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Understanding The Lived Experiences of Special Education Teachers Tasked with Ensuring Parental Involvement in Special Education Processes

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by
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Abstract

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) mandates parental participation in special education processes, yet families, especially culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families, often face obstacles in their active involvement as an equal team member in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Although there has been research on identifying the barriers families face in their active involvement in their child's special education programming, little has been done to understand the impediments teachers face in alleviating this problem and adequately enforcing parents' rights within special education processes. This qualitative phenomenological study investigated the lived experiences of special education teachers responsible for implementing parents' rights to participative activity in special education processes. The study explored special education teachers' self-efficacy in facilitating parental rights in special education processes, and whether special education teachers' self-efficacy was impacted when working with White families versus CLD families. This study revealed that 100% of participants had positive beliefs about parent-teacher collaboration, and felt confident in their ability to collaborate effectively with families within special education. Special education teachers' confidence in fully enforcing parents' rights in special education varied; the three educators that reported lower self-confidence attributed their low confidence to a lack of understanding of special education laws and factors outside of their control. All participants self-perceived their confidence in collaborating effectively with CLD families lower compared to White families.

This dissertation is dedicated to all the special education teachers. Special education teachers invest so much time, energy, and resources into all of their exceptional students. Because of you, students are working towards reaching their full potential. And because of your advocacy, they are receiving an inclusive and positive learning experience. This dissertation is also dedicated to all families that advocate for their child's education. For your patience, dedication, and collaboration to ensure strong outcomes for your child - a strong education would not be possible without each of you in your child's lives!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Special education has gained prominence with the increase in students receiving services (Francisco et al., 2020). Based on recent statistics, around 15% of all public-school students received special education and related services during the 2021-22 school year, compared to 13% during the 2010-11 school year (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures eligible students with disabilities have access to special education and related services (IDEA, 2004). IDEA (2004) provides guidance to states, local institutions, educational service agencies, and federal agencies regarding providing adequate education for all students with disabilities. The IDEA posits that all students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which includes services that meet their unique educational needs (Center for Parent Information and Resources, 2017; Francisco et al., 2020; NCES, 2023). According to Section 120A.20 Subdivision 1 of the 2023 Minnesota Statutes and IDEA (2004), it is the state's responsibility to develop policies and procedures that ensure that students with disabilities from birth to the age of 22 receive a FAPE by developing an educational program that meets the student's unique needs. Even in cases where students with disabilities have been suspended or expelled from school, IDEA (2004) mandates that all children continue to receive a FAPE.

Background of the Study

Special education is specially designed instruction to meet the specific educational needs of children with disabilities (Center for Parent Information and Resources, 2017; Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2023d). The educational system, in conjunction with families, develops an individualized education program (IEP) for students with disabilities under the IDEA (2004). An IEP is a document that details the educational program designed to meet the

student's individualized needs across various settings (Francisco et al., 2020; MDE, 2023d). The IEP typically includes critical information about the student, including the student's current present levels of educational performance; reasonable annual goals for the student to work towards; special education services, related services, and accommodations that staff members will provide to the student; the amount of services the student will receive; their participation in state and district-wide assessments; and how progress will be measured and communicated to parents (Price-Ellingstad et al., 2019). The IEP is developed to ensure that students with disabilities receive educational services in their least restrictive environment (LRE; Francisco et al., 2020). The IDEA (2004) indicates that states must have policies and procedures in place to ensure that public schools are educating students with disabilities in the LRE, or with their nondisabled peers, to the maximum extent possible. To ensure LRE, the removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational setting must only occur when services, supplementary aids, and accommodations are not sufficient to meet the student's individual needs in that setting (IDEA, 2004).

As per the IDEA (2004), involving parents in the special education process is necessary (Oztürk, 2017). This law highlights the importance of treating parents as equal team members in meetings, starting from determining their child's eligibility for special education services to developing and reviewing their child's IEP annually. The Part B Notice of Procedural Safeguards Parental Rights for Public School Special Education Students (procedural safeguards) outlines the rights of parents and adult students between the ages of 18 and 22 to encourage their involvement throughout the process (Almazan et al., 2017; MDE, 2023b). These rights include informed consent, filing complaints, access to legal advocacy organizations, and prior written notice documents. School districts must provide parents with a copy of the procedural safeguards

at least once per school year, as well as during specific situations such as when an initial evaluation begins, when a parent files a complaint, or when a parent requests a due process hearing (Hyman et al., 2011; IDEA, 2004; MDE, 2023c). This procedure ensures that parents are well-informed and continuously reminded of their rights throughout the special education process, as outlined by the IDEA (2004).

IDEA (2004) is a complex law that governs the majority of duties held by special education teachers. However, in a study by Algozzine and Davidson (2002), 47.5% of administrators reported having limited to a basic level of knowledge regarding IDEA. In addition, both K-12 general education teachers and special education teachers lacked knowledge and understanding of IDEA (O'Connor et al., 2016; Whitaker, 2003). This is significant as these perceptions can affect teachers' abilities to manage special education programming effectively, and based on the statistics, these perceptions affect approximately half of the special education teacher workforce (Algozzine & Davidson, 2002). Considering the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and student connections and the significance of self-efficacy in promoting change is essential. Teachers with higher confidence in their abilities tend to engage in practices that foster supportive and secure relationships with their students (Hajovsky et al., 2020). However, much remains to learn about how teachers' self-efficacy affects their relationships with parents. Conducting further research on teachers' self-efficacy in encouraging parental involvement in special education processes will shed light on how to meet the parental involvement requirement stipulated by IDEA (2004). Without comprehending teachers' self-efficacy regarding parental involvement, students will continue to suffer from insufficient support due to the process's lack of inclusivity and comprehensiveness (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

IDEA (2004) mandates that families participate in every part of the special education process, but unfortunately, they often face obstacles for active involvement (Rios & Burke, 2020). To illustrate, families often persisted or fought to be heard and to have their input included in their child's educational planning, causing them to feel undervalued and disrespected as team members (Fish, 2006; Miller et al., 2019; Zagona et al., 2019). Moreover, many families claimed that school teams neglected to inform them of procedural safeguards, which led to a lack of shared information and affected participation in different aspects of the process (Bjorgvinsdottier & Halldorsdottier, 2014; Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010; Yildirim & Akcamete, 2018). As a result, many families felt restricted in assisting their children with disabilities in the school environment.

This is a concerning issue, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) communities. Research indicated that CLD families were less likely to participate in their child's special education programming when compared to White families (Larios & Zetlin, 2013; Zhang & Bennett, 2013). This low participation rate was primarily due to the differences in communication styles and cultural assumptions regarding disabilities among different cultures (Tamzarian et al., 2012). The CLD population is rising in the United States, with CLD students comprising approximately 10% of the student population within public schools (Aceves et al., 2015; Fallah et al., 2018; NCES, 2023). Additionally, the percentage of school-aged English learners served under IDEA has increased from 9.07% in 2012 to 11.78% in 2020 (NCES, 2023). As a result, several families within special education faced additional obstacles to their active participation.

The High-Leverage Practices in Special Education, a set of essential educational standards for educators, emphasized the importance of teachers facilitating effective meetings and collaborating with families to fully support students with disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2017). Consequently, special education teachers are at the forefront of creating change and facilitating strong and effective partnerships between schools and families (Oostdam & Hooge, 2012). Such partnerships are essential in fully supporting students with disabilities, yet they may fall short in practice. Teachers reported feeling underprepared to work with families; as a result, instead of establishing open communication, teachers primarily engaged in one-sided conversations with parents or avoided initiating communication with them at all (Accardo et al., 2020; Carbonneu, 2021; Oostdam & Hooge, 2012). Current research has focused on identifying the barriers families face in this predicament, including the additional barriers CLD families face (Larios & Zetlin, 2013; Zhang & Bennett, 2013). There is a gap in the literature concerning the impediments teachers face in alleviating this problem and adequately enforcing parents' rights within special education processes. As self-efficacy contributes to positive change in behaviors and attitudes, understanding special education teachers' self-efficacy with parental involvement is essential to creating positive systemic changes within school systems.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study sought insight into the lived experiences of special education teachers responsible for implementing parents' right to participate actively in special education processes. The study explored special education teachers' self-efficacy in facilitating parental rights in special education processes. It also explored how special education teachers' self-efficacy may be impacted when working with White families versus CLD families.

Research Questions

The current qualitative phenomenological study explored the following four research questions:

1) What are the participants' lived experiences as special education teachers responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA?
2) What perceptions do special education teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?
3) How is special education teachers' self-efficacy impacted when facilitating parental involvement in special education processes for White families versus CLD families?
4) What steps can be taken to improve the impediments, if any, that teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?

Significance of the Study

Researchers have identified barriers for families with children with disabilities when navigating the special education system (Fish, 2006; Miller et al., 2019; Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010); however, it was equally important to understand the challenges faced by special education teachers in enforcing the rights of families. The researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon to inform graduate programs, school districts, and professional learning communities (Collier et al., 2015b). Teachers' attitudes played a significant role in the involvement of families within school systems. Negative attitudes hindered effective involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Therefore, it was essential to explore teachers' self-efficacy as they enforced parents' rights in special education. Self-efficacy impacted teachers' behavior and attitudes (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006), and understanding it allowed for recommendations to be made to increase positive behavioral practices within schools (Barni et

al., 2019; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Additionally, understanding teachers' self-efficacy when working with White and CLD families provided a deeper understanding of how teachers could be supported, as teachers reported lower confidence in areas requiring cultural knowledge (Cruz et al., 2019). This study provided a greater understanding of the phenomenon which allowed for recommendations to be made to implement proper systems and sustainable practices that included families of students with disabilities in their child's individualized education (Tamzarian et al., 2012; Yildirim & Akcamete, 2018).

Definition of Terms

This section provides operational definitions for key terms, allowing readers to understand the terms relevant to this phenomenological study. These terms are defined to ensure that readers understand their context within the study and provide a definition of terms that may be unfamiliar to them.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families. Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) individuals speak a language other than English in their homes and differ in their cultural values and backgrounds from the dominant culture (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2021).

Free Appropriate Public Education. A free appropriate public education (FAPE) is a core concept of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). According to IDEA (2004), school districts are responsible for ensuring that each eligible child with a disability receives a FAPE. This entails an eligible child with a disability having access to an individualized education program that meets their specific needs and allows them to access the general education curriculum. In addition, this program must meet state grade-level standards and allow the child to develop their skills that will support their further education, employment, and independent living (IDEA, 2004).

Individualized Education Program. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that details the educational program designed to meet the student's individualized needs across various settings (Francisco et al., 2020; MDE, 2023d). The IEP is typically developed by the IEP team which includes the parents of the child, at least one general education teacher, at least one special education teacher, a public agency representative, and a professional that can interpret the implications of the evaluation results (IDEA, 2004). The child with a disability may also participate and partake within IEP teams, as well as other individuals with knowledge or expertise regarding the child with the approval of the parent.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures eligible children with disabilities have access to a FAPE (IDEA, 2004). Eligible children receive their FAPE by receiving special education and related services. This law provides guidance to states on how early intervention, special education, and related services programming is implemented within public agencies. Children with disabilities from birth through age two receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C, while children between the ages three through 21 receive special education and related services through IDEA Part B (IDEA, 2004).

Procedural Safeguards. The procedural safeguards is a notice that is provided to parents of a child with a disability at least once a school year as outlined under the IDEA (MDE, 2023c). The procedural safeguards presents parents with an overview of their rights as parents for their child with a disability from birth through age 22. These rights include statements regarding parental consent for evaluation and transition services, confidentially and personally identifiable information, notices related to third-party billing, and educational records (MDE, 2023b).

Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to a person's confidence in their task performance (Burke et al., 2009). Self-efficacy is a characteristic that can typically be adjusted; thus, a behavior change occurs when self-efficacy changes, as self-efficacy impacts an individual's thoughts, actions, efforts, and perseverance, all necessary traits to facilitate change (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006).

Special Education. Special education is specially designed instruction for children with disabilities to meet their unique educational needs (IDEA, 2004; MDE, 2023d). Special education instruction may occur in various settings, including the home, classroom, and other settings. This instruction is specially designed to meet students' educational needs and other related service needs, such as speech-language pathology and occupational therapy (IDEA, 2004).

Tier 3 Licensed Teachers. According to Section 122A.183 of the 2023 Minnesota Statutes, candidates earn a Tier 3 license after successfully completing the following requirements set forth by the PELSB: (1) individuals have obtained a passing score on required licensure exams, (2) individuals have earned a bachelor's degree to teach, (3) individuals have earned an associate's degree, a professional certification, or five years of relevant work experience to teach, and (4) individuals have either completed a Minnesota or state-approved teacher preparation program, submitted a content-specific licensure portfolio, earned a professional teaching license from another state, or have had three years of teaching experience under a Tier Two license in good standing.

Tier 4 Licensed Teachers. According to Section 122A.184 of the 2023 Minnesota Statutes, candidates earn a Tier 4 license after completing the following requirements set forth by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB): (1) individuals have met all

the requirements for a Tier 3 license, (2) individuals have had at least three years of teaching experience in Minnesota, and (3) the individual's most recent summative evaluation did not result in being placed on or continuing a teacher improvement plan. A Tier Four license is the highest licensure level an individual can obtain in Minnesota.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This first chapter introduced the background and problem that will guide the rest of this dissertation. Chapter 2 presents a review of the current research and literature, as well as the theoretical framework of the current study. Chapter 3 describes the dissertation's methodology, research design, research setting, sampling and procedure, research instruments, measures, and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 details the data analysis for the study and provides a summary of the results. Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by providing an interpretation and discussion of the results and any implications and recommendations for future research. Chapter 5 is followed by references and appendices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical framework of the current study. The literature review delves into the historical perspective of special education in the United States. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of parental involvement in a child's education, the challenges associated with parental involvement in special education processes, and an overview of self-efficacy and its role in teachers' ability to bring about change within systems.

Theoretical Framework

To provide a comprehensive theoretical framework, this study used four different theories. Specifically, the study viewed the cultural capital, critical race, self-efficacy, and ecological systems theories within the research context.

Cultural Capital Theory

One key theory significant to the current study is Bourdieu's (1977) model for the cultural capital theory. This theory is significant in its relation to the study, as it highlighted the development of collective identity and group position through shared symbolic elements that bind a particular social class together (Routledge, n.d.). The cultural capital theory encompassed the traits that formed the dominant culture in society, such as values, beliefs, language, behaviors, and communication styles (Reed & Johnson, 2023). When individuals shared similar forms of cultural capital, they acquired a group position, which led to social inequality (Routledge, n.d.).

Bourdieu asserted that cultural capital was a significant measure of educational success (Jæger & Møllegaard, 2017). Specifically, when parents and students came from the same social system as the public school with which they interacted, their cultural capital increased and

positively influenced their child's success (Lee & Bowen, 2006). On the other hand, parents and students had less cultural capital when they did not share common characteristics with the dominant culture. They were at a disadvantage as they had to learn to navigate the dominant culture to be successful. Therefore, cultural capital leads to advantages or disadvantages for an individual's social mobility as an individual's rate of success is higher when they possess more cultural capital (Jæger & Møllegaard, 2007; Routledge, n.d). The current educational system in the United States is plagued with a significant gap between White and CLD teachers and students. According to the data from 2020-2021, 80% of public school teachers in the United States were White, while only 46% of K-12 public school students were White (NCES, 2023). The parent-teacher collaboration techniques that many teachers favored benefited White students and families due to cultural capital. Unfortunately, this impact did not fully reach CLD students and families (Lee & Bowen, 2006), further contributing to CLD families' additional difficulties.

Another issue was that many teachers were ill-equipped in their education and experience to engage in the correct cultural forms of capital that CLD families brought to schools (Gonzalez & Gabel, 2017). A significant cultural resource that CLD students and families required was often underutilized, adding a challenge for many students, teachers, and families (Gonzalez & Gabel, 2017; Sullivan, 2021). Therefore, this dissertation aimed to explore whether differences exist in teachers' self-efficacy when incorporating parental involvement for White and CLD families. It is important to recognize that cultural capital theory can play a significant role in the results, as it highlights the significance of shared symbolic elements that bind a particular social class together (Routledge, n.d.).

Critical Race Theory

Crenshaw's critical race theory (CRT) posited that race was a socially constructed phenomenon that disadvantaged people of color compared to the dominant White culture (Delgado et al., 2017; George, 2021). This disadvantage existed because the social community within the United States typically privileged the needs and interests of the dominant White culture over other ethnic or racial identities (Blanton et al., 2020; Delgado et al., 2017). The CRT was significant within the United States as it suggested that racism occurred actively or passively as racism was embedded within the nation's structures and institutions (Blanton et al., 2020). As racism continued to be intertwined within the nation's laws, policies, and institutions, many of the legalities favored the dominant group's interests (Blanton et al., 2020; Delgado et al., 2017).

The CRT explains that the certain values and behaviors of individual groups lead to unintended consequences that can place certain groups, such as minority cultures, at a disadvantage while allowing others, such as the dominant culture, to hold institutional power (George, 2021; Toldson, 2022). As such, the White culture may unintentionally create racial supremacy, as the experiences and beliefs of individuals of color can become saturated (Blanton et al., 2020). For example, within schools, Black parents often faced systemic racism as they were not always accepted into the school space, were perceived as neutral towards their child's education, and were often hindered from fully participating within their child's programming (Marchand et al., 2019). This theory is relevant as part of this study's theoretical framework as it seeks justice, liberation, and empowerment for persons of color (Tate, 1997). CRT brings light to the inequalities that exist within systems and helps to identify areas that require equitable practices to be implemented. This is significant as the current study focuses on the premise that

CLD families are unintentionally disadvantaged by school systems, as evidenced by the additional barriers they face in upholding their right to parent involvement.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory is integral to the current study's theoretical framework. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task or behavior (Bandura, 1977; Fitzgerald, 1991). According to this theory, individuals who perceived themselves as having high confidence in performing a task were more likely to engage and complete it (Bandura, 1977). Conversely, those who believed they could not perform a task were more likely to avoid it altogether. This theory posited that it was not sufficient for individuals to have the skills and knowledge needed to complete the task, but they also had to believe in themselves to successfully perform the task (Artino Jr., 2012). Therefore, the self-efficacy theory relied on the idea that an individual's confidence increased when they perceived their ability to perform (Bandura, 1977). An individual's perception of self-efficacy has a significant impact on their actions. Self-efficacy played a major role in the modification and maintenance of behavior, as well as the likelihood of an individual changing their behavior and actions (Fitzgerald, 1991).

