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DEVELOPING CO-TEACHING CAPACITY BETWEEN GENERAL AND SPECIAL  
EDUCATION TEACHERS THROUGH APPLIED RESEARCH

A Dissertation  
presented in fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education  
The University of Mississippi

by

Kellie Ruth Logan

May 2020

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## ABSTRACT

This is a work of applied action research to examine the collaborative teaching efforts between general education teachers and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School. This research includes the involvement of stakeholders and the researcher as a collaborative group with the intent to increase collaborative teaching in the general education classroom, where students with special needs and their peers without disabilities are educated. The methods used are professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, classroom observations, the development of an observation checklist, and teacher-group discussions. A program evaluation is included.

## DEDICATION

To my sweet Sutton, it was all for you.

To my husband, thank you for pushing me to take the next big step in my education.

To my parents, thanks for being my biggest fans.

To my sister, words cannot express how appreciative I am for your support throughout this process. I will forever cherish our late nights after class. I could not ask for a better surrogate mom for Sutton during the last three years. You deserve an award!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Cabrera: Thank you for your encouragement and support. You are a true example of leadership.

To Cohort Three: Thank you all for listen, for sharing, and for loving. We have developed strong bonds during these long three years, may we forever keep them tight. We are better together!

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

While some teachers embrace cooperative teaching and educating students with special needs in an inclusive environment, many despise the idea. Sadly, my first experience as a special education inclusion services teacher moved my feelings toward the latter. I was paired with a seasoned teacher who always hosted the students with special needs. I was a guest in her classroom; I did not even have a desk. At the beginning and throughout the year, I attempted to plan with her; she was always too busy or said she would just do it the way she had always done it. We did not have equal roles, and even the students knew it. When implementing the classroom discipline plan, I was asked to explain myself to her each time I redirected a student. This difficult experience nearly turned me away from wanting to continue as a special educator. Honestly, I never wanted to teach in the general education classroom with special education services and supports setting again. Fortunately, I was afforded a much more pleasant experience with a different teacher a couple of years later, after teaching in a self-contained setting. Ironically, this was also a teacher with many years' experience; however, she welcomed my role in our classroom, and the year proved to be productive and fruitful for everyone involved. While I learned from her in many ways, she also learned from me and was not too prideful or experienced to admit she had things to learn. We taught our students together, both of us growing throughout the year.

While sharing the load of classroom teaching struggles may seem easier to bear with a partner, many teachers find it quite challenging to teach collaboratively in the same classroom (National Council on Disability, 2018). Because teachers have varying personalities and teaching styles, the news of hosting the general education classroom with special education services and supports classroom and the special education teacher who accompanies the task is often an unwelcomed favor. Learning to teach a group of students as a single teacher is quite challenging; adding an additional adult to the classroom, with his or her own ideas and teaching styles, brings with it an element of complexity to classroom planning and instructional delivery (Rice & Zigmond, 1999). Special education teachers are often moved from one classroom to another from year-to-year based on the needs of students. General education teachers and special education teachers often take on separate, non-cohesive, roles within the same classroom; the special education teacher focuses solely on the students on his or her caseload, while the general education teacher concentrates on the students without disabilities in the class (Bauwens, 1994; Morocco & Aguilar, 2002). The same formula holds true for classroom management and discipline. Segregation of this nature within the classroom weakens student access to general education and reduces student achievement (Connor & Ferri, 2007).

Although special education teachers have participated in professional development addressing co-teaching models, a lack of practice within the classroom remains evident. In their case study, Hersi, Horan, and Lewis (2016) found the general educators did not value special educators as equals in the classroom. In the eyes of the general educator, he or she is allowing the special teacher into their classroom for the year or a single class period. The initial assumption of the special educator as a guest in the general educator's space is the first sign of

trouble in the cooperative teaching partnership. In my own experiences and observations of collaborative teaching pairs, I have found that students are not receiving the maximum benefits of cooperative teaching, which could be due to the unclear expectations from each educator in a collaborative teaching environment coupled with personality and teaching style conflicts. In their study of the rural black belt region of Mississippi and Alabama, Griffith, Jones, Winship, and Howard (2019) also found teachers' personalities and classroom territorial conflicts to be contributing factors to the lack of success in general education classrooms with special education services and supports. In transition, interviews gathered during a study by Idol (2006) revealed most teachers view the practice of inclusion or cooperative teaching as a good idea, but are not confident in their abilities to teach cooperatively and want more professional development on the methods of collaborative teaching.

The intended purpose of cooperative teaching is to allow teachers to harmoniously teach a heterogeneous group of students, providing effective instruction to a wide range of learners (Friend, 2008). However, Nichols, Dowdy, and Nichols (2010) found evidence that cooperative teaching classrooms only exist to serve the purpose of meeting the mandates of No Child Left Behind (2001). How, then, can we improve the implementation of cooperative teaching practices in order to maximize student growth? Before the goal of cooperative teaching can be met, teachers must be adequately prepared to deliver instruction as a team rather than two individuals sharing a space. Friend (2008) emphasizes the need for creative strategies such as common planning time, collaboration between teachers, administrative supports, and shared delivery as approaches which will improve cooperative teaching and learning outcomes. Both general and special educators have expressed a need for additional professional development in

the areas of cooperative teaching and meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general education environment. Unfortunately, the guidance the general education teachers receive is often minimal, in my experience. The expectation to educate all students in a successful and nurturing learning environment comes with the same expectation that educators must be provided the proper training in the area of cooperative inclusive teaching, practice with partner teachers, and support from school leaders in order to deliver a quality educational experience to the students whom they teach.

Through my own practice, using an applied research design with a program evaluation, I examined the problem of improving collaborative teaching in the general education classroom where both students with special needs and their peers without disabilities are instructed. I examined the problem of cooperative teaching methods in my own practice and school, using an applied research design with a program evaluation. The following sections will include demographic information about the school and district in which professional development and cooperative teaching interventions took place, followed by a rationale for the problem. The justification includes both global and local reasons for the study.

### **Description of the problem.**

Centurion Elementary School (C.E.S.) is a small school in the rural town of Centurion, Mississippi, and operates within the Cybertron County School District. Cybertron County School District hired a new superintendent who assumed responsibilities in July 2018. Previously the district operated under an interim Superintendent from January through June 2018. The mid-year retirement of the former Superintendent, who served the district for 12

years, coupled with the uncertainty of who would fill the position, caused a great deal of discord within the district.

During the time of the applied research, I served the district in a hybrid of roles. I taught students with special needs, served as lead teacher/administrator for C.E.S, and provided administrative services to the district's special education department. I also lead the special education department at Centurion Elementary School. Both the principal at Centurion Elementary School and the Director of Special Education for Cybertron County School District were serving in new roles during the 2018-2019 school year. While the Director of Special Education had previously been a principal for four years, he had little experience with special education. The 2018-2019 year was the first year the principal of Centurion Elementary had been an administrator. I brought to the table experience in each of the two areas and served as a resource and collaborative partner to both administrators. For the district's special education department, I helped develop procedures, provided guidance on federal and state compliance regarding educating students with special needs, provided budgetary advice, suggested and scheduled professional development for targeted areas of need, reviewed Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and provided guidance to teachers as needed. Support provided to the principal of C.E.S. included collaboration on unique discipline decisions, teacher observations, parent communication, implementing policies, and other administrative duties as needed.

According to information from the 2016 United States Census, the population of the town was 14,610 (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Cybertron County School District served nearly 2,800 students. Approximately 362 of those students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade received their instruction at Centurion Elementary School. Pre-Kindergarten

through fourth grade and one classroom for pre-school students with special needs were housed on one campus. Like many elementary schools I had visited, Centurion was in the middle of a residential area of town, and was difficult to locate without directions from someone who knew to turn left behind the Shell station. In a small school, almost everyone was some degree of local and possibly related; even the school custodians were a husband and wife team. Likewise, many of the teachers had lived in Centurion or within Cybertron School District all of their lives or were married to someone from the area. Although small, the community was supportive of the school, and the Parent-Teacher Organization was very active, hosting activities or involvement opportunities almost weekly. There were several small businesses in the community; most of them donated time and money to help the school. Parents and community members volunteered time and supplies to paint the school, plant flowers around campus, and add new signs to the front of the building. During professional teacher days, at least one business or community group donated snacks or lunches to the staff.

