achievement through collaboration.

Many collaborative activities require time, such as reading, researching, discussing, planning, observing, and attending workshops (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Administrators may demoralize already overworked educators by requiring more output without considering the extra time required for these activities. If administrators, teachers, and other service providers are to implement and sustain effective collaboration, they must have a shared vision and a commitment to working together to meet the educational needs of all students (Keefe et al., 2004). With this shared vision in mind, the school's priorities for collaboration are clearly defined and should guide decisions about time and resource allocation (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003). Administrators must proactively restructure available time and resources to intentionally facilitate teamwork to improve teacher planning and support student achievement through collaborative instructional and assessment practices. Overburdening educators is counterproductive; instead, collaboration directs individual efforts toward improving the system so that all students can benefit.

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