According to the self-efficacy theory, individuals who identified as having higher self-efficacy in performing a task demonstrated increased effort and persistence during challenging tasks compared to those who perceived themselves as having lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In the context of the current study, this theory is especially important. Teachers often felt underprepared in their ability to work effectively with CLD students and families (Gonzalez & Gabel, 2017). They believed they could not work effectively with CLD groups.

These self-perceived beliefs may unintentionally affect their ability to enforce parents' rights to active involvement in special education processes. Therefore, understanding the role of self-efficacy when teachers facilitate this task is critical. By gaining a deeper understanding of this theory as it relates to the phenomenon, educators can take additional steps towards equipping special education teachers with the necessary experiences, skills, and knowledge to effectively incorporate behavior change practices that would promote the inclusivity of all families.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory is relevant to this study's theoretical framework as it emphasizes the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in ensuring a child's positive development. The theory proposes that different structures influence a child's development, and the interaction between each of these structures determines the child's growth (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). These structures are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem, which is the child's immediate environment, includes the child's parents, school, and neighborhood (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The mesosystem, which is the interaction between different microsystems, involves the relationship between the child's family and their school. The exosystem, which contains environmental factors that indirectly impact the child, includes school board policies implemented at the child's school (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The macrosystem, the fourth level, embodies cultural and societal values. Lastly, the fifth level, chronosystem, implies that time and the transitions the child goes through in life impact the child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

The current study aims to increase the collaboration between families and schools to foster parental involvement in special education processes. The ecological systems theory supports the importance of a home-school partnership by highlighting the interplay between a

child's home and school settings. When these two microsystems work together at the mesosystem level, the impact of this collaboration on a child's development is greatly enhanced (Thijs & Eilbracht, 2012). The theory posits that children's development is affected not only by their interactions in the home and education settings but also by the relationship between the two settings (Kim & Riley, 2014). The home-school collaboration allows each party to gain additional knowledge and skills to foster and sustain the child's development. Therefore, by understanding the experiences of special education teachers as they are responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes, next steps can be developed to support strengthening the relationship between the home and school environments.

Literature Review

It is essential to comprehend the history of special education to understand the study's context. Special education is a relatively recent concept that has made significant progress since its inception in 1975, ensuring that students with disabilities receive the necessary support and services they require. Understanding the laws governing special education services is essential to giving children with disabilities access to a FAPE. Therefore, within this section, the researcher provides an overview of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) and the IDEA, and how these laws specifically awarded children with disabilities specific rights. In addition, readers will gain an understanding of the importance of parental involvement within education and the barriers that exist for families as they seek to be involved in their child's education. Lastly, the researcher engages in a discussion of self-efficacy and the impact of self-efficacy in education.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975)

One of the most significant movements in history that led to the inclusion of students with disabilities was the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) in 1975 (Keogh, 2007; Seymour & Seymour, 1979). Children with disabilities had limited rights or protections within public school education compared to their same-aged peers before implementing the EHA (Coates, 1985; IDEA, 2004; Kauffman et al., 2022). They were often sent to restrictive settings away from their homes, which violated today's requirement of educating students in their LRE (IDEA, 2004). Students with disabilities had difficulty accessing public education, and those with access to it had minimal support and accommodations (IDEA, 2004; Kauffman et al., 2022). Parents were limited from advocating for their children's rights because they often believed their children would not lead meaningful lives due to their disabilities (Coates, 1985).

After Congress passed the EHA in 1975, more students with disabilities gained access to a fair and adequate education (IDEA, 2004; Kauffman et al., 2022). The rights of students with disabilities were protected as state and local governments increased their support for these individuals. This support required public schools to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities to provide them with the opportunity to improve their overall educational outcomes. Public schools received specific guidance on what free and public education entailed for students with disabilities, including information regarding due process rights, nondiscriminatory assessment, and the right for students with disabilities to access an IEP that addressed their individualized educational needs (Keogh, 2007). EHA upheld that children with disabilities be educated in their LRE as much as possible to ensure they remained with their general education peers (Coates, 1985; Schinagle & Bartlett, 2015). Many colleges and universities were

encouraged to adjust their training and graduate programs to ensure school personnel could work with a broad range of students (Keogh, 2007). The EHA introduced rights to parents of children with disabilities through procedural safeguards (Coates, 1985; Coots, 2007). Before the EHA, school personnel solely made educational decisions regarding a child's education, and often, these decisions resulted in a lack of effective education for these students (Turnbull, 1993). Therefore, the EHA mandated parents of children with disabilities to have decision-making roles within their child's special education programming. This movement was just the beginning of providing students with disabilities and their parents with the rights to which they were entitled.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The EHA paved the way for expanding the rights of children with disabilities in public education. The EHA was reauthorized into the IDEA in 1990, with several amendments made to this federal law over the years (Yell et al., 2017). The IDEA included substantial amendments and additions, such as the inclusion of specific disability categories for special education, including autism and traumatic brain injury (TBI), and transition services within a child's IEP (Grigal et al., 2011; Yell et al., 2017). IDEA (2004) mandated that a statement of transition services should be included within an IEP no later than age 16. However, the state of Minnesota mandated that the discussion of transition services for an eligible student begin earlier and that the implementation of those services begin by the end of 9th grade (MDE, 2023). In addition, the IDEA expanded the role of parents and general education teachers within special education processes, and disciplinary and mediation procedures for students receiving special education services were added (Yell et al., 2017).

Since the IDEA passed, parent participation has been a key aspect for students with disabilities (Turnbull, 2005). Public schools were responsible for ensuring that one or both

parents of a child with a disability attended special education meetings (Duquette et al., 2011; IDEA, 2004; Kalyanpur et al., 2000). Parents were to be informed of meetings well in advance and had to mutually agree on a meeting's time and location (IDEA, 2004). When at least one parent could not attend special education-related meetings, the public agency had to take additional measures to involve them, such as by offering individual or conference calls. In such cases, the public school must showcase that it took necessary steps to ensure the parent(s) could be involved in the process by documenting all attempts to contact the parent(s) (IDEA, 2004). Public agencies were also responsible for ensuring parents could access the meeting appropriately, such as arranging for an interpreter if necessary (IDEA, 2004; Rossetti et al., 2017).

Parent Involvement in Education

Parent involvement in a child's education has numerous positive effects and benefits (Barnard, 2004; Collier et al., 2015a; Sheldon, 2003). Active parental involvement was associated with several positive outcomes for children, including improved attendance and lower student dropout rates (Barnard, 2004; Schmid & Garrels, 2021; Sheldon, 2003; Topor et al., 2010). Moreover, a parent's attitude and involvement in their child's education could positively influence their child's self-perception of cognitive competence, which in turn affected their academic achievement (Topor et al., 2010). Involved parents were likely to engage in direct instruction with their children, which improved their child's cognitive complexity (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Parents provided direct instruction to encourage their child's factual learning, knowledge, and cognitive complexity. Additionally, involved parents were more likely to model and reinforce fundamental attitudes and behaviors essential to school success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Overall, children tended to demonstrate higher

academic success when their parents were highly involved in their education than children with less involved parents (Topor et al., 2010).

Parent-teacher partnerships are an effective way to increase the chance that parents are involved in their child's education. Research showed that established parent-teacher partnerships reduced student grade retention rates and referrals for undesirable behaviors (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Barnard, 2004). Moreover, effective parent-teacher partnerships were linked to positive student-teacher relationships, as parents and teachers collaborated more often to promote positive student outcomes (Topor et al., 2010). These partnerships reduced student stress, effectively promoting student readiness for learning (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Barnard, 2004). In conclusion, parent involvement in partnerships with school personnel was pivotal for supporting student success and well-being.

Parent Involvement in Special Education

The positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic success is clear. Policymakers have recognized this and prioritized it in many state and federal educational policy initiatives. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) recognized the critical role of parents in decision-making processes, particularly regarding their child's educational programming and placement (Koch, 2020). For children with disabilities, the IDEA requires that parents participate in their child's initial eligibility determinations, service plan meetings, and educational placement decisions (Oztürk, 2017). To ensure effective collaboration between parents and schools, IDEA mandates that the local education agency (LEA) take responsibility for initiating this relationship by informing parents of their rights as parents of children receiving special education services (Duquette et al., 2011; Kalyanpur et al., 2000). However, it is not enough to simply include parents in special education-related meetings.

Instead, parents' knowledge and input should be strongly considered in all decisions for their child to ensure that their full rights and permissions are aligned with IDEA (Kurth et al., 2019a; Oztürk, 2017).

It is well-known that parental involvement and teacher collaboration are pivotal to ensuring the best outcomes for students receiving special education services. Multiple best practice standards for teachers emphasized the importance of involving parents in their child's education (Harry, 1997; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). President George W. Bush established the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002) to investigate concerns raised by parents, teachers, and administrators regarding federal, state, and local special education programs (Berdine, 2003). This commission aimed to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities, and it found that empowering parents through their involvement in their child's education was critical to achieving this goal. As a result, the commission strongly encouraged school professionals to empower families to participate actively in their children's special education. The High Leverage Practices in Special Education framework highlighted the importance of parent-teacher collaboration to maximize outcomes for students receiving special education instruction and services. According to this evidence-based framework, teachers must collaborate with families to support student learning and ensure students receive their required services (McLeskey et al., 2017). This framework also stressed the need for teachers to collaborate with families to empower them to advocate for their child's education and stay informed about their child's needs and progress through continuous communication.

Parental involvement was particularly beneficial for students with disabilities. In addition to the advantages that all children receive from parental involvement in their education, the active involvement of parents in their child's special education and intervention process led to

more progress toward their individualized goals (Spann et al., 2003). This benefit was particularly true when parents were involved in developing their child's individualized education program (Bariroh, 2018). As a result, it is more important than ever to emphasize collaboration between schools and parents to establish a foundational educational system for students with disabilities (Lara & Saracossti, 2019; Levy et al., 2006). Nevertheless, maintaining this mandated parent-school relationship presented numerous challenges for both parties.

Barriers to Parental Involvement in Special Education

The Part B Notice of Procedural Safeguards Parental Rights for Public School Special Education Students (procedural safeguards) outlines parental special education rights (MDE, 2023c). Parents and adult children are entitled to a copy of the procedural safeguards once per school year. Parents are entitled to a number of rights, including providing written and informed consent prior to schools initiating an evaluation or re-evaluation of a student, proceeding with an initial placement or programming of a student in special education, and releasing information to agency officials providing or paying for transition services. Parents also have the right to refuse any educational decisions proposed by the school district within 14 calendar days of when the parent(s) receive the school's proposal (MDE, 2023). In addition, parents are entitled to access their child's educational records without delay and have the right to request amendments to those records if the parent believes their child's records are inaccurate or misleading. Overall, the procedural safeguards provide parents with rights and responsibilities within their child's educational programming.

Unfortunately, obstacles still prevented families from exercising their educational rights, despite IDEA's position on parental involvement, the rights outlined within the procedural safeguards, and the wealth of evidence that pointed to the benefits of active parental participation

in education for students (Coots, 2007; Rios & Burke, 2020). While it was the responsibility of school districts to ensure that families were educated and informed about their rights as active members of their child's special education programming, many families were unaware of special education procedures and their role in special education team meetings (Geenen et al., 2005). Furthermore, parents could not provide ongoing support for their children in the home environment due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of the services they received within the educational setting (Oranga et al., 2022). This lack of information impeded parents' full and effective participation, ultimately limiting their child's potential for maximum growth (Oranga et al., 2022).

In many cases, parents felt like they could not fully participate in meetings due to the actions of school personnel (Kurth et al., 2019a). Parents often felt like school personnel dominated conversations during meetings, making them feel their voices were not heard (Guerrero et al., 2023; Kurth et al., 2019b; Love et al., 2017). Even when parents could voice their input or concerns, their suggestions were often only noted and seldom considered in the final educational decisions (Kurth et al., 2019b). As a result, parents frequently fought with school personnel to incorporate the input they believed was significant for their child’s educational success into the final educational plans (Kurth et al., 2019a). This dynamic often made families feel like schools were the "sole decision-makers" regarding their child's educational services and placement, leaving them feeling disempowered as supposedly equal team members (Koch, 2020). While public schools tried to include parents in special education processes, the input and concerns of parents were often not given enough weight, which limited their role as equal educational team members.

Parents often found themselves in a challenging position as active members of their child's educational team, where they could not contribute their ideas or suggestions regarding their child's educational plan (Geenen et al., 2005; Oztürk, 2017). This was because many special education providers prepared IEPs in isolation before meetings commenced (Hess et al., 2006). Consequently, important information that could contribute to the successful implementation of the plan was often withheld from the final educational document, as educators had already made decisions (Geenen et al., 2005; Kurth et al., 2019; Oztürk, 2017). This action made parents reluctant to participate in future meetings as they perceived that their thoughts and input would not be considered or incorporated into educational decisions (Koch, 2020; Thurlow et al., 2022). Unfortunately, this led to parents feeling like audience members within special education meetings rather than equal, valued members, which fell short of the IDEA mandates for parental involvement in their child's education.

Communication was one of the biggest challenges families with children receiving special education services in a public school faced. The language and educational jargon used in special education meetings could be difficult for parents and were rarely explained in layperson's terms, often leaving them feeling undervalued and excluded from their child's education (Koch, 2020; Thurlow et al., 2022). Differences in nonverbal communication and communication styles between parents and school personnel further compounded this issue (Geenen et al., 2005; Tamzarian et al., 2012). For CLD families, these barriers were even more pronounced, as their communication styles differed significantly from the dominant culture in their child's school. This difference caused families, especially CLD families, to feel isolated and less engaged in their role as active members of their child's education team (Geenen et al., 2005).

To address this communication difficulty, districts utilized language lines and interpreters to bridge the gap between CLD families and the school district (Tovar, 2016). However, many school districts continued to have limited access to bilingual staff and faced difficulty in staffing interpreters for every culture and language present in the district (Geenen et al., 2005; Tovar, 2016). Additionally, even when districts utilized interpreters and language lines to bridge the language gap, the verbal and non-verbal communication that occurred with the rest of the school faculty made it difficult to fully close the language gap. Overall, the resources available to families to bridge the language and communication barrier with school districts were inconsistent (Geenen et al., 2005; Tovar , 2016). This lack of resources led parents to feel unsupported when advocating for their child's education and as if they were being treated poorly by the school personnel because of their culture (Geenen et al., 2005). Additionally, school professionals may hold stereotypes or misunderstandings about cultural groups, which could create a negative climate and cause them to overlook family strengths (Harry et al., 2005). This mindset was particularly problematic as cultural differences often played an influential role in a child's education. When CLD families experienced continued disregard or disrespect for those differences, they often felt they must give up on advocating for their child's educational programming (Thurlow et al., 2022). The lack of accessible resources that help promote understanding of language used during meetings and the difficulties families face in the involvement in their child's education created animosity and negatively impacted parents' future participation in meetings.

Educators were barriers to effective parental involvement within special education programming. This barrier existed as teacher preparation programs often failed to prepare new teachers to work collaboratively with parents and families (D'Haem & Griswold, 2016; Murray

et al., 2018; Sewell, 2012; Willemse et al., 2017). This lack of preparation was evident across various educational areas, including those teachers who primarily provided services to students with disabilities. Teacher preparation programs provided special education teachers with limited genuine experiences that promoted the significance of family-school collaboration and parental involvement in special education processes (Collier et al., 2015a). Teachers had limited opportunities to expand on their skills through the workforce as many school districts did not provide training that focused on increasing teachers' ability to strengthen their relationships with families (Collier et al., 2015a). As a result, teachers unintentionally hindered parental involvement in their child's special education programming.

Teachers felt uncomfortable and lacked confidence in their abilities to communicate and collaborate effectively with parents due to their lack of preparation (Koch, 2020). Parents often depended on teachers' expertise to help them navigate their child's special education programming, as many parents lacked knowledge about disability categories and available educational options (Phillips, 2008). Yet, many teachers felt unprepared to answer questions and respond to the concerns of families, as most of their training involved being primary providers to children (Koch, 2020). When teachers lack the skills to effectively support their families throughout special education processes, the positive collaboration and communication between the school and the family is adversely impacted (Collier, 2015a). Therefore, it is essential to understand teachers' confidence in their skills and abilities to collaborate effectively with parents, as adequate steps can commence to build teachers' capacity in this area and increase parental involvement within special education processes.

Self-Efficacy

An individual's attributes and attitudes toward change influence their ability to effect change in a system (Hajovsky et al., 2020). These unique characteristics determined how individuals changed their behaviors and practices. One of the key attributes that affected this change was self-efficacy, which referred to a person's confidence in their ability to perform a task (Burke et al., 2009). Many teachers felt inadequate due to a lack of proper preparation and a lack of confidence in their ability to increase collaboration with parents in educational systems (Koch, 2020). It is essential to comprehend the role of self-efficacy to increase understanding of how teachers can improve collaboration with parents.

An individual's self-efficacy level can significantly impact behavior and outcomes (Hajovsky et al., 2020). When individuals reported high levels of self-efficacy, they were more likely to complete a task successfully. This positive correlation was because when individuals had confidence in their ability to achieve a goal, they were more motivated to work towards it (Kodden, 2020). Self-efficacy is a trait that can be developed and improved, and a change in self-efficacy leads to changes in behavior, as self-efficacy directly impacts an individual's thoughts, actions, efforts, and perseverance (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006). For instance, deliberate practice involving repetition and continuous exercise could help individuals improve their skills and increase their perceived self-efficacy (Kodden, 2020).

Self-Efficacy in Schools

The level of self-efficacy among teachers is an important factor in promoting academic success and well-being in schools (Barni et al., 2019). Self-efficacy influenced the effectiveness of activities implemented by school personnel and their level of commitment to these activities. Teachers who reported higher levels of self-efficacy tended to use more innovative strategies in

their work (Cobanoglu & Yurek, 2018). Moreover, individuals with high self-efficacy were likelier to persevere through challenging situations and engage in risk-taking behaviors (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). This behavior was because they possessed strong interpersonal skills and a strong professional commitment, which allowed them to identify problems within the organization and implement possible solutions (Zainal & Mohd Matore, 2021). These traits became essential when changes were required in the school system to combat the identified problems.