Twenty-one teachers and five paraprofessionals were responsible for providing educational services for their students. All of the teachers were white, and all but one were female, a stark contrast to the student demographic makeup of 52.76% African American, roughly 37% Caucasian, and around 7% of students came from multiple racial/ethnic backgrounds. Most of the paraprofessionals were African American and had worked with the school district for several years. The student to teacher ratio was 19:1, which was higher than the 16:1 state average. Students who attended this school were raised in homes with a variety of backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. Close to 75% of the adult population held a high school diploma, and almost 11% of the population had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The

median home value in Centurion was \$67,400, with about 72% of the population owning their own home.

Student achievement had increased in recent years. The school's accountability rating increased from "D" status in the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 school years, to an "A" rating during the 2017/2018 academic year. However, the proficiency level of students with special needs had dropped from 15.4% scoring "proficient" in 2015/2016 to 0% "proficient" or "Level 4" in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 (Mississippi Department of Education, 2016; Mississippi Department of Education, 2017; Mississippi Department of Education, 2018). The push for cooperative student collaboration was apparent when peeping through windows. In recent years, professional development, at both district and state levels, had revolved around cooperative classrooms and students' ownership of their learning. From the outside, an observer could see students' desks arranged in groups, with each group being given different work to complete as they rotated to each center. Unfortunately, a visit inside most classrooms revealed teacher-led instruction with little time for student interaction and exploration. Even though students were seated in groups, they were told to work quietly, and discussion between students was discouraged. Although students with special needs were spending more time in the general education setting, their grades were falling farther and farther behind those of their peers without disabilities. Mr. Mars, the special educator, was in-and-out of the general education classrooms where students with special needs were being educated, and he pulled some students out of the classrooms for extended periods of time to provide tutorial services. When Mr. Mars spent time in the general education classrooms with special education services and supports, he served in a role more closely associated with an assistant, rather than an equal educator in the classroom. He mostly



hovered over the identified students with special needs and assisted them as needed. Additionally, general education teachers were quick to pass the responsibility of educating special learners off to the special education teacher. I saw Calvin, a student with a developmental delay, being sent out of Mrs. First's classroom to the special education classroom to complete handfuls of work daily. Inside the special education classroom, Mr. Mars's phone was always at hand or within close reach, as were the iPads the students were increasingly attached to during a majority of instructional time.

Three special education teachers bore the responsibility of providing special services to students with disabilities at Centurion Elementary School. One of the three special education teachers held a degree in elementary education with a special education endorsement; one teacher was alternate-route certified, and one special education teacher was dual certified in both special education and elementary education. Special education teachers split their time across subject areas and grades to provide students with the instructional services outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Two special education teachers served students with special needs in first through fourth grades; one teacher serviced first and second grades, and the other teacher serviced third and fourth grades. The teachers' schedules were arranged to provide inclusive teaching services during reading instruction, the focus of this study. Students' disabilities within this group included Specific Learning Disabilities, Intellectual Disability, and Other Health Impairments. The special education teachers provided services to those students for sixty minutes of the 90-minute reading block. Several of the students also received tutorial instruction. One student received modified grades as well as resource instruction.

### **Justification of the problem.**

Previous and current years' classroom observations revealed the cooperative teaching pairs that are the focus of my research continued to struggle to teach in a collaborative, rather than parallel manner in their classroom. Effective cooperative teaching was necessary to meet the needs of the students in their classes. Two students with special needs in the fourth-grade grouping fell in the lowest-performing students of their grade-level peer group on English Language Arts (ELA) scores. Four of the students without disabilities in this group were identified in the lowest-performing group of students in ELA, and five students without disabilities were in the lowest-performing group of students in Math as well. With this performance data in mind, it was clear action must be taken to advance these students in both reading and math. Behavior data revealed one of the students with special needs had multiple minor and major discipline infractions. Similarly, some of the students without disabilities had multiple discipline infractions as well.

By definition, co-teaching involves two equally qualified teachers collaboratively delivering instruction to a group or groups of students (Murawski & Swanson, 2001). While there are many co-teaching models, the rule remains the same: collaboration is an essential component of co-teaching instruction (Shelly, 2018). When we consider the context of collaboration, working together to achieve a common goal is the descriptor that immediately comes to mind. Both students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities receive enhanced instructional benefits and outcomes under this model (Bauwens, 1994; Murawski, 2010).

Co-teaching is the model expected to be observed in a general education with special education services and supports classroom setting. However, at Centurion Elementary School, this was not the most commonly observed practice. Through my observations in general education classrooms with special education services and supports, I discovered many teacher pairs participated in widely separate activities within the same classroom with little or no evidence of collaboration, which suggested a need for improved collaborative co-teaching practices. Co-teaching is not constituted by housing two teachers with separate groups of students in the same classroom. Further, the lack of ownership for all students in the class by both teachers created confusion and distrust between teachers and students. It was determined that student achievement would continue to remain stagnant or decrease if intentional interventions were not implemented in teaching practices. In order to improve student outcomes, teacher inputs must first improve; similar to Hang and Rabren's (2009) findings, student outcomes improve when teachers hold positive perceptions of the cooperative teaching models utilized within their classrooms as well as positive perceptions of their teacher partners.

The benefits of the co-teaching models are numerous. Primarily, students with disabilities are provided the maximum possible access to the general curriculum, while continuing to receive specialized instruction (Murawski, 2010). Secondly, but not less important, all students have the opportunity to receive intense instruction; student instruction may be more individualized, with greater intensity and differentiation (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Socially, students with disabilities are provided more opportunities to participate with their peers more frequently than in negatively viewed pull-out models and feel more connected with their peer group (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Negative student behavior can be reduced by the

availability of close proximity of two teachers rather than one (Cross & Walker-Knight, 1997), as well as the enhanced student engagement the co-teaching model provides (Boudah, Schumacher, & Deshler, 1997). Finally, teachers are afforded peer-based learning opportunities (Cross & Walker-Knight, 1997), expanding the scope of their teaching capacity and building trust-based, collaborative partnerships (Murawski, 2003). As many teachers feel isolated from peers within the confines of their daily classroom duties, I suspected teacher job satisfaction may increase under the co-teaching model as well (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

### **Audience.**

Primarily, and in the immediate future, the teachers who participated in the program would benefit from the process and outcomes of this applied research. The goal of this program was to equip the cooperative teacher pairs at Centurion Elementary School with the necessary information and skills to modify their teaching practices to better serve the distinct needs of the students in their classroom. The program also aimed to evoke the realization that teaching to meet diverse student needs does not necessitate separate teaching.

Throughout the process of the applied research program, the school principal also gained knowledge regarding inclusive practices within the classroom. The principal of Centurion Elementary School was new to the role for the 2018-2019 academic year. She had spent most of her career in the high school setting. While she had some experience with special education, she admitted this was not an area of strength for her and was open to guidance and support. Being given a new lens through which to view the education of students with special needs and their counterparts without disabilities as a holistic unit would provide a new outlook on the organization of the school. This new information, gained through research-based practices, may

influence teacher assignments, scheduling, and other aspects of the school composition in the future.

If successful, this program will serve as a model for other schools in Cybertron County School District to follow, allowing a wide range of students, teachers, and administrators to benefit from the outcomes of the process. Additionally, educators across the state will be encouraged to follow this model to enhance the cooperative teaching programs in their schools as well.

Moreover, all future administrators and educators may one day become the intended audience for this program. Whether the outcome of this program was deemed positive or negative, I aspired to inform other educators to learn how best to serve students of all needs in their classrooms. As a special educator, I am passionate about appropriately serving the needs of students with differing abilities. However, those students are not always identified as students with special needs; they are often struggling learners in the general population. Educators can learn from this program how to utilize human resources to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. I wanted cooperative teachers to desire to discover innovative teaching methods to reach all students in their classrooms and truly teach as one. While it was difficult to articulate exactly what successful cooperative teaching looks like, I believe success will show itself through the students who cannot identify one teacher as the leader of the classroom. Instead, the students will proudly announce they have not one, but two wonderful teachers.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this applied research study was to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School. The

research process began with a description of the problem within the context of the school site, followed by a justification of the need to conduct the research. Collaboration occurred between the school principal, teachers, and special services administrators which improved cooperative teaching practices, determined the central questions that were addressed, as well as developed an action plan to address the problem. The goals of the action plan were used to develop a set of qualitative questions to support a formative evaluation of the plan and determine whether the action plan was successful in improving cooperative teaching at Centurion Elementary School. The results of the evaluation supported the improvement of teacher development as it applied to the education of students in inclusive classroom environments.