Specifically, teachers' higher perceived self-efficacy in school settings led to their willingness to engage in novel situations (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). In understanding teachers' self-efficacy, it is imperative to understand the additional factors that self-efficacy can impact. Teachers who reported higher self-efficacy demonstrated lower burnout rates and experienced higher levels of job satisfaction (Caprara et al., 2006; Collie et al., 2012; Lazarides & Warner, 2020). Teachers also demonstrated effective teaching behaviors, collaborated more, and cultivated highly valued relationships (Woolfolk et al., 1990). These factors were imperative when teachers faced challenges or situations that required change.

Higher perceptions of self-efficacy reported by teachers positively impacted parent-teacher collaboration (Ekornes & Bele, 2021). Specifically, teachers who felt more confident in their abilities were likely to engage in practices that led to supportive and secure relationships with their students and families (Hajovsky et al., 2020). However, teachers reported having more faith in their abilities to engage in parent-teacher collaboration, especially for students with behavioral needs, when they had formal training in psychology or special education (Ekornes & Bele, 2021). Thus, focusing on implementing interventions for teachers to build their skills and behaviors in supporting special education students plays a significant role in

increasing the teacher's self-efficacy, as these interventions can impact specific future behaviors of individuals and increase the likelihood of new learning being transferred in their work as professionals (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).

Self-efficacy is generally malleable as training and additional education can promote change within individuals. Teachers reported that they felt more competent in their work with the help of in-service training or professional development, which, in turn, increased their confidence in their ability to implement new practices (Roll-Petersson, 2008). Teachers' self-efficacy increased across all domains when they gained more teaching experience vicariously or through developed training (Gale et al., 2021). Therefore, school training and professional development are essential in boosting individuals' self-efficacy, particularly in schools, as they help to enhance individuals' thinking and problem-solving skills (Gale et al., 2021; Tongchai, 2021).

Understanding the self-efficacy of special education teachers responsible for ensuring parental involvement in special education processes for all families is important. This understanding is essential for determining the next steps to alleviate this problem. By developing teachers' confidence and reliance on their skills to engage in the necessary change required within the special education systems, steps can be taken to support teachers' ability to facilitate parental involvement in special education processes. Moreover, understanding self-efficacy can positively impact additional factors for teachers, such as decreased burnout and stress, increased collaboration with stakeholders, stronger relationships, and positive student academic achievement outcomes (Caprara et al., 2006; Collie et al., 2012; Lazarides & Warner, 2020; Woolfolk et al., 1990).

Summary

This literature review highlighted the evolution of special education over time and the expansion of rights for students with disabilities, as well as parental involvement in their child's education. However, despite the importance of parental engagement in both general and special education systems, barriers to involvement continued to persist (Coots, 2007; Rios & Burke, 2020). These barriers were often due to school personnel's lack of experience, the parent's lack of knowledge regarding special education processes and procedures, and the communication gap between the family and school (Geenen et al., 2005; Hess et al., 2006; Oranga et al., 2022). The review emphasized the significance of self-efficacy in individuals and its positive impact on behavior change (Hajovsky et al., 2020). Evaluating teachers' self-efficacy with parental involvement in special education processes can help address the ongoing challenges faced by families, as self-efficacy is a key factor in promoting behavior change.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the proposed methodology for this study. The sections within this chapter include research design, research questions, research setting, researcher positionality, sampling and procedure, research instruments, trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis, delimitations and limitations, and ethical considerations. Each section provides a detailed description of the researcher's method within the study.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to understand the experiences of special education teachers in Minnesota responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. The study explored teachers' challenges in engaging parents in special education processes, their self-efficacy in asserting parental rights, and the impact on self-efficacy when teachers worked with families from diverse backgrounds. By identifying patterns and themes in the data, this study sought to inform teacher preparation programs, school districts, and professional learning communities about potential strategies to address these challenges. These strategies included providing resources, support, and professional development opportunities to teachers to encourage meaningful involvement of families in special education, as well as implementing systems and practices that were inclusive of families of students with disabilities.

Research Questions

The qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore four research questions:

1) What are the participants' lived experiences as special education teachers responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA?

2) What perceptions do special education teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?
3) How is special education teachers' self-efficacy impacted when facilitating parental involvement in special education processes for White families versus CLD families?
4) What steps can be taken to improve the impediments, if any, that teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?

Research Design

Research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative research focuses on understanding the world in terms of people, situations, and events, while quantitative research emphasizes variables and numerical data. The current study utilized a qualitative approach. The main goal of qualitative research is to gain insights into participants' experiences to understand how those experiences impact them. It aims to understand the subjective interpretation of events and how it influences behavior (Maxwell, 2013). This approach helps researchers to gain a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena and behavior. A qualitative approach was appropriate for the current study as it explored special education teachers' experiences facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. A qualitative approach enables researchers to gain insight into how practices, policies, and procedures can be improved, which was also an essential aim of the current study (Maxwell, 2013).

Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that aims to understand an individual's conscious experience in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Neubauer et al., 2019). Researchers seek to comprehend the human experience by delving into the shared experiences of individuals related to a particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The goal is to unravel the meaning of a

specific experience by exploring what it is like for individuals (van Manen, 1990). This approach aims to uncover a shared meaning of the phenomenon by exploring the shared experiences of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Neubauer et al., 2019). There are two primary approaches to phenomenology, namely transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology. In transcendental phenomenology, researchers eliminate their biases, assumptions, and expectations and allow the narratives of the participants' experiences to guide the interpretation of the phenomenon's essence (Neubauer et al., 2019). In contrast, in hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher acknowledges their biases and uses their experiences, knowledge, and preconceptions to reflect and guide their understanding of the phenomenon.

In this study, the goal was to examine the experiences of special education teachers and their self-efficacy in ensuring parental involvement in special education processes. A qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used to achieve this goal, which was ideal for this study as it allowed for self-reflection on the phenomenon while understanding the participants' personal experiences so that additional insights regarding the phenomenon could be garnered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). This approach provided additional insights into the phenomenon by uncovering experiential structures and themes related to the experiences of special education teachers when enforcing parents' rights within special education processes (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). Additionally, this exploratory study used a flexible tool for educational research that allowed for adaptable data collection. The researcher demonstrated flexibility in their interactions with the research participants based on the context rather than adhering to a fixed pattern (Maxwell, 2013). This approach allowed for an immersive experience and the ability to ask follow-up questions based on the interactions with the participants to gain a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling method focused on identifying individuals with certain characteristics as they would be good sources of information for the research study (Patten & Newhart, 2017). For phenomenological research, purposive sampling allows researchers to intentionally identify participants who are experienced and knowledgeable in the phenomenon (Moser & Korstjens, 2017; Patten & Newhart, 2017). This study utilized purposive sampling to select the research participants. The study focused on Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed special education teachers in the state of Minnesota who have worked in special education for at least three years. Tier One and Two licensed teachers were excluded from the study as they typically have less than three years of experience. Due to their novelty within the field, additional factors can impact their self-efficacy as teachers in special education, therefore the focus remained on more experienced teachers within the special education field. The Tier 3 and 4 licensed teachers had experiences working with White and CLD families. This selection criteria ensured that the study could fully focus on the experiences of special education teachers related to parental involvement in their child's education.

The researcher completed the “PELSB Data Request Form” located on the PELSB website to obtain a list of Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed special education teachers in the state of Minnesota. The following data was requested from PELSB: name of the licensed teacher, licensure area, and email address. The researcher obtained a list of 19,657 teachers, and all of these teachers received an interest email seeking volunteers for the study over the span of three weeks (see Appendix A). The focus remained on teachers employed at the elementary school level. The researcher's focus on elementary sites ensured consistency across teachers' experiences, as special education teachers' roles and responsibilities vary between elementary

and secondary sites. Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed special education teachers who have experience working with White families and CLD families were purposefully selected to yield results that specifically address the four research questions. Once the researcher obtained approval from Bethel University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher commenced the study.

Interested participants completed a survey to verify whether they met the selected criteria to participate in the study. Surveys are questionnaires that contain questions to gather information from individuals (Ponto, 2015). They are a commonly utilized approach for purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013) and were, therefore, ideal for this study's purpose. The Google form link, which served as the survey, was embedded within the interest email. The survey consisted of seven questions that aimed to gauge their experiences and responsibilities to ensure that the participants selected met the full criterion required for the study (see Appendix B). The researcher personally reviewed the surveys, and participants received a follow-up email indicating whether they were eligible to participate in the study, along with additional next steps, if they met the eligibility criteria (see Appendix C). These efforts were employed to garner a total of 12 to 15 participants.

Participants and Setting

The researcher sent an initial interest email with a qualifying survey (Appendix B) linked to all Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed special education teachers in the state of Minnesota. Out of the 19,657 teachers who received the interest email, 162 individuals submitted a form expressing their interest in participating within the study. Participants were required to meet the following three criteria: a minimum of three years of experience in the special education field; a Tier 3 or Tier 4 special education license in the state of Minnesota; and a work history in the elementary school setting. The researcher checked each submission to ensure that individuals met the criteria

required to participate in the study. When each submission was cross-referenced with the criteria, 70 participants were found to be eligible to participate in the study. The researcher sent a follow-up email confirming eligibility to participate to the 70 individuals, along with the informed consent form and a link to sign up for an interview with the researcher. The 92 participants that were not eligible to partake in the study were also informed of their ineligibility. Although a high number of eligible individuals were contacted, and three additional attempts were made to solicit participation, the researcher was only able to obtain a final total of 10 participants, rather than the goal of 12-15 participants.

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E) to conduct interviews with the 10 participants. The researcher advised participants to choose a private location where they felt comfortable for the individual virtual interview session. The researcher conducted each interview in a private school or home office. Each interview began with a disclosure statement and series of questions asking participants about their background in special education, which are found in Table 1. All participants taught in an elementary school setting. Nine teachers were female, and one teacher was male. Five teachers reported being in the special education field for more than 10 years, ranging from 10 to 16 years. Nine out of 10 participants identified as White, while one participant identified as Asian. Information on race was gathered through a follow-up email initiated by the researcher. Five teachers reported being in the special education field for less than 10 years, ranging from four to eight years. Three of the 10 participants held more than one licensure area in special education; five were licensed in Academic Behavioral Strategist (ABS) licensure; one was licensed in Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) licensure; one was licensed in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) licensure; one was licensed in Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

licensures; one was licensed in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) licensures; and one was licensed in Academic Behavioral Strategist (ABS) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD) licensures.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Race	Building Level	Years in Special Education	Licensure
Teacher 1	F	White	Elementary	13	SLD, ASD
Teacher 2	F	White	Elementary	12	ASD, DCD
Teacher 3	F	White	Elementary	4	ABS, SLD
Teacher 4	F	White	Elementary	5	ABS
Teacher 5	F	White	Elementary	12	ABS
Teacher 6	M	Asian	Elementary	6	ASD
Teacher 7	F	White	Elementary	8	ABS
Teacher 8	F	White	Elementary	6	DCD
Teacher 9	F	White	Elementary	10	ABS
Teacher 10	F	White	Elementary	16	ABS

Note. The following are licensure abbreviations used above: Academic Behavioral Strategist (ABS), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD).

At the conclusion of each interview, each participant received their transcribed interview via email. All participants were required to check the transcript to ensure its accuracy and intention. Member-checking allowed the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of this research (Stahl & King, 2020). All participants requested no changes to be made to their final transcript. All 10 participants were entered into a drawing to win one of three $30.00 Amazon gift cards

upon completion of the individual interview to encourage participation (Abdelazeem et al., 2022). The winners of the drawing were notified via email and received their gift cards electronically.

Data Collection

The researcher received approval from the IRB committee before officially beginning data collection (Roberts, 2010). Bethel University requires all researchers to submit proposals to the IRB before conducting research at their institution to ensure the protection of all participants (Roberts, 2010). The proposal for approval to IRB outlined the rights and protections awarded to all participants (Roberts, 2010). Once IRB approval was received, the researcher identified participants for the study. Prior to collecting data, participants were required to provide their written informed consent after receiving a statement regarding the purpose of the research, the expected duration of participation, the procedures the researcher would follow, any risks, benefits, or discomforts that may occur by participating, the right to voluntary participation and understanding that the participant can withdraw at any time, and a description of the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained (see Appendix E; Roberts, 2010).

The researcher conducted individual interviews and engaged in “member-checking” of the interview transcriptions to gather data for the study. These methods helped achieve triangulation and strengthen the data's credibility (Stahl & King, 2020). Before administering these methods, a field test was conducted with one special education teacher not part of the study to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the interview questions.

Once the researcher reviewed the survey results, the identified participants received an approval email, an informed consent form, and a link to schedule an online interview using the Participant Interview Google Form (see Appendix F). Upon completing the research study

requirements, participants were placed into an entry for a drawing to win one of three $30.00 Amazon gift cards for completing the study's requirements. Once the researcher completed all interview sessions with the participants, and all participants provided confirmation of the accuracy of their transcripts, the researcher randomly selected three winners for the Amazon gift cards. The winners were notified via email, and they received their Amazon gift card electronically.

For the study, participants completed a 30-45 minute individual interview (see Appendix D). While face-to-face interviews were preferred, online methods were utilized (Ataro, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The researcher conducted interviews synchronously using Zoom, and the participants were asked to keep their videos on during the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The interviews were conducted in a private, quiet environment to ensure confidentiality. The interviews were audio-recorded for later review and transcription, with permission of the participants.

Following each interview session, the researcher read each of the transcripts while listening to the audio recordings to ensure consistency between the two sources. The researcher made edits to eliminate variations between the recordings and transcripts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Patten & Newhart, 2017). Once the researcher transcribed all the audio recordings, all participants received a copy of the transcript via email to give them an opportunity to make revisions or additions. All participants made no changes to the transcripts and agreed that the transcripts reflected their experiences accurately.

Instrument

The study used different research instruments to gather data from participants. Surveys allowed the researcher to identify participants, while interviews allowed the researcher to collect

data. Before the study, each research instrument went through a field test with one individual not part of the study to test its trustworthiness (Roberts, 2010). This field test helped identify areas that required improvement to develop clear protocols and questions that could effectively capture the phenomenon under study. The final version of the research instruments enabled the researcher to collect comprehensive and meaningful data from participants, which allowed them to fully reflect upon their experiences and the meanings behind them (Roberts, 2010).

Interviews

Interviews are widely used in qualitative research to gather participant data (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Interviews are conversations between a researcher and participant, where the researcher asks specific questions and the participant answers them (Knott et al., 2022). Depending on the structure of the interview, they can vary from structured to unstructured. Structured interviews follow a predetermined set of questions and allow for little deviation, while unstructured interviews are more conversational and do not rely on predetermined questions (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Semi-structured interviews are a third type that allows researchers to prepare questions in advance while adjusting during the interview to ensure complete answers from participants. Through semi-structured interviews, participants can provide detailed accounts of their experiences, clarify the meanings associated with their experiences, and share their thoughts and perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study utilized semi-structured interviews to gather information about the current phenomenon. This research instrument was preferred as it allowed for a more in-depth understanding of participants' experiences (Guerrero-Castañeda et al., 2017; Knott et al., 2022). As special education teachers' experiences and responsibilities vary widely, a semi-structured interview approach provided flexibility to deviate from the protocol as needed. When unexpected

or unforeseen experiences arose during the interviews, the researcher asked follow-up questions to ensure all relevant information was incorporated into the research (Guerrero-Castañeda et al., 2017; Knott et al., 2022). A single interview was conducted with each participant. An interview protocol was used as a guide during the interviews. The questions within the interview protocol were intentionally created to extract responses regarding the phenomenon. The interview focused on gathering background information and insight into the research questions (see Appendix D). There were six background questions, three questions related to research question one, three questions related to research question two, two questions related to research question three, and two questions related to research question four. Participants were able to share any additional information they believed would benefit the researcher's understanding of their experience with the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research is often centered around personal narratives and experiences, making it difficult to ascertain the degree of trustworthiness due to potential biases or misconstrued perspectives (Stahl & King, 2020). To address this issue, researchers have identified five critical concepts essential in establishing and enhancing trust in qualitative research. These concepts include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. Researchers must establish these concepts to ensure the trustworthiness of their qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Stahl & King, 2020).

Credibility

The first concept pertinent to establishing trust in qualitative research is credibility. It is equivalent to internal validity in quantitative research and ensures that research findings accurately represent the data collected (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The

researcher committed to prolonged engagement during data collection and analysis to collect sufficient data and become familiar with the data before making interpretations to ensure credibility within the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The researcher also engaged in “member-checking,” or respondent validation. Participants received an email of their transcribed interview and had the opportunity to modify and verify the interview transcript and interpretations to ensure its accuracy (Birt et al., 2020; Lindheim, 2022; Stahl & King, 2020). In addition, several sources of information, such as the individual interviews and an understanding of the literature, were used within the study to achieve data triangulation (Stahl & King, 2020).

Transferability

The second important element in qualitative research is transferability, which pertains to the generalizability of the study's findings to different settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). This aspect is essential as qualitative research findings can apply across various settings, and researchers might want to expand the results into different settings. Therefore, it is important to establish the study's transferability and results (Stahl & King, 2020). The readers received a comprehensive and detailed description of the sample, research instruments, and data collection procedures used to establish transferability in the current study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Stahl & King, 2020).

Dependability

Dependability is a significant concept to establishing trust. Dependability is achieved when the data supports the findings and interpretations of the participant's experiences over time (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To ensure dependability, the researcher practiced "bracketing" to differentiate their observations and interpretations from the facts of the data (Stahl & King,

2020). Furthermore, the researcher created an audit trail that included keeping records and providing details of all field notes, transcripts, and journals (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017), which helped the researcher reach conclusions regarding the data and findings.

Confirmability

The fourth concept to addressing trustworthiness in qualitative research is confirmability. Confirmability within research means that the researcher derives the data and interpretations from the data set (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The audit trail establishing dependability within the study helped ensure confirmability. The researcher derived interpretations and findings from the data record. The researcher securely kept all data records to ensure they are made available to researchers and readers (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017; Stahl & King, 2020).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essential to establishing trustworthiness in research. Reflexivity involves self-reflection by the researcher to understand their biases, preferences, and preconceptions concerning the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). In the researcher's positionality statement, the researcher discussed their assumptions and prior experiences that could impact the research process. The researcher limited their discussion of their experiences during the study to remain objective and unbiased when collecting and interpreting data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Reflexivity can also influence the researcher's interpretations if they have prior connections with selected participants. Therefore, the researcher refrained from conducting research with participants who were familiar to the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyze the data. The key objective of this approach is to delve into the lived experiences of the participants and examine them in detail. Researchers aim to gain insight into the participants' perspectives and capture the meaning and emotions attached to their experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Rather than making general claims based on pre-existing theories, IPA focuses on interpreting the individual experiences of each participant (Smith & Nizza, 2022; Smith & Osborn, 2014). The first step within this analysis process involved increasing the researcher's familiarity with the participants' experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). The researcher developed verbatim transcripts of the participant's interview by listening to the audio recordings at least once (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). The researcher transcribed all parts of the audio recordings, and the completed transcripts were then analyzed and compared to the original recordings to ensure consistency (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). All recordings were transcribed and thematically analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software program. By reading and re-reading the developed transcripts, the researcher familiarized themselves with the participant's experiences before summarizing and taking notes of the complex information by letting the participant become the focus of the analysis (Smith et al., 2022). This step permitted the researcher to slow down and engage in repeated reading to gain a deeper understanding of the narratives presented (Smith et al., 2022). In this step, the researcher took casual notes regarding their observations and emotions that came to mind regarding their recollections of the interview.

After the researcher became familiar with the participant's experience, they began examining the content and language of the participant's experience on an exploratory level

(Smith et al., 2022). Within this step, the researcher took notes of any thoughts, observations, and reflections on the left margin that came to mind while reading the transcript (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). These notes focused on summarizing key information, noting common recurring phrases, identifying any amplifications or contradictions in the participants' statements, picking out associations or connections within the text, and distinguishing any preliminary interpretations of the transcript (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher also noted the content and language of the text during this stage. By the end of this step, the researcher developed a comprehensive set of notes and comments regarding the information presented in the transcripts.

After the researcher completed their initial exploratory noting and commentary of the transcript, the researcher then identified experiential statements, or emergent themes. This step consolidated the information within the comprehensive set of notes and shifted the focus toward identifying the most important aspects of the transcript (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). To identify experiential statements, the researcher focused on chunks of the transcript while reviewing the notes made in the previous step to identify emerging themes (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The goal was to consolidate and develop a concise summary of the important aspects of the transcript (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher noted the experiential statements within the right margin of the transcript.

Once the researcher identified the experiential statements, they identified connections across the different statements (Smith et al., 2022). This task involved the researcher finding meaning between the identified emerging themes. Within this step, some emerging themes were clustered together, while others became the superordinate theme (Smith et al., 2022). To do this, the researcher utilized two copies of the transcript that held the exploratory notes and the

experiential statements on each of the margins and then worked with the blank copy to develop a master list of the themes. The researcher placed the master list of the themes and their evidence within a table. The evidence involved quotations, keywords, or phrases from the participant's transcript (Smith et al., 2022). In conclusion, this step was completed once the researcher developed a structure with a list of the group of themes and its subordinate categories (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith et al., 2022).

The next step in the IPA approach was to name the Personal Experiential Themes (PETs), meaning that the researcher gave the superordinate themes identified in the previous step a name (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher included the PETs in the table; under each of the PETs were the sub-themes that made up that statement, and under each sub-theme were the set of experiential statements (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher marked each experiential statement with evidence; therefore, the researcher placed each statement with a page number from the transcript to ensure proper analysis and documentation (Smith et al., 2022).

After the researcher developed the PETs for each participant, the researcher repeated the steps mentioned above for each individual who participated in the study. Once the researcher completed the individual analyses, the final step was to develop group experiential themes GETs; Smith et al., 2020). This step aimed to identify the shared experiences that the participants identified through their individual experiences. In order to do so, this step required identifying patterns of similarities and differences across the PETs identified for each participant (Smith et al., 2022). The sub-themes and experiential statements identified across the individuals were analyzed to develop a list of similarities and differences. The identified similarities and differences among the participants were identified as the GETs, as they were the themes that

would represent the group and their shared experiences (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher developed a final table that included the GETs, themes, experiential statements, and evidence.

Through IPA analysis, the first round of coding that the researcher engaged in led to the identification of three themes, parent-teacher collaboration, self-efficacy, and resources, which served as the foundation of all the upcoming codes. Interview questions one to three generated three codes, communication, family engagement, and teacher engagement; interview questions four to seven generated three codes, personal attributes, special education law, and cultural awareness and proficiency; interview questions eight to 10 generated three codes, diverse staff, cultural liaisons/interpreters, and training/professional development. Subsequent rounds of coding then allowed the researcher to identify 11 sub-codes within the first theme of parent-teacher collaboration.

Delimitations and Limitations

Understanding the delimitations and limitations of a study is important as it sheds light on any potential shortcomings that may have impacted the results and interpretations. The researcher had identified several such delimitations and limitations as part of the proposed study, and it is worth discussing them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

Limitations

Research conducted using the phenomenological approach has several limitations. The researcher obtained the depth of information from interviews where the researcher plays the main role. As a result, data collected may be subject to researcher bias (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Patten & Newhart, 2017; Roberts, 2010). The researcher created the study's interview protocols, which may be subject to biases during development and data analysis. The researcher had identified their positionality and discussed it to minimize researcher bias. Throughout the study,

the researcher remained as objective as possible. Triangulation, which involves using multiple data sources, was used to minimize bias and increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

Completing the individual interviews online via Zoom presented a limitation for this study. Online sessions can be limiting as research suggests that responses are typically shorter when researchers utilize online methods (Carter et al., 2021). In addition, the researcher obtains less contextual information, and the relational satisfaction and consensus development could be lower. The authenticity of the data is impacted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). To mitigate these concerns, participants were required to have their cameras on during their interview so that the researcher could gather notes regarding the participant's level of engagement through body language and facial expressions. The researcher informed participants of this requirement prior to providing consent. In addition, by utilizing a semi-structured interview approach, additional clarifying questions were asked to gather the necessary information needed to reach saturation for data analysis.

It is important to note that teachers may sometimes exhibit self-reporting bias when sharing their experiences, leading to an overly positive or negative portrayal of the reality of the situation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The researcher took necessary precautions, such as maintaining the confidentiality of participants throughout the research process and ensuring that no identifiable information will be disclosed to the public, to minimize bias in this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Patten & Newhart, 2017). Additionally, the researcher informed participants that they will keep all raw data and transcriptions in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. The researcher deleted any audio recordings after they generated the transcriptions, and the transcriptions themselves will be deleted three years after the completion of this study.

Delimitations

An important aspect to consider was the sampling and location of the study. The study focused on special education teachers holding elementary Tier 3 and 4 licenses and working in the state of Minnesota. It is important to note that the researcher did not prefer teachers with less than three years of experience, as additional factors could impact their self-efficacy. Additionally, the researcher desired special education teachers in public elementary schools to establish consistent experiences among participants, as job descriptions for special education teachers can vary significantly across grade levels. The research questions set out for this study also served as a delimitation. While much research explored the barriers parents face, there needed to be more research from the perspective of teachers tasked with this responsibility. Therefore, the scope of this study focused on teachers to identify the barriers they face in mitigating the barriers parents face in their active involvement in special education. Defining this scope for the study intended to explore the other side of the collaborative relationship in mitigating this overall issue.

Researcher's Positionality

Readers need to understand the researcher's position concerning the current study to account for possible sources of bias within the research (Patten & Newhart, 2017). In qualitative research, the researcher is usually the primary data collector; therefore, readers need to comprehend the researcher's values, biases, and assumptions at the beginning of the study. Being a school psychologist in a culturally diverse school district, the researcher has noticed that families of color and those whose first language is not English face several barriers in their active participation in special education processes. Some of these barriers include rushed meetings, limited parental feedback and input, and a lack of resources and practices that fully accommodate CLD families. These observations have made the researcher realize the importance

of addressing these issues within the current study. The researcher's experiences as a child of first-generation immigrants have influenced their perspective on this problem. The researcher's parents have previously struggled to understand their younger sister's special education programming due to the language and educational jargon used in meetings. The researcher's parents' understanding of their sister's educational programming only increased due to the researcher's background and expertise in special education. The language constraints were a barrier to the researcher's parents of color and their active involvement in the process.

Having fulfilled the role of a staff member who ensures parental involvement in their child's education and as a family member who advocated and participated in meetings, the researcher possesses a rich understanding of the context of this study. The researcher has gained knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity toward the challenges and problems families and special education teachers face in attaining proper parental involvement in these processes. The researcher's experiences have sensitized them to the barriers to creating an inclusive environment for all families. This dual perspective has enhanced the researcher's capacity to work effectively with the informants within the study by giving them an understanding of the barriers for families.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the researcher's professional and personal experiences have influenced their perspectives and have introduced certain biases into this study. In this case, the researcher believes that families may face challenges accessing their right to participation, while some teachers may lack the skills to enforce this right. However, the researcher recognizes that this generalization does not apply to all teachers, as various factors such as training and experiences influence their mastery. Therefore, the researcher strove to maintain an open mind, objectivity, and impartiality while critically assessing this study without any preconceived notions of the results.

Ethical Considerations

Respect for persons, beneficence, and justice are the three core concepts identified within the Belmont Report that ensure that all research participants are protected from harm (Nagai et al., 2022). As qualitative research focuses on the interactions between the researcher and the participant, the researcher created specific ethical guidelines aligned to the three concepts within the Belmont Report to protect participants. Within the current study, data collection only commenced once the researcher had obtained approval from their university's IRB and had received written informed consent from each voluntary participant (Nagai et al., 2022). Prior to obtaining informed consent, the researcher was responsible for communicating to participants the purpose of the research, the expected duration of the participation, the procedures the researcher will follow, any risks, benefits, or discomforts that may occur by participating, the right to voluntary participation and understanding that the participant can withdraw at any time, and a description of the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained (Roberts, 2010). Informed consent was integral in this research, and the researcher informed all participants of the various aspects of the study in an easily understandable way (Sanjari et al., 2014). Furthermore, confidentiality and privacy were essential to adhering to the three concepts identified within the Belmont Report. Participants' personal information and responses were kept secure and private within the study. All participants were assigned a code name or pseudonym to protect their identity to keep all data within the study anonymous (Roberts, 2010). The researcher informed participants that they will destroy all collected data following the completion of the study.

The researcher took audio recordings of interviews to ensure accurate data collection and analysis for the study. However, this raises ethical concerns; hence, obtaining permission from the participants was required (Roberts, 2010). The researcher fully informed participants of the

reasons for audio recording the interview and that the researcher will turn off the video feature during the recording. The researcher stored audio recordings in a secure location that was locked and private with the participants' fictitious names, and the researcher destroyed all recordings once the data had been transcribed (Roberts, 2010). Participants had the ability to pause the recording at any time and be placed within the researcher's arm's reach to ease any tensions that may arise (Roberts, 2010). Also, participants had the opportunity to review the recording to ensure the accuracy of their experiences.

Ethical concerns arise in qualitative studies as the researcher completes much of the data analysis and interpretation (Roberts, 2010). Fabrication or falsification of data or results can raise serious ethical concerns for the study. Therefore, to eliminate these concerns and increase the study's trustworthiness, the participant engaged in member checking to ensure the data's accuracy (Roberts, 2010). The researcher sent each participant a copy of their transcribed interview to give them the opportunity to make any necessary revisions to ensure its accuracy. Doing so allowed the researcher to maintain their relationship with the participant and work towards making necessary revisions to the interpretations rather than continuing with faulty ones (Lindheim, 2022). The researcher had strategies ready to be employed in the case where participants did not agree with the analysis, however, those strategies were not required (Birt et al., 2020). Member checking allowed the researcher to ensure that participants' biases did not play a role in the analysis and interpretations of the data (Roberts, 2010).

Lastly, an ethical concern arising from this study is the biased or discriminatory language that could infer inferior status to groups (Roberts, 2010). This study explored the experiences of special education teachers and the impact of self-efficacy when working with CLD families. CLD families are a minority group, and the researcher took careful consideration in ensuring that

these groups were not referred to in an inferior manner during any part of the research process. The researcher attempted to stay informed and knowledgeable regarding the current language used when referring to minority groups for the study to avoid desensitizing or assigning hierarchy to groups.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological study sought insight into the lived experiences of special education teachers who are responsible for implementing parents' right to participate actively in their child's special education programming. The study also explored special education teachers' self-efficacy in facilitating parental rights in special education processes, and whether self-efficacy was impacted when teachers worked with White families versus CLD families. The researcher conducted virtual interviews with each of the participants to identify themes that answered the study's four research questions:

1) What are the participants' lived experiences as special education teachers responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA?
2) What perceptions do special education teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?
3) How is special education teachers' self-efficacy impacted when facilitating parental involvement in special education processes for White families versus CLD families?
4) What steps can be taken to improve the impediments, if any, that teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?

Results

All individual, virtual interviews were conducted on Zoom. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to collect the participant data. Once interviews were completed, the interviews were transcribed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software tool. Once transcriptions were created, the researcher ensured that all identifiable information was removed from the transcriptions. The researcher conducted a content data analysis to analyze the transcriptions and

to identify emerging themes from the data that provided insight into the four research questions. Following Smith et al.'s (2022) steps for data analysis, the researcher engaged in repeated reading and note-taking to comment on any recurring phrases and key information present in the transcripts. In addition, the visual aids within the MAXQDA tool allowed the researcher to identify codes that were commonly present for each participant. Repeated reading and visual aids occurred for each participant's sources. This allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of each special education teacher, as well as to identify the sentiments of each experience. Visual aids within the MAXQDA tool allowed the researcher to identify recurring codes across all participants' transcripts. Once all the codes were obtained, the researcher identified two main themes that encompassed the participants' experiences.

The researcher identified three emergent themes within the current study: parent-teacher collaboration, self-efficacy, and resources. Each theme identified within the study had three subthemes, for a total of nine subthemes. The themes and subthemes are categorized by themes and subthemes, which are found in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subtheme
Theme One: Parent-Teacher Collaboration	Communication
	Family Engagement
	Teacher Engagement
Theme Two: Self-Efficacy	Personal Attributes
	Special Education Law
	Cultural Awareness & Proficiency
Theme Three: Resources	Diverse Staff

Cultural Liaisons/Interpreters
Training/Professional Development

Theme One: Parent-Teacher Collaboration

Family-school collaboration is paramount to ensuring the educational success for children (Paccaud et al., 2021). Each participant was asked what their philosophy was in regard to parent-teacher collaboration, and all 10 interviewees reported positive sentiments for this relationship and collaboration. Specifically, two educators (Teacher 1 and Teacher 5) shared similar responses highlighting the importance of bringing families and teachers together to ensure the best decisions are made for the child's education. Teacher 1 noted, "Parents know their children the best, and they should play a really big role in decision making, for their child's programming." Teacher 5 stated that "it takes equal involvement of parents as they are who know their child the best and teachers [as they are] who know the education world the best. Together, they can help [the] child be as successful as possible."

In addition, two of the 10 participants reported that more collaboration was key. Teacher 3 reported that in regard to parent-teacher collaboration, "The more the merrier." In addition, multiple teachers reported that success in special education was attributed to teachers and parents working together as a team. For instance, Teacher 4 reported that "it has to be a genuine team….I personally like to try to make my parents feel like they are the most important voice in the process." In addition, Teacher 7 reported, "It takes a village to raise a child...and when children receive consistency in both the home setting and school setting, the child benefits and makes better progress." Teacher 8 indicated that "if we can get everybody on the same page, it can increase the child's ability to succeed."

All in all, the responses garnered from the participants during the interview process were positive in regard to parent-teacher collaboration, as participants indicated positive sentiments towards wanting to ensure parents were actively involved in special education processes. However, multiple barriers existed for teachers as they worked to enforce parents' rights. Through the data analysis process, multiple codes and sub-codes were generated that composed the theme of parent-teacher collaboration. The codes include communication, parent engagement, and teacher engagement.

Communication. An effective strategy for enhancing parent-teacher collaboration is to increase the communication between both parents and teachers, especially when maximizing special education services and the generalization of skills for children (Azad et al., 2020). Through the participant interviews, communication generally fell into two categories for the individuals: informal communication and formal communication (IEP meetings). When asked how often teachers met with families regarding their child's special education programming, nine participants reported they only met with their families in a formal setting related to special education related processes once a year, and that was for their child's annual IEP meeting. One participant (Teacher 7) reported they met with their families twice a year in a formal setting–once to discuss an evaluation plan and another to discuss evaluation results. If a student qualified for special education, the proposed IEP would be discussed with the evaluation results.

In addition to teachers' communication and involvement with families within IEP meetings, four educators indicated that they engaged in informal conversations with their families. Teacher 2 reported "I email, I call, and I do what I can to keep the parents involved." Another educator (Teacher 5) stated that they had many points of contact throughout the year, and that they made sure to reach out "whether that is emails or phone calls, even at ridiculous

times during the day." Teacher 6 also reported "I will also check in with parents if it has been a while since I have, and I'll just shoot them a quick email just to ask them how their child is doing at home." Teacher 10 shared their flexibility in communication:

> I primarily use phone calls. I do have some parents who prefer text messaging or emails. But I try to do a phone call first to see if I can get in touch with them, and then I do a follow up with an email and/or a text message.

Furthermore, three special education teachers reported that they had built-in systems within their classrooms that supported their ability to keep parents informed about their child's education. Teacher 6 indicated that they created point sheets for all their students that were personalized with their schedules:

> My paraprofessionals or I will write comments or a score [on the sheets] where a three is perfect, two is okay, and one is not so great...if the student is struggling this week and [their points] indicate that something is [off], that was an indicator to reach out to the family [to collaborate] on supporting the child.

Another educator (Teacher 8) reported that they completed daily notes with their student's behavior, and "if there was a certain behavior need that [had] come up during the day, I'll let parents know about that." Teacher 3 also indicated engaging in a similar practice:

> I have daily charts for most of my students where I can fill out a quick check in at the end of day and snap a picture, and then I text it to my families. I do that for probably 50% of my caseload.