The central phenomenon of this applied research study was the need for cooperative teaching pairs, comprised of special and general educators, to expand the scope of their practice to serve students in a more collaborative and inclusive manner. Qualitative data was utilized at the beginning and throughout the process in the form of conversations with teachers and administrators and group meetings to gather data regarding perceptions of cooperative teaching practices. Observations were also employed to determine the success of the interventions, that is, whether the professional development was implemented in the classroom and to what extent. Quantitative data was gathered through the use of an existing survey tool used to gauge teachers' perceptions both before and after interventions were implemented. The program evaluation of action plan elements began with pre-observations and conversations with teachers, followed by implementation of interventions/professional development, and concluded with cyclical post-observations which evaluated the application of cooperative teaching methods. Teachers and administrators collaborated to develop a checklist which was used during the post-

professional development classroom observations. Teachers and administrators met regularly to formatively evaluate the process and make adjustments to the checklist as necessary. The action plan was implemented over the course of 18 months, which began in August 2018 and ended December 2019, followed by an evaluation of the program. Internal program evaluation was employed as the method of data collection and analysis for this applied research. In conclusion, this applied research study sought to improve the understanding of cooperative teaching and the abilities of special and general teachers in cooperative teaching settings at Centurion Elementary School to deliver instruction to students with diverse needs in a harmonious manner consistent with information gained during the study.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher addressed the following question: How can cooperative teaching methods between general and special educators be improved at Centurion Elementary School?

1. To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices?
2. What elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods?
3. How did group discussions guide the development of the applied research program?

### **Overview of the Study**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter, the Introduction, discusses the significance of the problem and the relevance to the site being studied. Chapter two consists of the Literature Review. In this section, existing research, which supported the

study and the related research questions, is discussed. The literature review is framed around the conceptual framework of the study. Chapter three includes the methods which are used in the research. The methods include data collection procedures, research design, and analysis procedures. Chapter four contains the results of the study. This chapter provides a presentation of the qualitative and quantitative findings, including any tables or figures, and statistics. The final section is chapter five, the Discussion. This chapter includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.



## **Chapter II: Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this applied research study was to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School. This chapter reviews the research on cooperative teaching and inclusion practice of heterogeneous student groups, including teacher and student perceptions, outcomes, and effectiveness of the cooperative teaching model as it relates to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. In nearly every public-school setting, you will see at least one classroom which is considered the “inclusion classroom” for each grade. In much of the geographic area where the research took place, the terminology “inclusion classroom” is used synonymously with general education classrooms with special education services and supports. Because educators held varying views of what it looks like to participate in cooperative teaching in the general education setting, it was necessary to further investigate what is meant by inclusion and cooperative teaching. Inclusion refers to the opportunity for students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers without disabilities. Cooperative teaching, by definition, involves two or more teachers delivering instruction at the same time in the same physical space to a heterogeneous group of students (Friend & Cook, 2004). The review of research sought to determine what teaching practices and factors produced the best student outcomes as a result of inclusive practice and cooperative teaching. The research findings

presented in the literature helped determine appropriate action plan elements for the development of the applied research program.

### **Background of Special Education Laws and Terms**

The idea of including students with special needs in the general education environment is not a new one. The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142) was passed in 1975 and mandated a ‘free and appropriate education for all handicapped children’ (FAPE) (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975). Public Law 94-142 was revised and renamed several times since 1975, with the most recent in 2004 called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, known as IDEA 2004. IDEA 2004 mandated that students should be educated in their least restrictive environment (LRE) (Connor & Ferri, 2007). This law went on to say students with special needs should participate with their peers without disabilities to the greatest extent possible and should only be removed from the general setting when it is not possible to provide an appropriate education for a child with special needs in the general classroom (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). These laws opened doors and paved the way for the classroom structures seen in many schools today, students with special needs and their counterparts without disabilities being educated in one general education classroom environment.

In addition to IDEA 2004, other mandates were put in place to ensure an appropriate education for all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was initially passed as part of the War on Poverty Campaign by Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration (United States, 1965). Like IDEA 2004, ESEA has been revised and renamed several times since 1965. Most notably, in 2001, it was revised and renamed the No Child Left Behind Act of

2001 (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). The purpose of NCLB was “to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002, p. 691). Even more recently, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002) has been replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). This revision put into place more detailed guidelines for student achievement, specifically for students who are disadvantaged, including those with special needs, among others. The ESSA allowed states to set their own general education standards which must be challenging and prepare all students, including those with special needs, to be college or career ready when they exit high school. Additionally, ESSA encouraged innovative approaches to teaching and learning, supporting differentiated learning for all students, based on their learning needs (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

### **Teacher Perceptions**

A large amount of the research regarding cooperative teaching focused on the impact of teacher perceptions of cooperative teaching on outcomes of the inclusive classroom. Many studies found student success in the general education classrooms with special education services and supports depended largely on teachers’ perceptions and understanding of cooperative teaching (Royster, Reglin, & Losike-Sedimo, 2014). Hersi et al. (2016) conducted a case study of three teachers engaging in a cooperative teaching triad and collaboration in a fifth-grade setting. Qualitative inquiry was utilized to examine the positive and negative outcomes of the three teachers’ experiences. The primary focuses were teacher experience and how participation

influences collaboration. The finding of this study revealed the classroom teacher held more value and respect for the reading specialist over the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher, whom she viewed as more of a helper or assistant. The collaborative experience was not as productive as projected due to personal preconceived perceptions of each teacher's role within the classroom.

Similarly, Idol (2006) conducted a program evaluation of four elementary and four secondary schools to determine how special education services were provided. Specifically, the degree of inclusion in each school, parallels (similarities) and discrepancies in services offered from each school, and ways students were supported in the least restrictive environment were evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through teacher, instructional assistant, and principal interviews. Quantitative data gathered from statewide assessments was also examined to determine the effect of testing students with disabilities on the overall testing results of the school. The findings of the program evaluation found both teachers and administrators strongly support the practice of inclusion teaching models, with the support of an extra adult in the general education setting to help all students, not just students with special needs. Teachers held mostly positive perceptions of the practice, with recommendations for more professional development related to inclusion. While test data from students with disabilities did not significantly impact the overall score of the class, it is recommended this test data be reported separately at the district level.

Teachers are more likely to favor cooperative teaching when appropriate supports are in place, such as professional development opportunities on cooperative teaching and common planning times. This was found to be true through a study conducted by Kohler-Evans (2006) on

the attitudes and concerns of secondary teachers toward cooperative teaching. Information was gathered through interview-based surveys. Seventy-seven percent of the teachers surveyed felt cooperative teaching has a positive impact on student learning. Teachers indicated the most influential features of the cooperative teaching relationship are 1) common planning time and 2) a positive working relationship with one's teaching partner. Ninety-seven percent of teachers surveyed said they would participate in cooperative teaching if given the opportunity. The study concluded a majority of teachers have positive attitudes and concerns toward cooperative teaching.

Teacher perceptions were also found to be influenced by external supports in a metasynthesis investigating cooperative teaching structures (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie 2007). Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) included 32 qualitative investigations of cooperative teaching to determine cooperative teaching benefits for both students and teachers. Primarily, qualitative research studies were used in this study, however, quantitative methods were not excluded. Surveys of cooperative teachers, studies focusing on cooperative teaching, reports, and dissertations were included in the metasynthesis. Teachers were favorable of cooperative teaching given the following needs are met: planning time, appropriate training, and student skill level. The unfavorable cooperative teaching method of one-teach, one-assist was found to be the dominate cooperative teaching model in use, with the special education teacher in the subordinate role. The metasynthesis concluded cooperative teachers generally support cooperative teaching, although best practices for cooperative teaching are infrequently observed.

Shevlin, Winter, and Flynn (2013) conducted a study on teachers' attitudes towards the idea of inclusive teaching and what they believe are barriers in creating inclusive teaching and

learning environments. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews of teachers, principals, and support staff. The study concluded teachers were generally supportive of inclusion; however, concerns regarding their own capacity and the capacity of individual schools were noted. It was evident a perception of a positive school environment influenced teachers' beliefs about inclusive practices.