One teacher (Teacher 9) stated that they stayed consistent with their feedback regardless of the response they received from families:

> I have consistent communication across my caseload with all of the parents....I just feel like consistent communication is important, even if people aren't [getting] back to me or responding or even if they're disenfranchised for a while, or...we ended on an awkward note or something. I keep that open communication and that consistent communication so they know that I'm not bringing personal feelings into professional performance.

Teacher 1 shared that their communication to families was often prompted by their child's functioning at school:

> I keep in contact with parents quite often. It depends on the specific student and their needs. For example, I have some kids who I communicate with parents every single day. And then for some [whose] behaviors aren't as significant or things like that, it is more like once a month.

Teacher 1 indicated that consistent communication, which was not always negative, improved their parent-teacher relationship:

> Being in consistent constant communication with a family all year has really improved that relationship. And they've seen that their child really trusts me too, and I think that helps when I do have feedback for them. The fact that they trust me and that I don't just call with negative feedback and negative things about their kid, since I am also saying a lot of positive things that has gotten them to trust me.

Another participant (Teacher 2) reported that their communication home was an effort to receive communication from the family in a collaborative manner:

> If they had a bad day, you know, or I'm sending them home crabby, I would communicate it. I'll try to communicate that and keep them abreast of what's happening in the

> classroom with me. And hopefully they're keeping me informed about what's happening at home so we can both be successful for the student.

Two teachers (Teacher 2 and 4) reported that they wanted parental input in their communication but were aware not to overwhelm parents. Teacher 4 indicated "I find a lot of parents are very overwhelmed by their involvement, so they need someone to advocate for them as well in order to fully participate." Similarly, Teacher 2 shared that they try to "get as much information to them [as you can without]...overwhelming the parent."

Family Engagement. Participants identified several different family factors that contributed to parent-teacher collaboration and parents' involvement in their child's special education programming. These factors included a lack of understanding of special education services, a lack of time, culture and language differences, and family risk factors.

Three special education teachers reported that parents' understanding of special education was a barrier for families when staying involved in their child's education. Teacher 1 had to explain the purpose of special education to their families:

> [Parents didn't] know their rights as a parent of a child with special needs, and thus they didn't advocate within meetings….Sometimes I'll [also have to] explain the purpose of special education. For example, we had a parent the other day ask for more occupational therapy services because their child has a tremor when he writes. We had to explain that the tremor didn't change how OT services were provided, and that the tremor itself [was] not impacting the child's education. [Ultimately], we [had] to get down to the purpose of the IEP and special education and make sure that students [were] able to participate fully, with necessary accommodations and not [go] above and beyond what they actually need

> in school. The parents continued to push back on this, which hindered our relationship and their willingness to fully participate.

Additionally, Teacher 7 reported that parents' understanding of how students were eligible for services or how services were implemented was a barrier:

> I think parents' understanding of what special education is [can be a barrier.] We have some parents who believe that it's kind of an a la carte, and you get to pick and choose what services you get, and then you have other parents that think they're going to get the world, [and] they don't understand that [special education programming] is based on educational need.

The biases and misperceptions that families held regarding special education programming often impaired their ability to actively collaborate and be involved. Teacher 4 reported, "I do have kids from affluent families and some of their barriers I have observed are the biases they hold about the system." In addition, Teacher 7 indicated that "[Families] want the services, but they just don't want the label….A barrier is parents' own biases or misperceptions of what special education is." Teacher 4 and Teacher 7 reported that these biases and misperceptions affected parents' willingness to participate in special education.

Five of the 10 educators reported that time was a barrier for parents in their active involvement and collaboration with teachers and special education planning. Teacher 3 reported that "there are always environmental challenges that are going on at home, and that often plays into parents' availability for meetings." Teacher 10 reported that parents' work hours typically impacted their involvement:

> Quite a few of our parents are single parents, so they're working jobs that are longer hours or different hours than the workday....If a parent can't come to a meeting because

> they don't get off of work until five or they're working three jobs, there's very little leeway sometimes in that.

One participant (Teacher 6) reported that juggling multiple support for children was exhausting:

> A lot of older parents are usually tired and exhausted, and they don't have the capacity to be involved in learning the strategies that are working for their child, as well as implementing those strategies at home.

Another educator (Teacher 7) explained that parent participation due to work hours was difficult, but virtual options have improved this situation:

> Another barrier is parents being able to find time to attend the meetings, especially since it's usually during what would be their workday or during our school hours. It's gotten a little bit better with Zoom because then parents can attend virtually.

Teacher 9 reported a similar observation:

> Just time, you know, as the classroom is 9 to 5, and a lot of parents work nights or even days. They have other children that they're looking at scheduling for and providing for, and then they have their own work life and self-care to manage….Time is limited for the parents to reach out and advocate for their [child's] needs.

Additionally, two out of the 10 educators observed that cultural and linguistic differences often served as barriers for families. Teacher 1 reported the following:

> The language barriers seem to be the most or have been the most significant barrier. I've worked with a lot of families from East Africa, and the primary caregiver doesn't speak the best English or they're self-conscious about it.

In addition to this, Teacher 1 acknowledged that paperwork was not language-friendly:

> Parents get this big thick IEP or an evaluation and it's all in English. How are they supposed to know their rights or what their child is receiving when they can't read the language or speak the language?

The second educator (Teacher 7) acknowledged that there "is the communication barrier [and] and the language barrier" that holds families back from their active involvement. From a cultural standpoint, Teacher 7 stated that

> A lot of our culturally diverse families have a little bit more difficulty with the idea that their child has a disability and so they are resistant to considering special education…[in addition,] a lot of our materials are not in the families or students' primary language. Some families aren't even able to read in their primary language.

In addition to time, culture, language, and parents' understanding of special education, three teachers identified some form of family risk factors as a barrier to strong parent-teacher collaboration and parental involvement in their child's programming. One educator (Teacher 4) identified that "I have parents that have not graduated from school themselves, and probably have learning disabilities themselves. So those are some major barriers for a lot of my kids." In addition, Teacher 8 reported parents' mental health as a barrier:

> Sometimes parents' own mental health can be barriers. So that can be a challenge when working with some students who have special needs when their parents may also be facing either their own learning disabilities or some other mental health issues.

Teacher 10 explained additional risk factors as barriers:

> We have a high population of individuals who unfortunately have addiction concerns and health stuff going on of their own. Or maybe they're in relationships that are negative and so that impacts them as well. We do have a lot of parents too, that have police

> involvement. So they don't necessarily want to come to school because they have warrants. And don't want to be picked up…obviously in front of their kids or at a school.

Teacher Engagement. Through the interview process, special education teachers identified barriers that they faced as teachers as they worked to ensure parent involvement in special education. The barriers identified revolved around five common topics: lack of time for teachers, cultural and linguistic barriers, parental involvement levels, administrative support, and feelings around communication.

Four special education teachers (Teacher 1, Teacher 2 Teacher 3, and Teacher 6) reported that time hindered them from fully engaging with families and ensuring their input and involvement was considered in special education planning. Teacher 1 specifically stated,

> I have 22 kids on my caseload. My biggest challenge is just being able to provide the necessary communication and the right amount of communication to all of my students' parents, and not under communicate. I never want to get to their IEP meeting, and then the parents state that they haven't heard from you all year.

Teacher 2 indicated that time was limited during the day, so they felt rushed in meetings:

> It's my goal to have a good meeting, a productive meeting, so I try to swerve the outside conversations. I try to stay on task, and get it done, because I only have a 45-minute prep and I have to be back in class. We have to finish our meetings because that's federally mandated. So you just do your best to involve parents and consider their input.

Another teacher (Teacher 3) reflected on their caseload and indicated "I think just having a smaller caseload and more prep time to be able to communicate with parents" would help them ensure more parent-teacher collaboration. In addition, Teacher 6 reported that collaboration with school teams is difficult and ultimately impacts how they communicate with families:

> We get so busy, so it's silly how much information is just out there with different people and it isn't collectively shared until we get together, which is rare. Then, when communicating with families and trying to involve them in decision-making, it just feels so fragmented and ineffective.

As culture and language impact parents' tendency to fully participate in their child's education, culture and language were identified as common barriers for teachers in upholding parents' right to be involved in their child's special education programming. Four teachers identified culture and language barriers as hindering them in fully involving parents in special education processes. One educator (Teacher 1) indicated that because of language barriers, specifically, "It just [feels] like no one knows each other, and it just doesn't feel personable." Teacher 3 reported that "for my families for whom English isn't their primary language, it is much harder to consistently [communicate] with them." Another participant (Teacher 5) indicated that with the cultural and linguistic differences with their children, "Translating special [education] jargon and context is a lot harder than just your everyday conversation," which led to Teacher 5 filtering or watering down information that parents were receiving. Lastly, Teacher 10 reported that a lack of understanding of multiple cultures was a hindrance:

> We have a high population of individuals that are Black and Native American. And then we also have a high population of individuals that have more than one race and culture and they are a part of or that they identify with...and I don't have a really good understanding of the parents' culture, their experiences, and how they perceive things. And that impacts my ability to communicate and collaborate with them.

Another barrier that some teachers explained as a barrier to their experiences with ensuring parental involvement was the parents' own attitude towards being involved in their

child's special education. Teacher 2 reported that parents' attitudes could impact teacher communication:

> Some parents are helicopter parents, or overwhelming parents that can be very assertive or bullying....I have had to draw boundaries with those parents, and ultimately limit my collaboration with those families.

Teacher 4 reported that "there are parents that just check out of the process and that's concerning to me because it is their child, and [because they check out], I don't reach out as much." Teacher 8 highlighted that a barrier was the parents' honesty and openness during the process:

> The challenges I would face at times are just [with] honesty. Sometimes parents have not been honest with us about their home life situation. So that can be challenging, probably the biggest challenge, when you find out that there's some things that you're being lied to about, like certain appointments or the actual care of their child, which then makes you not want to be willing to communicate.

On the other hand, Teacher 3 stated that their communication and involvement with certain families increased when "they [were] very involved and we really came together to try and see each other's perspective as we were both working for the best for the student."

A number of teachers identified the level of administrative support as an important factor that contributed to ensuring parental involvement in special education processes. At times, parental involvement was hindered due to administrative support. Teacher 1 indicated,

> My principal does not really understand special education, and so I don't always feel supported by her. For a meeting that I had yesterday with a parent, they didn't really want the principal there because [the family] feels like she doesn't really understand special education very much….I also wish I had more backing from [the] administration. If a

> parent complains about something, it is important to have the principal or my main supervisor just supporting me and making sure that they have all of the information before siding with the parent. The presence of the administrator either hindered my ability to completely engage with my parents or the administrator themselves got in the way of that collaboration.

In addition, Teacher 2 reported that meetings with an administrator presence could potentially get contentious and impact parent-teacher collaboration and involvement. Teacher 2 illustrated the need for stronger alignment between administrators and teachers:

> I think [administrators] need to get back in the classroom and figure out what their job is. When this parent is coming across the table ready to whack their kid off the chair, don't sit there on your computer and look around. Don't make me intervene. You're more in charge and that is out of the realm of a normal IEP meeting or parent meeting. Sometimes, the administrators call these parents in, and just because the kid is on my caseload, I get hauled in there too and I don't even know what the situation is. That is frustrating, as it impacts my relationship with families.

Teacher 4 found that administrator support was minimal, as they shared,

> I find my administrative support is not as much as I would like it to be with the parental involvement component….There are times where I have had a couple of families that felt more comfortable speaking to an administrator of color. In that case, I really rely on my administrator to bridge that communication. For the most part, my admin just shows up to the meetings. However, due process is such a foreign thing to general education teachers, even administrators. I feel like they rely on the special education teacher or the special education coach for most of it, and they are just kind of inactive participants. They

> participate in limited capacity, and that's not what the parents were looking for, which then impacts my relationship and engagement with parents.

In contrary to the other participants, Teacher 5 reported,

> I have really appreciated our administration's support. They've all been very supportive of just trying to keep lines of communication open even if a parent is upset....I've been lucky that my administration has been very supportive and they always come to our meetings, which has made families feel heard and supported in their engagement.

Lastly, a common factor identified in teachers' ability to uphold parents' rights in special education ultimately came down to their own feelings. Teacher 1 indicated,

> I don't enjoy talking on the phone. And so that's something that's really hard for me to do. With most parents I communicate with every day, we just text back and forth or email. But there are other times where a phone call really is necessary. And I think that's one of my biggest challenges as there is a source of anxiety around actually talking to parents on the phone because you can't see their faces, so I don't do it as often.

Teacher 5 identified stress and anxiety from previous situations:

> 95% of the time I absolutely love including parents with things. In the past, I've had three tough situations that were very difficult to try and include and that would cause anxiety for me and stress, and the best thing for me to do in that moment was to limit my collaboration.

On the other hand, Teacher 3 indicated comfortability with communication with families:

> I've gotten much more comfortable with [communicating with my families]. Part of my job is getting to know families. For the vast majority of our families, I know [them] really well, and I really love that. There are 1 or 2 that make me nervous, and I have observed

myself pulling away from them. But overall, involving parents is important because it's a great asset to have on our team.

Theme Two: Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Each participant was asked to rate themselves on four different statements. Each of these statements was intended to capture the individual's self-efficacy in their ability to uphold parents' rights within special education processes, and whether their self-efficacy was impacted when working with White families versus CLD families, directly providing insight into research questions two and three.

Table 3

Teachers' Self-Efficacy Ratings

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with one being not very like me, and 10 being very like me), please rate the following statements:				
	I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with families of students receiving special education services.	I believe I can fully enforce parents' rights within special education processes	I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with White families of students receiving special education services.	I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with CLD families of students receiving special education services.
Teacher 1	9	10	9	7
Teacher 2	10	4	10	8
Teacher 3	9	8	9	8
Teacher 4	10	8	9	7
Teacher 5	8	9	8	6
Teacher 6	8	9	9	6
Teacher 7	9	7	8	6
Teacher 8	8	8	8	6

Teacher 9	10	10	10	9
Teacher 10	9	7	9	6

The first and second statements were rated by the special education teachers' ability to partake in the study to capture their self-efficacy when tasked with ensuring parental involvement in special education processes as mandated by IDEA.

Teachers' Personal Attributes. For the first statement, "I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with families of students receiving special education services," all participants rated themselves fairly high, as all raters provided a rating of 8 or higher. Participants were asked to provide an explanation for why they gave themselves the ratings they did on the statements. Specifically, for the first statement, the ratings that participants provided themselves were attributed to one common reason: their own personal attributes. Teachers' ratings on the first statement were relatively positive due to teachers' proclaimed attributes. Teacher 1 shared,

> I feel like I'm pretty good at communicating with parents for the most part, and involving them in the process. I know the parent rights pretty well, and I want them to be aware of them. Any time I have an IEP meeting, I offer the parental rights booklet which you're supposed to do, but then I will also talk about some of the most important pieces of it so that they are aware, because I know it well.

Teacher 2 attributed their high ratings to their years of experience within special education:

> I have been a teacher for over 20 years, and I feel like I have the parent involvement pretty well figured out. I can pretty much tell when a parent comes into the room what kind of a meeting it's going to be, and I can adapt to meet the parents where they are.

Meanwhile, Teacher 6 felt confident in their ability to collaborate effectively due to the empathy they brought to meetings:

> I just feel like a pretty empathetic educator. I try to put myself out there and put the needs of the parents first. I think putting that first puts me at a higher standard as a teacher and as a person.

Teacher 7 accredited their confidence to their attributes:

> I think parents are comfortable with being active within IEP meetings because I'm a good listener. Parents want to know that you're on their side or that you have their child's best interest. And so I think that because I'm a good listener and that I can come back with objective information and then also problem solve with them, is why I gave myself a rating of 9.

Teacher 9 explained that their experience as a special needs parent strengthened their confidence in themselves in ensuring collaboration with families:

> I'm a parent of a special needs child. I've been part of his IEP team since he was born 16 years ago….I started my special education journey with a personal connection. I understand being a parent and an educator, and I try to put myself in my parents' shoes when collaborating with them.

Teachers' Understanding of Special Education Law. On the second statement, "I believe I can fully enforce parents' rights within special education processes," the responses varied. Seven out of 10 participants reported scores of 8 and higher, demonstrating higher belief in their abilities, and two out of 10 participants reported a score of 7, demonstrating moderate beliefs. One participant reported much lower belief in their ability to enforce parents' rights. For statement two, participants' responses generally encompassed two common themes: their

understanding of special education law and outside factors. When asked if participants believed they could fully enforce parents' rights within special education processes, Teacher 3 reported that their understanding of parents' rights hindered their ability:

> You know, [I] give out the procedural safeguards at every meeting, and I've honestly never read it in its entirety. I know generally what's in there. But, if I had a pop quiz on it tomorrow, I probably wouldn't do very well….I guess I can't feel confident and speak to how to ensure parental rights in that way, if I don't know all of them.

Teacher 4 provided a similar response:

> I gave myself a 10 for the ability to collaborate effectively because I do make the relationship building the focus of my [collaboration]. [But] then fully enforcing those parental rights, I gave myself an 8 because I try within my scope of knowledge. IDEA is huge and knowing everything that is involved in understanding IDEA is an overwhelming task. And I will fully admit, I don't know all of it.

Teacher 2 indicated "I wish I knew special education law better so that I could enforce [parents'] rights so that they could be more involved in their child's education."

Additional Factors Impacting Teachers. In addition, outside factors out of the control of teachers played a role in their ratings on the second statement. Teacher 7 specifically stated:

> I gave myself a 7 for my belief in enforcing parents' rights within special education. I feel like I gave that rating because of the inner workings within the school. Each school has a different philosophy or interpretation of special education. They interpret the laws a little bit differently. So you kind of have to be a little bit of a chameleon and I'll advocate for the parents and students, but I also kind of have to go along with the system.

Teacher 2 reported administration overruled decisions:

> I've given myself a 4 on [this] one because I have been in special education meetings with administration and sometimes some administrators like to pull the power trip. I can't override them which impacts me being able to enforce parents' rights in these meetings.

Cultural Biases, Awareness, and Proficiency. Participants were asked to rate themselves on an additional two statements. The third statement was "I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with White families of students receiving special education services," and the fourth statement was "I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with CLD families of students receiving special education services." All 10 participants provided lower ratings regarding their confidence on the fourth statement compared to the ratings they provided on the third statement. Specifically, eight out of the 10 participants provided a two-to-three-point decrease in rating for the fourth statement compared to the third statement. As they did for the first two statements, participants were asked to provide a rationale for their ratings, as well as for the differences in their ratings between statement three and four. Participants' responses to this question encompassed three common ideas: the need for diverse staff, access to cultural liaisons and/or interpreters, and adequate training and professional development.

When participants were asked to provide a rationale for the differences in their ratings, and why their ratings were lower for their confidence in collaborating effectively with CLD families versus White families, much of the responses related back to teachers' cultural awareness and proficiency. Teacher 1 acknowledged the ease in understanding when teaching students who look the same as their teachers:

> In my experience, it's always easier to communicate effectively with people who look like you. It's just like when kids are able to learn more from people who look like them.

> Right now, I work at a school that is predominantly white, middle class. I feel very comfortable with the families there. [With the] families who speak Spanish, [I] always need to have support in communicating with them. Even though I talk directly to them and the interpreter is there to support me, it still never feels quite as personable to me, and that is the same with any family whose primary language is not English.

Additionally, Teacher 3 indicated that culture often got in the way of ensuring effective collaboration with families:

> That ease of communication isn't always available. We have Talking Points which offers automatic translations, but some of the families don't read their spoken language, which is not helpful. There's sometimes differences in how we perceive what the goal of special education is as well and what that looks like for students in school. Like, the stigma around autism, is perceived very differently in other cultures compared to a white culture. And seeing the special ed classroom as the bad room, which is something I see more often from culturally diverse families than from white families.

Another educator (Teacher 4) indicated that although they try to become more culturally aware, cultural biases can play an impact in effective collaboration:

> I spend a lot of my own time going outside of what's provided to me to become more culturally aware and to have more equitable practices. If English is not their first language, and I have to rely on somebody to help translate what I'm trying to say, lots of things can get lost in translation….For example, I had a student who needed specialized transportation and it was a conversation that I wanted to have with the father. The interpreter basically told me that, before he even had the discussion with dad, the dad would say no because in their community, it was looked down upon. Cultural biases were

> brought into the conversation, which is then hard for me to collaborate with families, because language is still a barrier.

Teacher 7 attributed their lower ratings for collaborating effectively with CLD families due to their own cultural differences:

> My confidence is different for the groups because of that language barrier. It's hard to connect or get a true feeling of how parents feel with cultural differences in communication and body language.

Teacher 8 reported a similar rationale, stating "my own background of being a white Caucasian….I feel like there's always things that I'm learning about...that I haven't known before." Teacher 9 indicated "It's just hard to address all of the perspectives including language and culture as a white person, as I'm not always familiar with the cultural significance of things." Ultimately, a mix of cultural biases, cultural awareness, and cultural proficiency impacted the teachers' abilities to feel less confident in their effective collaboration with CLD families.

Theme Three: Resources

As part of the individual interviews, participants were asked to identify the resources and support available to them in upholding parents' rights to be actively involved in special education processes. As a follow-up question, they were asked what resources or support they would find beneficial in upholding the responsibility of ensuring parental involvement for families. Responses from participants focused on three main points: the need for a more diverse workforce, accessibility to cultural liaisons and interpreters, and additional aligned professional development and training opportunities.

Diverse Workforce. Four special education teachers indicated that a more diverse workforce, specifically for special education, would be imperative in increasing effective

collaboration and ensuring parents' involvement in special education was upheld. Teacher 2 reported that communication could be swifter with diverse and multilingual staff:

> I think it would be nice if our staff were diverse and spoke different languages. They could intervene a lot faster than me having to call a language line to have the kid or families tell the language line what they're trying to tell me. With more diverse staff in special education, we can collaborate more effectively.

Teacher 3 reported a similar outlook on resources that would be beneficial in upholding parents' rights:

> Having a more diverse workforce...is what I found to be the most effective. This year between my student teacher and my two special education assistants in my classroom, I'm the only white educator in my classroom, which definitely has helped communication and collaboration with families. They're all from different backgrounds, understand special education, and relate to my students and families in different ways. Even if they're not the primary contact for families, just having them there and available for me to ask questions for families is tremendous.

Teacher 4 reported a similar outlook on resources that would be beneficial. They indicated that "it's very hard to see other ethnicities in special education, as educators, as resources, as people to rely on." Teacher 4 reported that although the district they worked in had access to equity specialists to support CLD families and students, "that lens [was] not being brought to special education still." Teacher 6 indicated that "the school system could start trying to hire more... multiracial and biracial staff, which would be a good start."

Access to Cultural Liaisons, Translators, and Interpreters. Five out of the 10 special education teachers reported that being able to readily access cultural liaisons and interpreters was

key to ensuring parental involvement in special education processes was upheld. Teacher 1 indicated that access to individuals with special education backgrounds was important:

> I work in a large district, but it's still really hard to find someone with the necessary training to be able to actually interpret in an IEP meeting. And so I think just more availability of resources. And being able to translate documents in other languages because otherwise…[a] parent gets this big thick IEP or an evaluation and it's all in English.

Teacher 4 experienced a lack of accessible translators to support in bridging gaps between families and schools. Teacher 4 indicated, "There are just not enough people. We have one guy as our translator and there aren't many other people who want to be underpaid in a school district." Teacher 5 also reported the importance of access to translators:

> I would love [it] if the Department of Education would give us a list of translators that they would be willing to give a stipend to drive out to greater Minnesota. And just give us more access to translators, because it's not that we don't want to communicate with different families. It's just that we can't learn a language fast enough to speak with them.

Teacher 7 indicated the need for interpreters that had some knowledge of special education:

> I wish I could make sure that our interpreters have background knowledge in special education. They don't need to be experts or they don't need to be teachers. But I want them to make sure that they understand special education and the process a bit so we can be a team in ensuring parents' rights are fulfilled.

Similarly, Teacher 8 indicated:

> I would love to see more cultural liaisons in the school. I've heard that at some schools within Minneapolis, they have cultural liaisons especially if they have a high

> demographic of certain cultural groups. They can also translate and help us to understand cultural backgrounds and the norms. I would love to see more of that within the school district I work at.

Professional Development and Training. Lastly, teachers indicated the need for additional professional development and training that aligned with their special education work to ensure they could uphold parents' rights to be involved in their child's education. Ultimately, four special education teachers reported that their job training and professional development opportunities did little to support them with this responsibility. Teacher 2 stated,

> We don't get professional development that is pertinent to special education and parent-teacher collaboration very often. I haven't seen or heard anything about research unless I do it on my own. I would love to attend workshops that pertain to something that I can take back to the classroom, and use with my families and students.

Teacher 4 indicated that professional development was not aligned to their work as special educators:

> When we have staff development days, most of the staff development does not focus on special education. And it makes it really hard to stay up to date with best practices with our families and students unless I seek out my own training.

Another educator (Teacher 9) reported,

> Not really sure my training prepared me, but my experience did. It's just something that is not explicitly taught in school at all about how to build community, engage in collaboration, and uphold parents' rights. All we're taught is the importance of collaboration, but not how.

Similarly, Teacher 8 indicated that,

> I feel like a lot of education is just on the job training. Right? This is how it should look; this is what you should do. But really, it's a lot of just watching other people do it, following what other people are doing, and learning right there on the job. And we haven't been trained or taught on how to collaborate and ensure parents' rights.

Summary

Overall, the purpose of this chapter was to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers tasked with ensuring parents' rights within special education processes. The results of this phenomenological study revealed that although all 10 special education teachers that were interviewed in this study had positive sentiments about parent-teacher collaboration, many factors affected their ability and confidence in fully being able to do so. Three major themes, nine codes, and 12 sub-codes were identified that further explored the experiences of special education teachers, as well as their self-efficacy when working with families. Although the researcher's goal of 12-15 participants was not met, 10 participants did provide insight into their experiences. Enough information was gathered from the 10 participants to determine a pattern with the experiences collected. The participants reported that communication, teacher factors, and parent factors played a role in their ability to effectively engage in parent-teacher collaboration. All participants rated their confidence in collaborating effectively with special education families relatively high, as all participants provided a rating of 8 or higher. Three participants demonstrated lower confidence in their ability to enforce parents' rights within special education processes, and they attributed their lower ratings to their full understanding of special education law and to factors typically out of their control. All participants provided lower ratings for their confidence level when collaborating effectively with CLD families versus White families. Participants reported cultural bias, awareness, and proficiency as the main reason for

these lower ratings. They reported that additional resources could be made available to support them in increasing their self-efficacy, specifically by having a more diverse workforce, having readily accessible cultural liaisons and interpreters, and having more aligned professional development and training opportunities.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of special education teachers tasked with facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA. Furthermore, the purpose of this study sought to understand special education teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as well as to determine whether their self-efficacy was impacted when facilitating parental involvement for White families versus CLD families. By gaining insight into the lived experiences of special education teachers, the researcher sought to understand the steps that could be taken to improve the identified impediments.

The main research questions for this study were as follows: (1) What are the participants' lived experiences as special education teachers responsible for facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA? (2) What perceptions do special education teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes? (3) How is special education teachers' self-efficacy impacted when facilitating parental involvement in special education processes for White families versus CLD families? and, (4) What steps can be taken to improve the impediments, if any, that teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?

Discussion

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) indicates the necessity of ensuring equal participation for families of children with disabilities during IEP meetings. To ensure parents are afforded their right to equal participation, IDEA (2004) places this responsibility on public schools to ensure necessary steps are taken to ensure parent participation

in special education processes. Although parent participation is incorporated in IDEA and public schools hold the responsibility of seeing this through, families continue to face barriers as they seek to participate in their child's programming (Rios & Burke, 2020). A wealth of research exists regarding the barriers that families face in their active involvement in special education processes; therefore, the current study sought to focus on teachers' experiences with facilitating parental involvement in special education processes.

Participants within the study were required to meet the following three criteria: hold a Tier 3 or Tier 4 special education license in the state of Minnesota, work primarily in an elementary school setting, and have at least three years of experience in special education. Of the 10 participants in this study, nine were female and one was male. All but one participant identified as White, while one participant identified as Asian. Three out of 10 participants held multiple licenses, with the majority of participants holding an Academic Behavioral Strategist (ABS) special education license. All participants have worked in special education for over four years, while five of the 10 participants have been in the special education field for over 10 years. All participants worked primarily at an elementary site level, which was one of the criteria for participating in the study.

All participants within the study reported high regard for parent-teacher collaboration within special education processes, yet teachers identified that they experienced a number of barriers that hindered them from fully facilitating parents' rights within special education processes. Special education teachers identified several factors that contributed to their parent-teacher collaboration including communication, family engagement, and self-engagement. Teachers' self-efficacy was explored within the study. Participants identified that their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement impacted their abilities when working with

families, especially when supporting CLD families versus White families. Self-efficacy was found to be affected primarily by three factors: personal attributes, special education law, and cultural awareness and proficiency. Teachers' self-efficacy differences when working with CLD families was mostly impacted by the lack of access to appropriate resources. Although many common themes were identified across the 10 participants' experiences within the study, these experiences could not be generalized, as this was considered a small sample size.

Parent-Teacher Collaboration and Individual Engagement

The first theme generated in the current study provided specific insight into the study's first research question which sought to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers tasked with facilitating parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA. All participants commonly expressed the importance of parent-teacher collaboration and the importance of such partnership in special education. This finding corroborated previous literature that indicated that teacher-family partnerships were essential in supporting students with disabilities (Accardo et al., 2020). Two special education teachers specifically noted the importance of parents and teachers coming together because each group possessed different skills and knowledge that together were effective in developing appropriate plans of support for the child. Participants' views regarding the importance of parent-teacher collaboration supported Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasized the importance of bringing two different structures together for significant outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Specifically, in this study, when the family and the special education teacher, the two microsystems, came together, the collaboration that resulted was positively impactful, as both systems were able to gain more knowledge and skills that were imperative in promoting the child's developmental functioning (Kim & Riley, 2014; Thijs &

Eibracht, 2012). Participants shared that they engaged in various communication methods with their families yet continued to face barriers with facilitating parents' rights within special education processes, due to both parent and teacher factors.

Communication. This phenomenological study explored the steps special education teachers within the study took to involve their families in special education processes. All participants indicated that they met with students' families regarding their child's special education programming in a formal setting only once per year, which aligns with IDEA's (2004) mandate that IEP teams should review a child's IEP annually. Six of the participants reported engaging in additional methods of contact with their families to ensure ongoing communication throughout the school year. Special education teachers reported that they emailed, texted, or called families frequently to ensure parents were involved and updated on their child's programming. In addition, three teachers utilized daily logs or point sheets to update parents of their child's functioning at school each day. These results are comparable to previously mentioned literature. Past research found that special education teachers engaged in different communication methods, which included phone calls, e-mails, and in-person exchanges (Davern, 2004). Written notes and daily logs were a common method of communication that allowed special education teachers to keep families aware of their child's daily functioning (Hall et al., 2003). The majority of the participants within the current study reported that they consistently engaged in daily forms of informal communication with families related to special education processes, yet a number of barriers existed that impacted their ability to form strong family-school partnerships.

Family Engagement. Previous studies have found that families face a number of barriers in their active involvement in their child's education. These barriers include lack of parental

knowledge of special education (Applequist, 2009; Boyd & Correa, 2005), time constraints (Campbell-Whatley & Gardner, 2002; Hossain & Anziano, 2008), cultural differences (Campbell-Whatley & Gardner, 2002; Koch, 2007), and family risk factors (Dryfoos, 2003; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002). This phenomenological study explored special education teachers' perspectives on the barriers that families of students receiving special education services faced. Teachers identified four common barriers within the study that served as barriers for the family's engagement in special education. Consistent with previous research, these identified barriers included parents' understanding of special education processes, time constraints, culture and language, and family risk factors.

Understanding of Special Education. Special education knowledge is important to access services, and research suggests that parents may not participate due to a lack of knowledge of the IEP process, special education, or their rights (Elbaum et al., 2015; Fish, 2006; Trainor, 2010). Within the current study, two special education teachers identified parents' understanding of special education processes as a barrier to facilitating parental involvement in special education. The teachers in the study reported that parents often were unaware of the services available to their child and how programming for their children worked in education. Similarly, prior research has found that parents lacked the knowledge and experience within education, which impacted their ability to understand the service model and educational or alternative options that were available for their child (Phillips, 2008). This lack of understanding and knowledge of special education processes hindered parents' participation in their child's education, and due to the complexity of special education, hindered their ability to act as an advocate for their child (Bjorgvinsdottir & Halldorsdottir, 2014; Phillips, 2008; Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010; Smith & Krieg, 2022). Researchers have suggested the need for parents to

increase their knowledge of special education law in order for them to participate successfully in meetings, or else the lack of background would lead families to feeling overwhelmed or confused about the processes (Fish, 2006; Mueller & Buckley, 2014).

Time. Five participants identified time constraints as a significant barrier that families faced in their active involvement in their child's special education programming. Specifically, teachers reported that parents often did not have time to attend or participate in meetings due to a myriad of reasons, including meetings being scheduled during parents' workday, parents having to juggle multiple responsibilities, and parents having multiple children to tend to. Previous research identified parental time constraints as a barrier to participating in their child's education. Specifically, it was found that working multiple jobs, being single parents who were responsible for juggling work and family, and having multiple children all were likely factors that played a role in the time constraints that families faced (Decastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Hampden-Thomspon & Galindo, 2017; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Goldstein et al. (1980), out of the 14 IEP meetings that were observed, none of the meetings included participation by both of the child's parents due to meetings being scheduled during work hours. Parents have been unable to actively participate in their child's education due to the lack of energy they had left after focusing on the everyday demands of their lives (Geenan et al., 2005).

Culture and Language. Two participants within the study documented that cultural and linguistic differences between the home and school served as a barrier for families in their collaboration. One participant noted that a family they previously worked with was hesitant to participate in their child's special education programming as English was not their first language, and they felt self-conscious about their language skills. Previous research has found an

immediate barrier for CLD families is their lack of proficiency in the English language (Bennett et al., 1998; Turney & Kao, 2009). Schools can feel intimidating to CLD families. Due to their lack of confidence in their language skills, in their understanding of school systems, and their beliefs that teachers are professionals and are not to be interfered with, many families who do not speak English may distance themselves from an equal partnership (Lian & Fontanez-Phelan, 2001; Tamzarian et al., 2012). Even for the families that demonstrate English language proficiency, the jargon utilized within meetings may feel overwhelming (Zhang & Bennett, 2003). One participant within the study identified that written paperwork was difficult to navigate when cultural and linguistic differences were presented. In a study conducted by Tamzarian et al. (2012), families reported feeling overwhelmed by the IEP documents as they were written in formal language and were difficult to understand due to the existing language differences.

Parent Risk Factors. Lastly, three participants identified specific family risk factors as hindering teachers' ability to facilitate parental involvement in special education processes. The three risk factors identified within the current study included low levels of parental education, parents' own mental health risks, and drug/substance abuse by parents. As previous literature suggests, families that demonstrate higher developmental risk are less likely to have a partnership established with their child's teachers (Garbacz et al., 2016). One participant in the study identified that some of their parents had disabilities and a low level of education themselves which hindered their participation in processes. Consistent with the current findings, previous research has found that certain family characteristics including level of education and emotional or mental health difficulties negatively impact a parents' involvement in their child's education (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020; Oranga et al., 2022). Higher levels of parental education

were associated with more parental involvement in the educational process of children (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Feliciano, 2006). This was due to parents feeling embarrassed about their level of education and perceiving themselves as not having the skills necessary to advocate for their child's education (Decastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Lopez, 2001; Stewart, 2008). Two participants documented that mental health barriers and addiction problems were a hindrance to parent-teacher collaboration. Research has found that single parents, parents who faced mental health challenges, and parents who faced problems linked to drugs, alcohol, and debt were less likely to be involved in their child's special education programming (Britt, 1998; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Teacher Engagement. Teachers are highly influential in increasing parental involvement. Collier et al. (2015a) emphasized that teachers who provided encouragement and focused on building relationships with their families were more likely to be successful in ensuring parents' active involvement in their child's education. However, this two-way partnership and teachers' ability to facilitate parental involvement in special education were impacted by barriers faced by teachers. Special education teachers identified a number of barriers they faced in facilitating parental engagement in processes including lack of seriousness from parents, inconsistent attendance, unrealistic expectations, limited school administrator support, cultural and language differences, and time constraints due to large caseloads (Baker et al., 2016; Bashir, 2023; Zagona et al., 2019). Within the current study, special education teachers identified five common barriers faced in facilitating the responsibility of ensuring parental involvement. Consistent with previous literature, these barriers were identified as time constraints, cultural and linguistic barriers, parent attitudes toward participation, administrative support, and their own feelings.