Srivastava, Boer, and Pijl (2017) conducted a study to measure and describe the outcomes of three aspects of inclusive teaching: teachers' attitudes, knowledge of disabilities, and general educator knowledge of inclusive teaching methods. Data to assess attitudes was collected using surveys; knowledge bases were measured using scales developed to assess knowledge of four disabilities. Results of the survey indicated teachers held neutral attitudes toward inclusive practices. The study also found knowledge of disabilities was low while knowledge of inclusive practices was acceptable. The study concludes general educators need additional professional development opportunities in the area of student disabilities definitions and how to address them to foster better student outcomes.

Being closely related, both teachers' and students' perceptions toward cooperative teaching can be dependent on the other. Hang and Rabren (2009) conducted a study on teachers' and students' perspectives and efficacy of cooperative teaching of new cooperatively taught classrooms following the 2004 through 2005 school year. Data included surveys to indicate student and teacher perspectives, observations to determine cooperative teaching fidelity, and review of records to determine efficacy. Positive student and teacher perspectives and significant change in academic and behavioral performance indicate the cooperative teaching

model may be an effective delivery option for instruction of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

### **Pre-service Teacher Perceptions**

Perceptions of pre-service teachers toward teaching students with disabilities in the general education classrooms with special education services and supports can also be manipulated with appropriated training, support, and exposure as supported in the study conducted by Rakap, Cig, and Parlak-Rakap (2017) to determine the impact of two special education courses on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their willingness to work with students with disabilities. Data was collected using a four-part survey administered four separate times during the study. The survey included demographic information and scales measuring opinions regarding students with severe disabilities, willingness to work with those students, and interaction with children with disabilities. The results of the study concluded while one course held significantly larger weight, both special education courses positively influenced teachers' attitudes, willingness, and comfort levels regarding working with students with special needs.

Similar results were found in the Ricci, Zetlin, and Osipova (2017) study on the perceptions of pre-service special education teachers toward collaboration and cooperative teaching during pre-service teaching experiences. Fifty-seven pre-service special education teachers participated in the study. The methods used to gather data included self and peer-evaluations and university supervisor ratings of students' collaboration skills. Pre-service teachers responded to open-ended questions upon completion of fieldwork. Ratings and responses to questions and were assessed using both quantitative and qualitative research

methodology. The outcome of this study concluded pre-service teachers experienced significant positive changes in their perceptions of cooperative teaching and collaboration from the beginning to the end of the study, supporting the need for clinical experiences used to promote motivation, cooperative teaching and planning, and perceptions of the cooperative teaching models.

Practicing educational professionals may also guide the preparation of pre-service teachers for cooperative teaching in the general education classrooms with special education services and supports. Kroeger et al. (2012) conducted action research to increase a school's inclusive teaching capacity through questioning ways to collaborate to benefit student-teachers and their future students. Participants included a myriad of education professionals comprised of researchers, educators, creators, and consumers of knowledge. Data was collected through documentation including detailed notes across the school year, discussion threads and emails, and formal and informal evaluations. Documentation supporting reflection in practice in methods courses was the primary focus. Strauss and Corbin's strategies for grounded theory and open coding was used to organize the data. The study revealed the need to incorporate research and methods of action research into educational practice, as well as a stronger partnership between teacher preparation programs and K-12 entities to create a realistic practicum of cooperative teaching and learnings.

### **Student Perceptions**

One study, (López, Etxabe, & Montero, 2016) which took place in Spain, concluded students with disabilities have an overall positive perception of their educational experiences. López et al. (2016) conducted a study to determine how students with disabilities viewed their own



educational experiences, upon completion of secondary education. Data was collected from students, students' families, and educators through questionnaires. Qualitative and quantitative analysis focused on data provided by students. The study concluded the students hold a positive perception of their educational experiences. Students indicated having friends and receiving help from classmates as well as teachers. Students also noted they had experienced bullying, but also knew how and from whom to seek help. Finally, students highlighted teacher interactions and teaching methods which made learning accessible and meaningful for them, along with approaches which led to the development of their autonomy.

### **Outcomes and Effectiveness**

Another set of studies focused on whether inclusive teaching is worthwhile and valuable to the success of student outcomes. Interestingly, Fruth and Woods (2015) focused on the whether the outcomes for students without disabilities was affected by participating in a cooperatively taught classroom. Fruth and Woods's (2015) research examined the impact of inclusive practices on students without disabilities in the inclusive classroom as compared to students without disabilities in the segregated teaching environment. A post-test only, quasi-experimental design, was utilized to examine the differences, if any, in the students' performance. Results of the study concluded there was no significant difference in student performance in the areas of social studies, science, and reading. However, in the area of math, students in the segregated environment scored a mean of 10.14 points higher than those students in the inclusive environment. Because this study is isolated and narrow in scope, more research is needed validate the results.

Contrasting Fruth and Woods's (2015) research, Tremblay (2013) concentrated the impact of inclusive versus non-inclusive instruction on outcomes for students with disabilities. Tremblay compared two instructional models, cooperative teaching and solo-taught special education for students with disabilities to determine the effect on academic achievement and student attendance. The study included an experimental group of 12 inclusive classes and a control group of 13 special education classes. Performance data were collected from academic assigned resources. However, significant differences were found in the outcomes in reading/writing and attendance. The study concluded the inclusion model to be more effective on student outcomes compared with the special education setting.

In a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of cooperative teaching, for students with disabilities Murawski and Swanson (2001) found inconclusive, leaving room for additional research. The meta-analysis of cooperative teaching research reviewed 89 articles, with six providing sufficient quantitative information to support a calculated effect size. Articles were selected through comprehensive database searches, a hand search of articles cited in review articles, and a hand search of two named periodicals, thirty-seven articles met the criteria of including a teaching method involving both a general and special education teacher in the same classroom. These 37 articles were further analyzed to determine whether they contained sufficient quantitative data to calculate the effect size, included the four characteristics of cooperative teaching: general educators and special educators working together, interventions occurring in the same physical space, co-planning, and delivery of instruction to a heterogeneous group of students; and cooperative teaching occurring for more than two weeks. This analysis left only six articles for the final study. The remaining articles were coded for study

characteristic, sample characteristics, outcome measures on the dependent variables, and effect sizes. The meta-analysis concluded additional research is necessary to substantiate the effectiveness of cooperative teaching for students with disabilities.

Morocco and Aguilar (2002) conducted an analysis of a school-wide cooperative teaching model in an urban middle school, inclusive of students with disabilities placed in heterogeneous classrooms. The purpose of the study was to determine if a single teacher held the primary teaching responsibility, whether cooperative teaching was successful, and what contributed to the success or lack of it. Information was gathered through interviews of school leaders and administrators along with classroom observation data. The study concluded class instruction was mainly delivered by the content teacher while individualized instruction was provided primarily by the special education teachers. However, both teachers in each setting were found to utilize a full range of instructional roles. Cooperative partnerships were more successful under collaborative school structures, when teachers held equal status rules, both teachers were committed to all students' learning and held strong content knowledge.

Because the rise of popularity of inclusive, cooperatively taught classrooms are associated with the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), Nichols et al. (2010) sought to determine whether inclusive classrooms are beneficial or exist solely to meet requirements of NCLB (2001). The study of cooperative teaching in 24 school districts examined whether cooperative teaching produces increased positive outcomes for students with disabilities or whether cooperative teaching models are simply put in place to meet No Child Left Behind (2001) commands. Information was collected through surveys in 24 school districts with the following enrollment: greater than 2,000; between 1,000 and 2,000; less than 1,000.

The study determined general and special education teachers with highly qualified statuses are being assigned cooperative teaching responsibilities without proper prior professional development and support. The findings support the conclusion of cooperative teaching classrooms exist primarily to meet No Child Left Behind (2001) mandates, and less for the purpose of providing quality instruction for students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities.

Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, and Mcculley (2012) conducted a review of research on inclusion and cooperative teaching models, collectively including 146 studies. The articles were used in the meta-analysis based on focus on cooperative teaching or inclusion, a review with either quantitative or qualitative studies, and peer-review. Open coding was utilized to systematically compare data. Findings concluded an organizational structure for categorizing studies: collaborative models, student outcomes, teacher supports, and attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of collaborative models. Named categories may assist school psychologist in providing assistance to teachers regarding inclusion and cooperative teaching practices.