Time Constraints. Time was identified as a significant barrier in facilitating parents' rights to parental involvement in special education processes by four participants. Two participants specifically noted that a high caseload of students affected their ability to communicate with families. Research has demonstrated that initiatives are being placed in schools to reduce class sizes within general education classrooms, yet the caseloads of special education teachers continue to rise (McLeskey et al., 2004). Special education teachers are responsible for a number of activities including academic instruction, instructional support, paperwork, consultation, collaboration, discipline, planning, and more (Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2009). Due to increasing caseloads and a number of responsibilities, teachers are forced to work a significant number of hours by staying late, working during breaks, or arriving to work early in order to complete all their responsibilities (Ortogero et al., 2017). One participant within the current study expressed that they were unable to truly engage in conversations with families and understand their input due to a lack of time within their schedules. This finding was supported by a previous study conducted by de Bruïne et al. (2014), which found that participants felt there was not enough time to gather team members' thoughts and opinions during meetings; meetings were rushed due to a lack of time within the master schedule of the school day. Ultimately, time served as a barrier for teachers within the study and impacted their ability to facilitate parental involvement in the way they hoped (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2019).

Culture and Language. Four participants noted that cultural and linguistic differences impacted their ability to collaborate and facilitate parents' rights to active involvement in special education processes. One participant acknowledged the difficulty they faced in learning the complexities of different cultures and languages of students within their caseloads. Two participants reported that due to cultural and linguistic differences, meetings lacked personability,

and information being shared to families tended to be watered down heavily. Research found that even with the assistance of interpreters within meetings, teachers tended to limit the information being shared to families in belief that this was supporting the families understanding of the information (Syeda & Dresens, 2020). Unfortunately, this often increases miscommunication between parents and teachers (More et al., 2013). The number of CLD students in the United States is also continuously on the rise, yet the special education workforce is not representative of the student population within special education (McLeskey et al., 2004). Cultural and linguistic barriers served as a barrier for special education teachers as they felt they did not have adequate knowledge to work with CLD families and students, which was consistent with the findings of the current study (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Miranda et al., 2017; Villegas, 2018). This current finding corroborated the cultural capital theory upon which the foundation of this study lies. Teachers felt they did not have the skills to demonstrate different forms of capital needed to engage effectively with families leading to barriers to effective school-home collaboration (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017).

Parent Attitudes. Four participants noted that their willingness and commitment to engaging with families for special education processes was dependent upon parents' level of involvement and their attitudes toward collaboration. Participants within the current study reported that they felt the need to limit their communication and collaboration with parents who asserted themselves strongly, disrespectfully, or dishonestly; when parents were collaborative and sought to work together, teachers' likelihood to increase communication and collaboration was higher. These findings were consistent with previous research that suggested that teachers were less likely to establish a strong relationship with families when they were more difficult to work with (Lasater, 2016). The parent-teacher collaboration was negatively impacted when

parents presented as more demanding in their advocacy for their child. In addition, when parents were disengaged, teachers often felt frustrated (Buchanan & Clark, 2017). As indicated by the participants in the study, previous literature suggested that teachers had difficulty working with overprotective parents, disrespectful parents, and parents who continuously questioned or had reservations about the teachers' work with their child (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012).

Administrative Support. Three participants within the current study attributed the lack of administrative support in facilitating parent-teacher collaboration as a barrier to facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. Specifically, participants often felt that their administrators provided minimal support in navigating challenging family situations or that administrators placed teachers in an uncomfortable position when navigating discipline for students receiving special education services. Participants reported that they believed their administrators lacked a solid understanding of special education processes. Literature suggests that a large number of current administrators are not equipped to support special education, with some administrators reporting that they received very little formal training (Gilson & Etscheidt, 2022). Consequently, administrators felt unprepared to support teachers with their responsibilities, including facilitating collaboration with parents within IEP meetings. This lack of knowledge and preparedness often made teachers feel unsupported by their leaders, especially when teachers required their support in navigating difficult parent-teacher communication (Bashir, 2023).

Teach*er *Attitudes and Feelings. Lastly, three participants attributed their own comfortability levels and personal characteristics as factors that impacted their ability in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. Specifically, one participant acknowledged that communication with parents on the phone was a source of anxiety for them,

while another participant was able to identify when some parent-teacher partnerships were becoming too stressful, and communication had to be overall limited. This was primarily affected by teachers' past experiences working with difficult families. Research has found that teachers who have experienced successful parent-teacher collaboration are more likely to continue their engagement with families; however, teachers who have had difficult relationships resulting in past anxiety may carry over those feelings into future relationships, impacting their engagement with families (Keyes, 2000).

Self-Efficacy of Teachers

The second theme, self-efficacy, generated in the current study provided specific insight into the study's second and third research questions which explored special education teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes, and whether their self-efficacy was impacted when facilitating parental involvement for White families versus CLD families. Within the study, all participants provided high ratings regarding their self-efficacy on their ability to collaborate effectively with families of students receiving special education services. Specifically, all special education teachers within the study provided ratings of an 8 or higher, with seven out of the 10 participants believing their self-efficacy on a scale of 1-10, was a 9 or higher.

On the second statement addressing participants' beliefs on fully ensuring parents' rights within special education processes, the participants expressed more variability in their self-efficacy ratings. Seven out of the 10 participants provided a rating of 8 or higher on this statement, two individuals provided a rating of 7, and one individual deviated significantly from the rest of the participants with a rating of 4. When participants were asked their reasoning behind their ratings, much of the variability attributed to the teachers who rated themselves a 7 or

lower were due to their lack of full understanding of special education law, as well as factors outside of their control.

In addition, when comparing the third and fourth statements, which asked participants to rate their self-efficacy when collaborating effectively with White families versus CLD families, all participants provided lower ratings in their ability to collaborate effectively with CLD families. Specifically, eight out of the 10 participants within the study reported a two-to-three-point difference in their ratings. Teachers' self-efficacy ratings on the four statements provided support for the theoretical framework on which the study's foundation was based. In particular, special education teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy corroborated the cultural capital theory, critical race theory, and the self-efficacy theory. As the findings within the study suggested, special education teachers within the study felt less equipped to collaborate and reach their CLD families due to the language and cultural differences between the participants and their families. Thus, there were different forms of capital identified within the study, which disadvantaged the CLD families due to the structures and systems in play. These systems and lack of structures to support effective collaboration between CLD families and teachers identified the need for equitable practices within systems to ensure that CLD families were fully engaged in the process, bringing light to the critical race theory in play.

Participants in this study attributed their self-efficacy for collaborating effectively with families within special education to the strengths of their own personalities and experiences. Specifically, participants identified that their years of experience, their communication skills, their personality, and their experiences in special education as a parent of a child in special education strengthened their ability to engage in effective collaboration with families. Previous studies provided support to these identified factors as research has found that parent-teacher

partnerships are lifted when certain attributes that teachers hold, including being warm, open, and reliable, exist and encourage parental involvement (Comer & Haynes, 1991). In addition, more experienced teachers were more likely to establish stronger relationships with their families and had more success with engaging parents frequently (Cantin et al., 2012; Castro et al., 2004). This was likely due to more experienced teachers having additional field experiences that allowed them to learn effective practices that supported parent-teacher collaboration, which in turn developed the teachers' self-efficacy with the task (Ekornes & Bele, 2002; Peebles & Mendaglio, 2014).

Participants identified that a barrier they faced in fully enforcing parents' rights within special education processes was their understanding of the procedural safeguards that parents typically received at least annually. Specifically, the participants indicated that they needed to increase their knowledge of parents' rights, IDEA, and special education law in general in order to fully feel confident in enforcing parents' right to active involvement. This was consistent with a previous study where teachers reported that they lacked crucial information about IDEA and were sometimes misinformed about the provisions within special education law (O'Conner et al., 2016). In addition, one participant indicated that decisions made by an administrator often overruled their ability to enforce parents' rights. This left teachers feeling unsupported in their responsibility of ensuring parents are fully informed and involved in decision-making processes (Bashir, 2023).

Within the current study, all participants provided lower self-efficacy ratings on their ability to collaborate effectively with CLD families compared to White families. Six participants identified their differences in self-efficacy ratings due to their own cultural proficiency. This study was made up of a majority of individuals that identified as Caucasian. Previous literature

suggested that Caucasian teachers entered the teaching profession with minimal to no knowledge or experience working with diverse cultures (Mahali & Sevigny, 2021). Teacher efficacy is greatly impacted by their self-perceived ability to work with their diverse student and family population. Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy perceptions decreased when working with diverse families and students, as they felt unprepared and disconnected in their knowledge and experiences to effectively collaborate with a culturally diverse population (Mahali & Sevigny, 2021; Rosetti et al., 2017). In a similar study, teachers attributed their lower confidence levels in working with culturally diverse families to their lack of understanding of cultural strengths and differences, language barriers, and school structures that hindered teachers' ability to participate in parent-teacher meetings with CLD families in a comfortable manner (Paris, 2015).

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of special education teachers as they facilitated parental involvement in special education processes. By exploring teachers' experiences, as well as by identifying their perceptions of self-efficacy when working with CLD families and White families, the researcher was able to identify common trends and themes that would be imperative in determining next steps and recommendations in reducing the barriers teachers and families face, as well as empowering teachers in their work with a culturally diverse population. As research emphasizes, family-school collaboration is crucial in its impact on multiple school factors including a student's academic achievement, motivation, and health (Paccaud et al., 2021). The current study's findings paralleled previous literature as all participants identified the strengths that parent-teacher partnerships could bring to the educational setting for students. Yet, the

participants identified factors that existed in the educational setting that hindered their ability to fully foster that relationship and increase engagement for families.

Although this study focused on the exploration of the experiences of special education teachers, it also initiated a movement to increase the knowledge of the process so that educational leaders can develop processes and identify resources that would facilitate increasing teachers' competence and confidence when tasked with this responsibility. Within this study, special education teachers reported several areas that hindered their ability to develop strong partnerships with families. Through the perspectives and experiences of the 10 participants in the current study, the researcher was able to identify a third theme, resources, that provided insight into the fourth research question, which focused on the steps that could be taken to improve the impediments special education teachers faced in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes.

These recommendations, identified directly from the participants, involved the need for school districts and training programs to consider and acknowledge the need for a more diverse special education workforce, access to cultural liaisons and interpreters with special education knowledge, and increased professional development and training programs that focused on collaboration. These resources recommended by the participants would be beneficial in increasing teachers' self-efficacy in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. Previous literature has found a positive relationship between the availability of resources and teachers' self-efficacy levels when engaging in their responsibilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Binammar et al., 2023). In addition, through the experiences gathered throughout the current study, the researcher identified the need for increased administrative

support and additional time for special education teachers to be successful in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes.

Four participants within the study reported that a more diverse workforce within special education would be an imperative next step in increasing parent-teacher collaboration and in ensuring parents' involvement in special education. Specifically, the participants within the study identified that with an increase of diversity among special education staff, communication could occur quickly and effectively as staff members would have a stronger understanding of cultural and language differences. Currently, special education teachers of color are underrepresented nationwide compared to the students of color within special education that are overrepresented, leading to an unrepresentative education workforce (Tyler et al., 2004). Research has found that when the teaching workforce reflects the racial and cultural composition of their community, positive outcomes can result for students (Tyler et al., 2004; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). This reflexivity can allow the teaching workforce to be appropriate and effective liaisons for the community and school, while being equipped to increase the academic achievement of students by increasing engagement of families in their children's education.

Additionally, five participants within the study identified the need for accessible cultural liaisons and interpreters to support in the facilitation of parental involvement in special education meetings. Four participants highlighted that in their experiences, cultural liaisons and interpreters were difficult to find; one participant added that interpreters should hold some background in special education. Currently, the special education field is challenged with recruiting interpreters that are well-versed in translating different languages, and therefore, schools often resort to utilizing personnel that could speak and understand a different language to interpret within meetings (More et al., 2003; Mueller et al., 2004). The consequence of this is that skilled

interpreters with experience serving in special education meetings are not provided at IEP meetings. As a result, personnel with little training are filling in as interpreters which can lead to negative impacts for CLD families (Flores, 2005; Rossetti et al., 2018). Therefore, to avoid misinformation and to ensure information is accurately communicated, increasing the availability of interpreters with training and experiences with special education law and terminology is essential (More et al., 2003).

Lastly, four participants identified the need for additional professional development and training regarding best practices in special education as well as building essential skills to establish strong teacher-parent partnerships. Two of the four participants highlighted that most of their practices regarding parent-teacher collaboration were gained through their own field experiences. Previous literature has identified that although the majority of teacher training programs instill the importance of parental involvement in all teacher candidates, only a few programs provided training to their teacher candidates on the practices of fostering effective collaboration and partnerships with families (Caspe et al., 2011; Collier et al., 2015a). Additionally, very few programs provided their teacher candidates with real life experiences navigating interactions and collaboration with families (Collier et al., 2015a). The teachers who did receive formal training and experiences on practices to develop effective school-community partnerships were more willing to engage in such partnerships (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000). Therefore, previous literature supports the importance of providing teachers with training within their programs on building the necessary skills to engage in effective partnerships with the community. In addition to teaching practical skills within teacher preparation programs, teachers expressed high interest in professional development opportunities focused on special education processes and working with parents (Berry et al., 2011). Ongoing professional development

allowed teachers to stay current on the recent literature and best practices that would allow them to continue expanding on their skills, knowledge, and practices.

The researcher identified additional areas of recommendations that would benefit special education teachers' facilitation of parental involvement in special education processes: increase of administrative support and additional time. As indicated previously, administrators often fell short in their support of facilitating parent-teacher collaboration. This was likely due to the minimal formal training in special education processes they received in their preparation programs (Gilson & Etscheidt, 2022). By establishing steps to increase administrators' knowledge of special education, the retention of special education teachers can improve (MDE, 2021a; Phillips, 2021). The retention rate of special education teachers is particularly low, and a significant factor in this retention rate is the lack of administrative support (Billingsley, 2004; Brownwell & Smith, 1992). This has led to a nationwide shortage of special education teachers, ultimately resulting in high caseloads and increased responsibilities for special education teachers who remain in the field (Ortogero et al., 2017). Therefore, an essential component to ensuring special education teachers feel supported as they navigate more complex parent-school partnerships is to ensure that administrators receive specific pedagogy in special education laws and processes. By providing administrators with more knowledge and training, the recruitment and retention of special education teachers can begin to increase so that the nationwide shortage can begin to diminish. This would result in special education teachers being awarded the time they need to effectively engage in their responsibilities, including facilitating parental involvement in special education processes.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this current study added to the current literature about parent-teacher relationships and teachers' responsibility of facilitating parental involvement in special education processes. However, this study presented gaps in the literature that would be beneficial to explore in future research if steps are to be taken to ensure the facilitation of parents' rights within special education processes. Previous literature suggested that special education teachers were not prepared to support their diverse families in special education processes (Brannon & Daukas, 2012; Mueller & Vick, 2017). Within the current study, participants identified that the majority of their practices to engage families, including diverse populations, in effective partnerships came from field experiences; little to no training was provided in teacher preparation programs. There is a need to provide teachers with practice opportunities within preparation programs, as well as continued professional development opportunities while in the workforce. Additional research on the training and professional development opportunities that would most benefit special education teachers should be conducted to ensure teachers are receiving the formal training necessary to facilitate parental involvement in special education.

Additionally, another direction for future research is to consider a different research design to gather information regarding the phenomenon. Specifically, a qualitative case study focused on exploring one or two special education teachers could provide in-depth insight into the experience as teachers facilitate parental involvement in special education. As special education teachers face a number of challenges and complexities in their partnerships with families, a case study would allow researchers to dive deeper into these complexities in a real-life setting, rather than relying solely on recollections of experiences (Crowe et al., 2011). In addition, this research design would allow the researcher to gain perspective on how barriers

may play out in teacher-parent partnerships. A case study design would allow the researcher to gain new perspectives into factors which may affect teachers' facilitation of parental involvement in special education that may have not been researched before.

The current study identified the lack of administrative support as a barrier for teachers as they facilitated parental involvement in special education processes. Further insight from previous literature demonstrated that administrators often lacked knowledge of special education laws and processes. School administrators play an essential role in fostering a culture that encourages strong and collaborative partnerships between the community and school (Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Previous literature has identified the barriers that parents faced as they sought to actively participate in their child's education; the current study explored the lived experiences of special education teachers as they facilitated parental involvement in special education processes. As administrators also play an important role in fostering parent-teacher collaboration, further research is needed to identify how administrators can support facilitating parents' right to be actively involved in special education processes.

A significant limitation of the current study was the sample size and population of the study. To generalize conclusions, it is recommended that future research focusing on this phenomenon be conducted with a larger sample size, as well as multiple levels of schools. The participant pool for the current study involved a high number of participants that identified as White and made up the majority of the dominant workforce. By increasing the sample size of future research, more diverse special education teachers could be recruited to determine whether experiences and perceptions of self-efficacy differed for them versus White special education teachers. In addition, only elementary-site special education teachers were allowed to partake in the current study. In order to deepen the understanding of special education teachers' experiences

and generalize findings, it would be imperative to conduct future research with special education teachers working at different educational levels, including the early childhood, middle school, high school, and transition levels.

Conclusions

This phenomenological study revealed that all teachers demonstrated positive outlooks regarding their parent-teacher relationship, as well as high self-efficacy in collaborating effectively with families. However, teachers faced numerous challenges when ensuring parental involvement in processes, including factors that hindered parents from being involved and factors that hindered teachers' ability to ensure parental involvement in special education. All participants within the study indicated lower self-efficacy levels when collaborating effectively with CLD families. Participants identified three resources required to increase their ability to ensure parental involvement in special education including a need for a more diverse workforce, more professional development opportunities, and access to more cultural liaisons and interpreters. The researcher identified the need for increased administrative support and additional time as important factors in supporting teachers as they facilitate parental involvement. The implications of the current study's findings provide a starting point for local and federal education agencies and training providers to engage in practices that would support teachers in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes to ensure parents' rights are fulfilled as emphasized by IDEA.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Email for Potential Participants

Hello,

My name is Dharmisha Narayanan. I am a doctoral candidate at Bethel University, currently writing my dissertation. I am also a school psychologist and fellow educator in the state of Minnesota. As part of the dissertation process, I will be conducting a research study related to exploring the lived experiences of special education teachers tasked with enforcing IDEA's mandate for parental involvement within special education processes. The aim of this study is to explore teachers' experiences and understand the impediments that they face with enforcing parents' rights within special education processes. The study also aims to understand teachers' self-efficacy with this responsibility, and how their self-efficacy is impacted when working with White and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families. The intent is to understand these experiences to provide better support systems to mitigate the difficulties that our teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes.