Because cooperative teaching is quite different from solo-taught classroom practices, many educators have raised questions regarding how teachers in cooperatively taught classrooms should be evaluated. Wilson (2005) conducted research on current teacher evaluation instruments and identified the need to develop an evaluation instrument for the cooperative teaching model. Through a review of research and collaboration with a school district and local university the existing evaluation model was assessed through a “cycle of inquiry” during monthly meetings. The team developed and assessed four phases of the observation tool. The outcome of the study resulted in an evaluation tool perceived positively by both teachers and

administrators. Following preliminary use of the new tool, several additional questions were raised, which require further investigation.

Likewise, Wischnowski, Salmon, and Eaton (2004) conducted a study on the implementation and evaluation of cooperative teaching to educate students with disabilities in the general education setting. Data related to student achievement was collected over the course of two years and included student achievement, test modification application, behavior referrals, student self-concept, and teacher and parent satisfaction. The results of the study indicated cooperative teaching support and development is a justifiable means to provide students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum and their peers without disabilities.

An often-overlooked aspect of general education classrooms with special education services and supports is the socialization of all students across academic, physical, and social barriers. Zindler (2009) conducted action research to analyze social inclusiveness of a general education classroom composed of seven students with disabilities and 17 students without disabilities. Based on prior research, the teacher reflected upon the success of the one-year study by considering how successful she was in facilitating meaningful relationships between all students with varying needs and backgrounds (Zindler, 2009). She also evaluated whether it was possible to fully incorporate students with special needs into the social lives of their peers without disabilities. To conduct the research a second-grade teacher took on a new position as part of the inclusion services team, she served as the general education instructor. Data was collected through interviews, sociograms, and observations. Data reflection revealed students with disabilities did gain social status within the classroom, however, it was limited. Despite the intentional move toward a more socially inclusive classroom, the group of students with

disabilities formed their own clique and were not fully integrated into group activities and social circles.

## **Summary**

While there was variance in outcomes among schools, the research concluded the most positive outcomes of cooperative teaching resulted from high-quality teacher preparation and a clear understanding of student needs. The provision of these needs supported positive teacher perceptions of inclusive cooperative teaching. Teacher perceptions were often influenced by their level of topic knowledge; therefore, to increase teacher perception of cooperative teaching, teachers should be provided high-quality professional development in the areas of cooperative teaching models and methods. The research questions were developed with the information from the literature in mind. Researchers shared findings that teachers support cooperative teaching and the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting, given appropriate supports for teachers are in place (Idol, 2006; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Shevlin, Winter, & Flynn, 2013; Srivastava, Boer, & Pijl, 2017). Many of these pointed to teacher-to-teacher collegiality as another important factor which influences cooperative teaching outcomes. Additionally, pre-service teachers' perceptions toward teaching students with disabilities were positively influenced by their training regarding special education during their pre-service experience (Ricci, Zetlin & Osipova, 2017; Rakap, Cig & Parlak-Rakap, 2017). The literature reviewed led to strong conclusions that professional development in the area of cooperative teaching needed to be employed at C.E.S. as part of the applied research action plan. The researcher attempted to identify the elements of professional development

which were most effectively incorporated into classroom teaching practices during the applied research observation cycles.

Teachers desired a better understanding of what is expected of them in the cooperative role through revised teacher growth rubrics which reflect cooperative teaching practices. Based on the information provided through Wilson's (2005) research regarding how teacher evaluation instruments are used in cooperatively taught classrooms, we incorporated a teacher-developed observation tool and explored how the tool aided in the transformation of classroom teaching practices.

The subsequent applied research was employed to enhanced teacher professional development and classroom observations with the use of a teacher designed observation checklist aimed at the improvement of cooperative teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

## Chapter III: Methods

### Introduction

The purpose of this applied research study was to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School. In this chapter the central question to be addressed will be discussed, along with sub-questions which led the process and output data for the program. An explanation of how each question was answered is provided in detail, including who was responsible for implementing each part of the process. This chapter explains how the action plan for the program was developed by stakeholders along with a description of the action plan, including a detailed description of each element included as part of the action plan. Chapter Three concludes with an explanation of the program evaluation which is organized to reflect the evaluation of each research question and includes the methods by which each question was evaluated. The central question addressed is, “How can cooperative teaching methods between general and special educators be improved at Centurion Elementary School?” Additionally, the following questions address each element of the action plan as well as provided a guide for the program evaluation.

1. To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices?
2. What elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods?



### 3. How did group discussions guide the development of the applied research program?

The research site for this applied research was Centurion Elementary School, one of the three elementary schools in Cybertron County School District. Interventions and professional development were provided to all teachers with evaluation focus on fourth and second grade reading teachers, which each includes one general educator and one special educator. This chapter includes a description of the development of the program for the action plan.

Additionally, elements of the action plan are detailed. A program evaluation was used to assess this action plan using process and output data, which are presented as research methods.

#### **Development of the Action Plan**

The action plan for this research was developed out of the need to address cooperative teaching in the general education classroom. Conversations between myself, the superintendent, special education administrator, and principal of Cybertron Elementary School along with teacher observation data led to the decision to proceed with a plan to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers. While adequate teaching efforts were being put forth by each teacher, it was done in isolation, with little collaboration between the pairs. Discussions and suggestions were made among administrators, yielding the decision to discuss cooperative teaching needs with a group of special and general educators. During the group meeting on August 6, 2018, teachers agreed they needed guidance and professional development on how to become better collaborative teachers. The consensus of the group was to begin with being more conscientious of collaboratively teaching in the short term and to establish common planning times between cooperative teaching pairs. In regard to long-term planning, the group requested professional development in the area of cooperative

teaching, and consented to participation, pending scheduling of the professional development session. It was suggested to monitor and observe practices both before and after the professional development and record the results using a checklist to determine whether the interventions were being implemented in the classroom.

Prior to the implementation of the professional development, I discussed with the principal, special education director, and superintendent the utilization of a survey tool (Appendix A) to determine the teachers' perceptions of inclusion and cooperative teaching both before and after professional development and observations took place. We felt the utilization of a survey tool would provide the teachers an opportunity to share their honest feelings about cooperative teaching anonymously and without the pressure of judgement by peers and administrators. Because I served as the special education administrator for Cybertron Elementary School, the survey was job-embedded and necessary to begin to understand teacher misconceptions and hesitations regarding teaching students with special needs in the general education setting prior to providing teachers with supports and guidance. Prior to conducting the evaluation of the data, I obtained Internal Review Board (IRB) approval to use the existing survey data, observation data, and group discussion notes as part of my research evaluation. When asked whether students with mild to moderate disabilities can be effectively educated in regular classrooms instead of special education classrooms, 44.44% of the teachers answered, *Neither Agree or Disagree*. The majority of teachers were neutral regarding this statement, which is reflective of no previous training for educating students with disabilities in the general education environment. In previous years, this type of training was only provided for special education teachers, who were the primary service providers for students with special needs.

Teachers' uncertainty in this topic further supported the need to provide professional development and support in the area of cooperative teaching. Results from this survey are located in Appendix A.

Teacher, school, and classroom observations from the previous school year were used to guide the development of the action plan for this program. The observations showed that some students with special needs were physically in general education classrooms but were not participating or participated minimally with their peers without disabilities. Special education teachers were observed pulling students with special needs to separate classrooms for instruction, sitting in classrooms only with their assigned students, and participating in housekeeping tasks within the general education classroom. Observations of general education teachers revealed minimal interaction with students with special needs, deferring discipline to the special education teacher, and sending students out of the room when they asked for extra help. Follow-up conversations with teachers regarding the observed behaviors revealed they felt untrained in how to handle situations with these students and uncomfortable trying discipline students with special considerations. They felt the special education teacher was better trained, and therefore better able to handle all aspects of educating students with special needs, regardless of the setting. Overall, the general education data exposed fear and uncertainty when working with this group of students, which further supported the need to develop a plan of action to improve cooperative teaching practices.