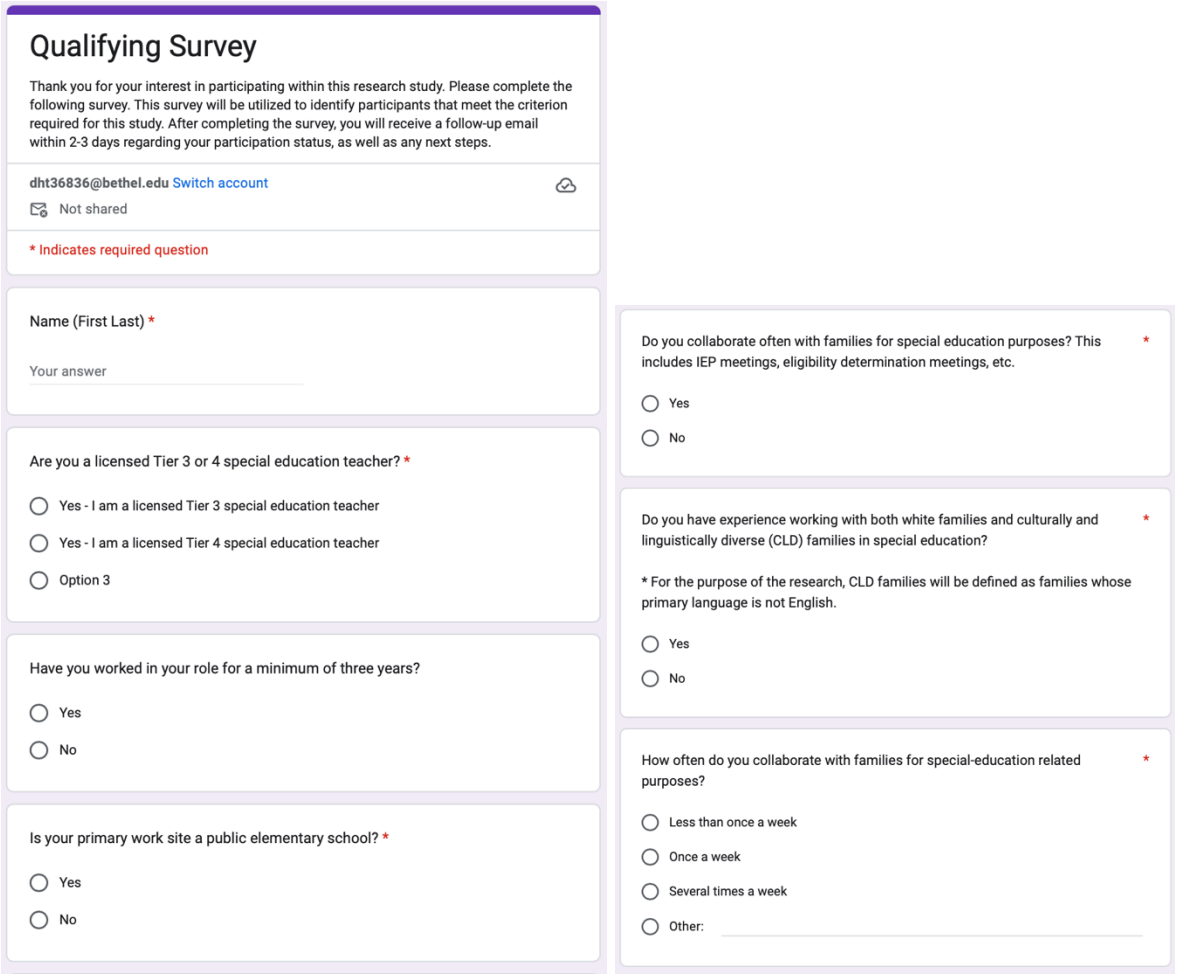
You are invited to participate in this study. You were identified as a Tier 3 or 4 licensed special education teacher working in the state of Minnesota. If you are interested in partaking in this study, please complete this **survey**. This short survey asks several close-ended questions about your experiences and responsibilities in your role which will allow me to determine if you meet the full criterion required to participate within the study.

Once the survey is completed, I will review the responses to ensure that you meet all the criteria to participate in the study. A follow-up email will be sent within 2-3 days following completion of the survey to confirm your participation status. At that time, you will also receive an informed consent form and a Google link to the Interview Participation Form to sign up for an interview time slot. Participants will also be entered into a drawing to win a $30.00 Amazon gift card.

Thank you,

Dharmisha Narayanan
Bethel University

Appendix B: Qualifying Survey



Qualifying Survey

Thank you for your interest in participating within this research study. Please complete the following survey. This survey will be utilized to identify participants that meet the criterion required for this study. After completing the survey, you will receive a follow-up email within 2-3 days regarding your participation status, as well as any next steps.

dht36836@bethel.edu Switch account

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Name (First Last) *

Your answer

Are you a licensed Tier 3 or 4 special education teacher? *

- Yes - I am a licensed Tier 3 special education teacher
- Yes - I am a licensed Tier 4 special education teacher
- Option 3

Have you worked in your role for a minimum of three years?

- Yes
- No

Is your primary work site a public elementary school? *

- Yes
- No

Do you collaborate often with families for special education purposes? This includes IEP meetings, eligibility determination meetings, etc. *

- Yes
- No

Do you have experience working with both white families and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families in special education? *

* For the purpose of the research, CLD families will be defined as families whose primary language is not English.

- Yes
- No

How often do you collaborate with families for special-education related purposes? *

- Less than once a week
- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Other:

Appendix C: Eligibility Email for Participants

Approval Email for Participants

Hello,

Thank you for expressing your interest in participating in this research study. After reviewing your survey results, you are eligible to participate in the study. I have included a copy of the informed consent form. Please review this form to understand the study's purpose and additional pertinent information. If you wish to move forward and partake in the study, please sign, and return the form to me at dht36836@bethel.edu.

Once you sign and return the informed consent form, please complete the Interview Participation Google Form to schedule your initial interview session. A confirmation email will be sent to you within two to three days after completing the Google Form along with a Zoom link.

I look forward to working with you through this process to further understand your experiences as a special education teacher.

Thank you,
Dharmisha Narayanan
Bethel University

Disapproval Email for Participants

Hello,

Thank you for expressing your interest in participating in this research study. After reviewing your survey results, you are not eligible to participate in the study based on the criterion. I am sorry to inform you of this decision, and I appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Dharmisha Narayanan
Bethel University

Appendix D: Interview Protocols (Semi-structured format)

Disclosure *(prior to starting the interview): For data collection, this interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Once the recording has been transcribed, you will receive a copy via email to provide you the opportunity to make any revisions necessary to ensure the transcription's accuracy. You have provided your consent to participate in this study; however, you can withdraw from the study at any time. This interview is being conducted over Zoom. Zoom will be used for audio-recording purposes only. At the end of this interview, the audio-recording will be downloaded in order for it to be transcribed. The audio-recordings will be deleted immediately after the transcriptions have been generated. The transcriptions of the interview will be located on a password-protected computer and will be deleted three years after the completion of this study. Additionally, Zoom is not HIPAA-compliant and may have access to these recordings, therefore, to ensure protection and confidentiality, we will not discuss any individual identifiable health information (e.g., past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition). You have the option to withdraw from this study at any time; do you agree to move forward?*

Background Information:

1. How long have you been teaching in the special education field?
2. What is your primary work location?
3. What license do you hold?
4. How often do you meet with parents for special education related processes?
5. How often are those meetings related to IEPs that mandate parental participation?
6. How often do you meet with parents regarding their child with a disability outside of a meeting that mandates parent participation?

Research Question #1

What are the participants' lived experiences as special education teachers tasked with the responsibility of ensuring parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA?

Introduction: *To give some background, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, strongly emphasizes the importance of ensuring parental involvement in special education processes. One of IDEA's foundational principles is the right of parents to participate in the educational decision making regarding their child with a disability. The first set of questions will be asked with the intent to understand your experiences as a special education teacher tasked with the responsibility of ensuring parental involvement in special education processes as emphasized by IDEA.*

1. As a special education teacher, what steps do you take to ensure parental involvement in special education?
2. What barriers do you see families face in their active participation within special education?
3. What challenges and unique concerns do you face as a special education teacher in ensuring parental involvement in special education processes?

   Prompt: *Describe the support you receive from administration and peers during the task of facilitating parental involvement in special education..*

Research Question #2

What perceptions do special education teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy in ensuring parental involvement in special education processes?

Introduction: *For the next set of questions, I will be asking questions to understand your self-efficacy when it comes to ensuring parental involvement in special education processes.*

4. How would you describe your philosophy regarding parent-teacher collaboration?
5. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not very like me and 10 being very like me, please rate the following statements:
    a. I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with families of students receiving special education services.
    b. I believe I have the capacity to enforce parents' rights within special education processes.

    Prompt: *Tell me more about why you gave yourself these ratings. Provide examples.*

Research Question #3

How has the self-efficacy of special education teachers been impacted when ensuring parental involvement in special education processes when working with White families versus CLD families?

Introduction: *The last set of questions focused on your self-efficacy when working with families. To dive deeper into your self-efficacy, the next set of questions will allow me to further learn about your experiences and self-efficacy through a cultural lens. For the purpose of this study, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families will be described as individuals whose dominant language in the home is not English, and whose cultural values and backgrounds differ from our current dominant culture.*

6. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not very like me and 10 being very like me, please rate the following statements:
    a. I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with White families of students receiving special education services.
    b. I am confident in my ability to collaborate effectively with CLD families of students receiving special education services.

    Prompt: *What factors contribute to the ratings you provided? If you indicated a difference in your confidence ratings when working with White families versus CLD families, why do you believe your confidence is stronger for one group versus another?*
7. What contributes to your self-efficacy ratings when working with different families within special education?

Research Question #4

What steps can be taken to improve the impediments, if any, that teachers face in facilitating parental involvement in special education processes?

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8. How did your training and experiences contribute to your ability to uphold this responsibility?
9. What are some next steps you believe are crucial in increasing your self-efficacy with this task?
10. Are resources or supports available to assist you in supporting families with different backgrounds? If not, what would be beneficial to you in supporting families?

Appendix E: Consent Form for Research

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TASKED WITH ENSURING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESSES

Dharmisha Narayanan

Bethel University

School of Education

Thank you for agreeing to partake in a research study of the *lived experiences of special education teachers tasked with enforcing parental involvement within special education processes.* You were selected as a possible participant because you work at an elementary school, are licensed as a Tier 3 or 4 special education teacher, and have experience working with a culturally diverse population. If you decide to participate, I, Dharmisha Narayanan, will be conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand the impediments special education teachers face in enforcing parents' rights to active involvement within special education processes. This study will seek to understand special education teachers' self-efficacy when tasked with this responsibility, and whether special education teachers' self-efficacy is impacted when working with White families versus culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families.

Procedures:

If you provide your consent to participate in this study, I will ask you to complete the following:

1. Participate in a 30-45 minute private interview with me that will be audio recorded. Questions will pertain to your experiences as a special education teacher working with families within special education.
2. Each interview session will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. Once the session is transcribed, you will receive an email with a copy of the transcription and you will be asked to review the transcript to ensure its accuracy.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study:

The risks of this study are minimal. No physical risks will occur for participating in the study; however, there may be some minimal psychological or emotional risks associated with meeting with me and/or answering questions related to your lived experience. Therefore, you will have the right to not answer questions or end the interview at any given time without facing consequences. In addition, no tangible personal benefits exist for you. However, your stories and experiences can provide influential information regarding the impediments teachers face in enforcing parents' rights to special education processes. This information can assist school districts with mitigating possible impediments that exist for teachers in ensuring an inclusive special education process for all.

Compensation:

As a token of appreciation for your participation, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of three $30.00 Amazon gift cards. If you withdraw from the study early, your name will be withdrawn from the drawing.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no individual will be identified, and only aggregate data will be presented. However, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as individuals may infer someone's identity based on the direct quotes that will be presented in the final report. Zoom will be utilized for the interview. You will be asked to keep your video on, and to engage in the session in a private and quiet location. All sessions will be recorded utilizing Zoom, and will later be downloaded for transcription purposes. Zoom is not HIPAA-compliant; therefore, no discussion of individually identifiable health information will occur (e.g., past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual). Zoom recordings are not private, and the recordings are considered identifiable data. Therefore, all audio-recordings and transcriptions will be stored in a secure password-protected computer that is accessible only by me. All the data collected for the purpose of this study will be stored in a private, secure location that will only be accessible by me. All data will be deleted three years after the completion of the dissertation, aside from the recordings that will be deleted immediately after the transcriptions have been generated.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation within this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your future relations with Bethel University or your school district in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships. You have the right to ask the researcher to pause the audio recording. You have the right to not answer any questions during the study.

Contacts and Questions:

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact Dharmisha Narayanan at 714-624-3628 or dht36836@bethel.edu or Dr. Meg Cavalier at cavmeg@bethel.edu.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

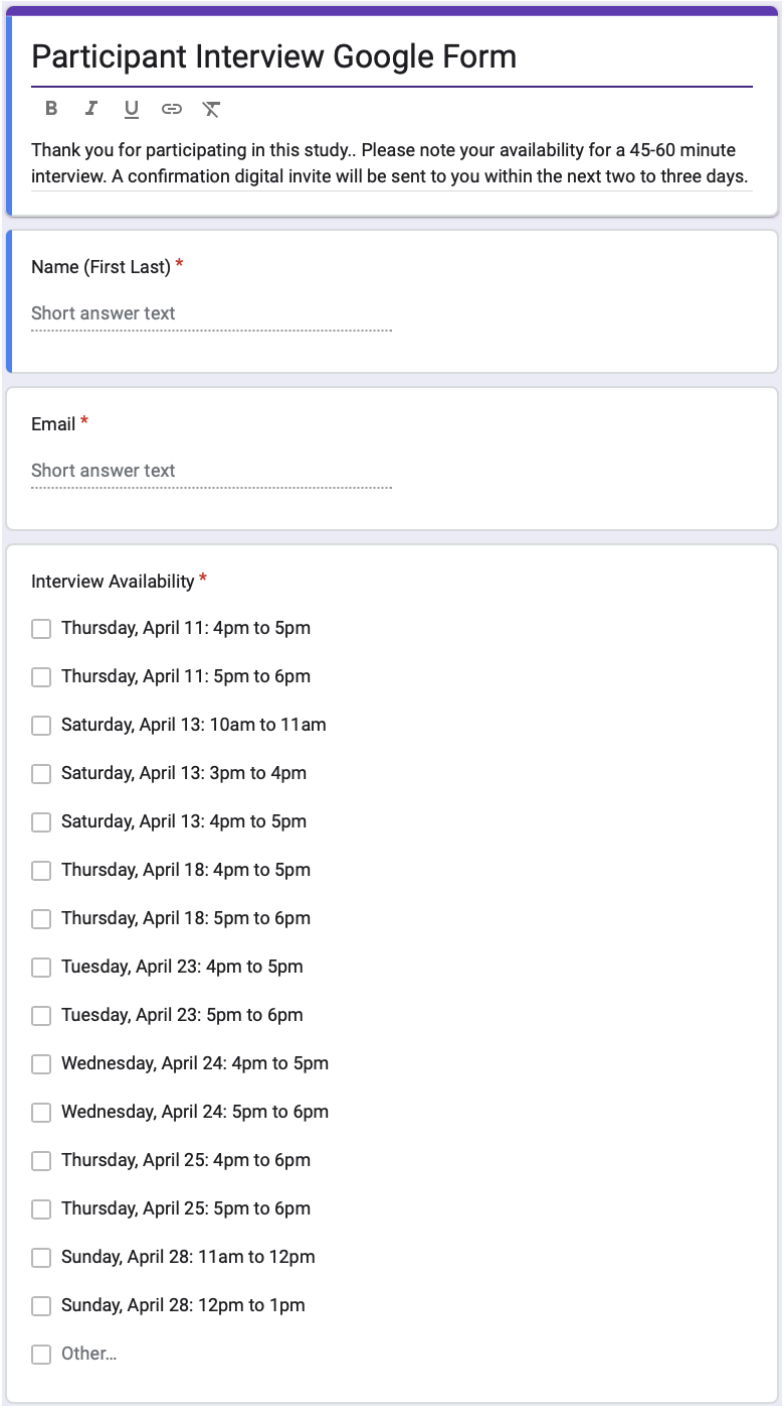
Statement of Consent:

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Participant Interview Google Form



Participant Interview Google Form

Thank you for participating in this study.. Please note your availability for a 45-60 minute interview. A confirmation digital invite will be sent to you within the next two to three days.

Name (First Last) *

Short answer text

Email *

Short answer text

Interview Availability *

- [ ] Thursday, April 11: 4pm to 5pm
- [ ] Thursday, April 11: 5pm to 6pm
- [ ] Saturday, April 13: 10am to 11am
- [ ] Saturday, April 13: 3pm to 4pm
- [ ] Saturday, April 13: 4pm to 5pm
- [ ] Thursday, April 18: 4pm to 5pm
- [ ] Thursday, April 18: 5pm to 6pm
- [ ] Tuesday, April 23: 4pm to 5pm
- [ ] Tuesday, April 23: 5pm to 6pm
- [ ] Wednesday, April 24: 4pm to 5pm
- [ ] Wednesday, April 24: 5pm to 6pm
- [ ] Thursday, April 25: 4pm to 6pm
- [ ] Thursday, April 25: 5pm to 6pm
- [ ] Sunday, April 28: 11am to 12pm
- [ ] Sunday, April 28: 12pm to 1pm
- [ ] Other...