External research was reviewed in-depth to guide the development of the action plan presented. The overarching theme in a majority of the literature reviewed was the need for quality professional development for general education teachers to become better equipped to

teach students with special needs in the general education classroom. As found in the study by Nichols et al. (2010), our school was using the general education classroom as a place to house students with special needs only to satisfy the obligations of No Child Left Behind (2001), rather than to provide them with maximum access to the general curriculum. Our school's current model was parallel to the one described by Scruggs et al. (2007) who found the one-teach, one-assist model of cooperative teaching to be dominant in most classrooms, along with teachers' identified needs for planning time, training, and student placement in the general education classroom based on skill level. The similarities of our school and teachers to the study motivated administrators to identify the need to build capacity in all teachers to educate students with special needs across multiple environments through professional development. Through the use of a survey tool, Srivastava et al. (2017) also concluded general education teachers are not adequately equipped to teach students with special needs in the general education classroom. The study suggested teachers need additional training and professional development opportunities on disability definitions in order to foster more productive learning environments for the identified students.

Although many of the research articles reviewed focused on the deficits in the general education teachers' knowledge of special needs, group discussions among teachers at C.E.S. led to an agreement to provide supports to both general and special educators. One of the necessary components of successful cooperative teaching identified in the study by Kohler-Evans (2006) was a positive working relationship with your teacher-partner. By providing the interventions to both groups of teachers, they would be able to build collegiality, learn and work together, and collaborate to expand upon the skills learned. Additionally, the administrative team felt this

would diminish the perception of laying blame on one group or the other and minimize animosity between teachers.

### **Description of the Action Plan**

The elements implemented as parts of the action plan were observations along with mentoring, professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, group discussions, a teacher survey tool, and the development of an observation checklist. In combination, these action plan elements were targeted at improving the cooperative teaching practices at Centurion Elementary School.

### **Observations with mentoring.**

The goals of observations and mentoring with teachers were to determine specific areas to be targeted for interventions and to provide the needed feedback to initiate improvement in those areas. Pre-observations included data from the 2017-2018 school year, with the addition of observation data which took place in August and September of the 2018-2019 school year. This data was compared with observation data collected during the program implementation along with ongoing professional development to help determine whether the program met its goal of improving cooperative teaching practices. Observations were completed by the principal of Centurion Elementary School and Cybertron County School District Special Education Administrators. Classroom observations were a part of these administrators' existing job duties and did not require additional time for the purposes of this program. Additionally, using the *Instructional Rounds* model (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; City, 2011) as a guide, two sets of cooperative teaching pairs observed each other during cooperatively taught classroom instruction and provided reciprocal feedback regarding cooperative teaching practices

that were observed. The checklist (Appendix B) teachers and administrators used during observations were unique to the program as they were newly created during the applied research. While the program elements will be ongoing at the research site, the program evaluation began in January 2020 in order to determine the success of the program implementation, potential limitations, and needed improvements for future replication and implementation.

### **Professional development.**

The goal of the professional development was to build teaching capacity and better equip general education teachers to educate students with special needs while working alongside special educators. Special educators also benefited from participating in professional development sessions by learning new information and gaining opportunities to collaborate with and establish positive relationships with general education teachers. Although the special education teachers have participated in instruction and professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, they have experienced limited opportunities to practice those skills with their general education counterparts. As a district special education administrator, I was responsible for planning the professional development sessions, which took place during scheduled district-wide professional development days, and required no additional time from teachers and administrators for the sole purposes of this study. Professional development sessions began in October 2018 with a half-day session presented by Mississippi Department of Education Professional Development Coordinators titled, *Co-Teaching; How to Start in your Building*, (Shelly, 2018). All teachers were asked to participate in this session; only one teacher was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Additional professional development

opportunities will be scheduled based upon emerging needs, as determined through group discussions and observations with mentoring. We continued to utilize the Mississippi Department of Education or the North Mississippi Education Consortium for professional development to be provided at no cost, limiting the monetary resources needed for the applied research program.

Professional development was a key element of this program and was determined to be an area of need, as indicated during teacher group discussions at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Idol's (2006) research also points to professional development in the area of cooperative teaching as a requested need by teachers. In another set of surveys, Scruggs et al. (2007) found that teachers indicated they favored cooperative teaching with the stipulations of appropriate training and planning time were provided. It is clear professional development had the potential to play a pivotal role in the future of cooperative teaching.

### **Group discussions.**

During beginning of the school year and following professional development, administrators and teachers participated in discussions focused on improving cooperative teaching. The goals of each group discussion varied, topics included appropriate discussion meeting intervals, professional development needs, program strengths and weaknesses, and development of an evaluation tool. The evaluation tool was agreed upon by all participants to be reflective of the skills learned during the professional development. During early discussions, the agreed upon tool was a checklist, which was the tool that was developed for use during the program. The principal and I led the group discussions and ensured group goals were met.

These sessions were held after school within the teachers' required working hours on a day agreed upon by participating teachers.

### **Development of an observation checklist.**

Following the October 2018 professional development on cooperative teaching, teachers developed an observation checklist based on the information learned during the session. The checklist was developed as part of a series group discussions. Teachers were asked to review *Co-teaching; How to Start in Your Building* PowerPoint slides, (Shelly, 2018) along with notes from the professional development and provide suggestions for the checklist. Additionally, teachers were provided Marilyn Friend's guidance on cooperative teaching, *Co-Teaching: Creating Success for ALL Learners* (Friend, 2016), which outlines cooperative teaching practices for teachers and administrators and provides guidance for developing a co-teaching checklist. It was anticipated that the teacher-developed checklist would evolve as teachers' capacity in cooperative teaching was expanded and as needs changed during the program. The checklist became part of the school's ongoing observations and will provide support for new teachers in the future.

### **Program Evaluation Data Collection and Analysis Methods**

As the researcher, I collected a variety of data throughout the program. This included formative data gathered during group discussions and observations with feedback as well as summative data collected during end-of-program observations. Additionally, summative data was collected through a survey which assessed teachers' perceptions toward cooperative teaching. The program evaluation mimicked the cyclical implementation of the program; with a model of observations, group discussions, checklist development/revision to be ongoing



throughout the program. In this section I will describe the program evaluation elements as they apply to each research question.

**Data collection tools and instruments.**

This program evaluation utilized a variety of data collection tools and instruments in order to gather, analyze, and triangulate data. Summative data regarding teachers’ perceptions toward inclusion were measured using a survey instrument (Appendix A). Group discussions were formatively and summatively analyzed in the form of document analysis (Appendix C) from notes taken during the conversations. Group discussions led to changes in the program development as formative data was collected throughout the discussion process. The formative data from classroom observations (Appendix B) and feedback also helped guide the program development as changes were made to the checklists to reflect the emerging needs of the teachers during the applied research process. The checklists (Appendix B) were also analyzed summatively and compared with information provided during professional development to determine whether the teaching methods provided through professional development were incorporated into classroom teaching practices (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Research Questions, Data Collections Tools and Explanation Alignment*

Research Question	Data Collection Tool	Explanation
To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices?	Observations and conversations with teachers	Observation data was recorded using a teacher-developed checklist. The checklist was used to develop post-observation conversations with teachers. Notes from the evaluators passing observations and conversations with

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		<p>teachers were recorded as formative data. Mentor/mentee conversations were intended to provide guidance to the mentee teachers regarding cooperative teaching.</p>
	Teacher-developed checklist	<p>The observer used a teacher-developed checklist to guide observations. This simple checklist indicated whether specified components of cooperative teaching were seen during the observation visits.</p>
What elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods?	Classroom Observations	<p>Classroom observations were used to gather information about whether cooperative teaching methods learned during professional development were implemented into classroom practices.</p>
	Teacher-developed checklist	<p>The teacher-developed checklist was developed to mirror skills learned during the professional development. It was used in conjunction with classroom observations to indicate whether cooperative teaching methods learned during the professional development were incorporated into classroom practices.</p>
	Survey Tool	<p>A survey was administered to teachers before the program began (prior to professional development) and again at the culmination of the program. The results of the survey were compared to see if teachers' attitudes toward inclusion changed and in what ways, from the beginning to the end of the program.</p>

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How did group discussions guide the development of the applied research program?	Anecdotal Notes	The evaluator recorded anecdotal notes of group discussions which were used to reflect the comments and suggestions made by teachers during the development of the program.
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**Research questions.**

To address research question one, to determine if classroom observations with mentoring transformed classroom practices, classroom teaching behaviors were evaluated using observations with mentoring. Qualitative data was gathered through classroom observations and conversations with teachers and administrators. The purpose of the observations was to evaluate whether teachers incorporated cooperative teaching strategies learned during professional development into their classroom teaching practices. Each of these aided in the understanding of the processes, hesitations and misunderstandings, implementation, and approaches to improve the program. The observations provided formative data to help guide the implementation of the program as well as summative data to determine whether the program met its intended goal of improving cooperative teaching practices at Centurion Elementary School. The observations were ongoing and incorporated the use of a checklist (Appendix B). The mentoring component of the observations was intended be used to discuss areas of strengths and weaknesses with teachers both before and after observations. Mentors intended to record brief notes outlining discussions with teachers during follow-up mentoring sessions. Teachers were advised to seek guidance from mentors throughout the process.

In order meet the needs of question two, to identify the elements of professional development which directly influenced cooperative teaching methods, a multi-part analysis

involving classroom observations, a teacher-developed checklist, and a survey tool were employed. The data gathered was triangulated to help improve validity of the research by combining information from multiple vantage points (Holtzhausen, 2001). Primarily, classroom observations determined whether the professional development sessions met the intended goals of increasing cooperative teaching practices between general education teachers and special education teachers. The teacher-developed checklist (Appendix B) was utilized in conjunction with classroom observations to provide a concrete representation of the professional development elements observed in the classroom. This was a simple checklist with “Yes” or “No” response indicators, a checkmark was used to indicate practices which were observed and no mark for items on the list which were not seen during the observation. As teachers mastered teaching elements on each checklist, they added new elements to the list and removed elements which had become frequent practices in their classrooms. Essentially, the goal was that the checklist would evolve along with teachers’ mastery of cooperative teaching practices during the program.

Professional development was also evaluated, in part, using a survey tool, Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (Appendix A) (Cullen, Gregory, & Noto, 2010). Teachers were asked to anonymously respond to questions about their opinions as they related to educating students with special needs in the general education classroom. This survey (Appendix A) was administered and used to gather data prior to implementation of interventions, specifically in advance of the initial professional development, and again at the culmination of the program, after intervention cycles had been completed. The qualitative-quantitative dichotomy produced using the outcomes of the completed observation checklists and survey tool

analysis helped determine whether changes in teaching practices took place and provides information about the targeted professional development during the program implementation. Moreover, triangulation of the observation checklists and survey tool outcomes provides the researcher with additional confidence in the results of the applied research (Holtzhausen, 2001), particularly, if the combined results of each element support the existence of a positive change in cooperative teaching practices at Centurion Elementary School. The survey tool was also used to provide summative data which helped determine whether teachers' attitudes toward inclusion changed during the program and in what ways. As the program developer and evaluator, it was my desire to see some of the teachers' thoughts regarding inclusion move away from an isolation model and toward more inclusive ideas.

To determine whether professional development sessions were well developed for the target audience and the specified areas of need, as indicated in question three, the topics presented during professional development were compared to teachers' areas of need which were identified during group discussions held at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The comparison yielded results indicating whether the professional development session topics were reflective of the teachers' needs.

Question three sought to examine how group discussions guided the development of the applied research program. In order to address this, conversations during group discussions were recorded in anecdotal notes (Appendix C) by the evaluator in order to analyze comments made by teachers. Notes included information shared during the conversations as well as the number of teachers who participated and the number of comments made. Teachers were asked to provide feedback throughout the program regarding their own needs, perceived needs of the

program, perceived successes of the program, and other feedback which may have guided the development of the program.

### **Data analysis.**

Data from the observations and mentoring were analyzed to determine whether classroom practices were transformed throughout the process. The checklists (Appendix B) were reviewed and compared to determine whether observations with mentoring were implemented and utilized as intended. Comparisons of completed observation checklists were analyzed to identify data citing specific cooperative teaching practices observed during each visit. The analysis of this data will allow the evaluator to determine whether cooperative teaching practices increased following each cycle.

Results of the observations were analyzed and compared with content presented during professional development to determine whether the desired elements were incorporated into classroom teaching practices. The data from the observation checklist (Appendix B) were examined in a side-by-side comparison with the professional development outcomes (Appendix D). Analyzation of the observation data, triangulated with professional development outcomes, sought to determine what growth trends emerged throughout the process. A strong supporter of triangulation, Denzin pointed out that using multiple methods reveals different aspects of a study, he further suggested multiple methods should be employed in all studies (as cited in Patton, 2002).

The suggestions and feedback elicited from teachers during group discussions (Appendix C) also produced information which was categorized, coded by theme, analyzed as part of the program evaluation, and shared in the program findings. Following the design provided by

Creswell, analyzation of the data was guided by the six steps he outlines (Creswell, 2014). Specifically, once the data was organized and read, it was coded into categories as trends presented themselves. Analyzation of the scribed conversations (Appendix C) helped the evaluator determine whether teachers felt comfortable participating in the discussions as well as provides evidence of teachers' suggestions for improvement. Goals and outcomes of each discussion session were examined to determine whether the group's intended goals were met as part of the program evaluation.

Because the checklists (Appendix B) were developed by teachers based on their teaching needs, it was expected the content of the checklists will evolve throughout the process. As teachers progressed through the items on the checklist, mastered teaching elements were removed, and new ones were added to the checklist. This checklist was utilized during classroom observations to determined which specific components of the professional development were incorporated into classroom practices. Because the checklist was developed based on the professional development content, the results were synonymous with the classroom observations.

Finally, the results of the observation checklist (Appendix B), results of the survey tool analysis (Appendix A), and the content of the professional development (Appendix D) were triangulated to determine whether commonalities existed and whether they supported the intended outcomes of the program. This triangulation of data helped add validity to the research, where data sources used presented a convergence of like information, which added justification to the identified themes (Creswell, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

The development of this action plan evolved out of the need to improve cooperative teaching practices, as discussed by administrators and teachers. Teachers at Centurion Elementary School voiced a desire to serve their students more effectively but felt they did not have the proper training to do so. The group agreed professional development would be the most logical first step in training teachers on how to better serve students with special needs in the general education classroom. From the professional development, teachers' conversations led to the idea to develop a checklist of cooperative teaching practices desired to be implemented in their classrooms. The checklist was designed to be utilized during classroom observations and evolved to reflect teachers' needs. Teachers continued to meet to discuss the progress made in their classrooms as well as to provide suggestions for the program. Teachers helped throughout the development the project in the form of the development of a progressive observation checklist and provided information regarding future professional development needs, as well as served as active participants throughout the implementation process.

In the following chapters, the results and findings of the study are documented. Chapter Four includes the results of the study. This chapter includes a presentation of the qualitative and quantitative findings, including tables and statistics. The researcher hopes to find collaboration and cooperative teaching between general and special education teachers to be increased following the implementation of the program.

The final chapter is Chapter Five, which includes a discussion of the program. This chapter includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. Stakeholder input is included in this chapter in the form of



suggestions for future implementation, which were documented during teachers' discussions throughout the program.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the results and findings of the applied research. I begin with a statement of the research problem, followed by a review of the research, and end with a presentation of the results of the data collection and analysis.

Through my own practice, and using an applied research design with a program evaluation, I examined the problem of improving collaborative teaching in the general education classroom where both students with special needs and their peers without disabilities are instructed at Centurion Elementary School. The purpose of this applied research study was to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School.

In order to address the problem, the researcher began with the following research questions to guide the program: How can cooperative teaching methods between general and special educators be improved at Centurion Elementary School?

1. To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices?
2. What elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods?
3. How did group discussions guide the development of the applied research program?

## **Research**

Using information found in previous research studies to support the program, the current applied research incorporated professional development for teachers in the area of cooperative teaching, along with a teacher-developed observation checklist, and the use of a survey tool. Previous research supported professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, citing that teachers favored cooperative teaching for the purposes of providing inclusive services to students with special needs, but did not feel they were adequately prepared to practice cooperative teaching in their classrooms (Idol, 2006; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Shevlin, Winter, & Flynn, 2013; Srivastava, Boer, & Pijl, 2017). Teachers at the research site, C.E.S., were provided professional development in the area of cooperative teaching in hopes of improving cooperative teaching practices between general educators and special education teachers. Because many teachers are not familiar with what is expected of them in regards to cooperative teaching, yet have a desire to meet academic expectations (Wilson, 2005), the teachers also developed an observation checklist based on the professional development they attended, which was incorporated into classroom observation cycles.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development in the area of cooperative teaching was the guiding element of the applied research program. Because teachers were unsure of what was expected of them as it relates to cooperative teaching, professional development was provided. The professional development was led by Mississippi Department of Education staff and lasted half a day; notes from the professional development are located in Appendix D. The professional development was pivotal in the program, as it provided guidance for teachers as they developed the

observation checklists which were utilized during classroom observations. A majority of the conversations during the teachers' group discussions involved information from the professional development notes.

### **Data Sources**

Data from multiple sources was used summatively to determine whether the applied research program was successful in meeting its goals of improving cooperative teaching practices between general and special education teachers at C.E.S. Formative data was gathered along the way to make informed decisions which guided the program's development and needed adjustments as the program unfolded.

#### **Group discussions.**

Teachers met periodically during the program to discuss their progress toward implementing cooperative teaching elements into their classroom practices. During their meetings, teachers discussed the development of and revisions to the observation checklists. The goal of the group discussions was to allow teachers autonomy in developing the observation checklists which would be used during classroom observations. Group discussions provided formative data which impacted the frequency of group meetings, the omission of administrator-mentor component of the observations, as well as changes to the teacher-developed checklist.

Group discussions were not held at the frequency the teachers originally planned meet. In November of 2018, teachers initially planned to meet after school was dismissed, every other Tuesday. They wanted to meet when all or most of the teachers were able to attend. Unfortunately, the teachers were unable to hold this schedule. Several various factors affected the group's ability to meet every-other-week as they had initially planned. Inability to meet was

affected by teachers' second jobs, children who played sports, other (more pressing) school-related meetings, and other various factors. The teachers decided to change the meeting to a once-a-month frequency, to be held on the second Tuesday of every month. However, they were unable to meet every month as well, and teachers' group meetings were held on an as-needed and as-available frequency. Teachers met a total of five times from January 2019 to November 2019. Four of their meetings resulted in new observation checklists (Appendix B); one meeting resulted in an agreement to continue using the current version of the checklist. Scribed conversations from group discussions can be found in Appendix C.

### **Observation checklist.**

The observation checklists used throughout the applied research was unique to this program and were developed by the teachers at C.E.S. The ultimate goal of the observation checklists was to provide cooperative teachers guidance for classroom practices and clear expectations for classroom observations, information which was absent in the previous teacher growth model (Wilson, 2005). Summative data was gained from the observation checklists in determining whether the cooperative teaching methods learned during the professional development were incorporated into classroom teaching methods and to what extent. The completed observation checklists provided formative data after each observation cycle and aided teachers in determining what cooperative teaching practices were mastered as well as those which need additional practice.

The checklist evolved during the program to reflect the needs of the teachers. The development of the checklist began in January 2019, with the first iteration of the checklist. Teacher relied heavily on the notes from the professional development (Appendix D) to develop

the checklists. They were also provided Marilyn Friend's guidance on cooperative teaching, *Co-Teaching: Creating Success for ALL Learners* (Friend, 2016), to aide in the checklist development. After reviewing the information provided to them, teachers felt the first items they wanted to work toward incorporating into their practices were (a) cooperative planning, (b) both teachers working with all students in the classroom, and (c) shared classroom management.

The teachers used this first observation checklist (see Appendix B) from January 2019 through mid-March 2019. Upon returning from spring break, the teachers revised the checklist (see Appendix B), which was used for the remainder of the school year and at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Using the second checklist, they moved to (a) providing evidence of co-planning, (b) practicing the six co-teaching models learned during the professional development, and (c) observers being able to see the outcomes of their unified classroom management in the classroom. The third draft of the observation checklist (see Appendix B) was developed in September 2019 and was used through the fall. The third observation checklist (see Appendix B) added observer identification after teachers began observing each other, in addition to administrator observations. Checklist elements added were (a) cooperative grouping of all students and (b) addressing students' needs in a shared manner. The six co-teaching models remained the same from Draft 2 through Draft 4 (see Appendix B). The final checklist (see Appendix B) was developed in November 2019 and continues to be used for cooperative teaching observations at C.E.S. The final checklist kept two elements from the previous checklist, (a) the six co-teaching models and (b) addressing students' needs in a shared manner. The third element added was (c) the inclusive instruction of all students. The evolution of the checklists (see Appendix B) was reflective of the changes in teachers' classroom practices.

Teachers rational for checklist elements throughout the process can be found in the scribed conversations of group discussions (see Appendix C). The progression of the observation checklist elements can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

*Observation Checklist, Element Comparison*

Draft 1	Draft 2	Draft 3	Draft 4
No observer identification	No observer identification	Observer Identification: Administrator or Peer Teacher	Observer Identification: Administrator or Peer Teacher
Co-planning	Co-planning, Evidence: (notes)	Cooperative grouping of all students	Instruction is inclusive of all students
General and Special Education teachers work with <u>all</u> students in the general education classroom	General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models: <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one assist <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one observe <input type="checkbox"/> Station Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative/Differentiated teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Team Teaching	General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models: <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one assist <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one observe <input type="checkbox"/> Station Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative/Differentiated Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Team Teaching	General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models: <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one assist <input type="checkbox"/> One teach, one observe <input type="checkbox"/> Station Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative/Differentiated teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Team Teaching
Shared classroom management plan	Shared rules/procedures/classroom management are evident (notes)	Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher	Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher

**Survey tool.**

The survey tool used during the program was adapted from a previous study (Cullen, Gregory, & Noto, 2010) to meet the needs of the current research. The survey, which gauged teachers' attitudes toward inclusion using a Likert scale, provided summative data which helped determine whether teachers' attitudes toward inclusion changed during the course of the program



and in what ways. Teachers responded to 14 statements about the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the general education environment. The response categories were *Agree Very Strongly, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree Very Strongly*. The survey was administered to the teachers prior to participating in professional development in the area of cooperative teaching. The teachers completed the same survey again at the culmination of the program, after the applied action research elements were implemented. The goal of the survey was to determine whether teachers' attitudes toward inclusion changed during the program, and to what degree.

## **Findings**

The findings of the applied research are organized by research questions. I will address each question, including the elements which apply to the question within the explanation of the results.

### **Research question one.**

To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices? Teachers' practices of cooperative teaching were documented as improved during the applied research. Prior to the implementation of the applied research, teachers shared classroom spaces and were observed using what resembled a one teach, one observe type model. However, prior planning and intended purposes were absent from the model. After the implementation of the applied research interventions, observations revealed that teachers incorporated the teaching strategies learned during professional development into their classroom practices, using the observation checklist as a guide. Teachers started with the implementation of collaborative planning and progressed to collaborative teaching methods throughout the process. Initial

observations did not show a great deal of observable improvement in classroom practices, as teachers were in the planning stages and were trying to learn to plan together and teach in a more cohesive manner.

The classroom observations helped teachers make steady progress toward the successful implementation of cooperative teaching strategies in their classrooms. During observations using the first draft of the observation checklist, teachers were observed participating in co-planning 50% of the time. During the use of the second observation checklist, co-planning practices increased to be observed during 68% of the observations. Combined classroom management efforts increased from 60% to 71% from the first checklist to the second. The practice of incorporating the six cooperative teaching models into classroom practices increased from 64% during the use of the second observation checklist to 100% when using the final draft of the checklist. Likewise, the use of the more involved cooperative teaching models, such as team teaching and parallel teaching, increased from the beginning to the end of the program. Teachers used the observation experiences as a way to obtain small goals in order to master the end result of cooperative teaching. The combined results of the observations are found in Appendix B.

Through this process, teachers used self-reflection as an opportunity to improve their classroom practices in the area of cooperative teaching. Teachers became more aware of the gaps in their collaborative instruction and were able to change their teaching behaviors as a result. Teachers shared that being an observer during peer observations helped them improve their thinking about ways to improve their own cooperative teaching partnerships. They preferred peer observations to administrator observations, noting that “It took the pressure down

a notch and helped us when we were working together to plan for the next checklist,” (Appendix C). Toward the end of the program, the teachers shared that they would like to continue using peer observations to help them meet other instructional goals and hoped they could find a way to help other teachers in the school observe each other as well.

The mentoring component of this element was not as effective as I aspired for it to be. During group discussions (Appendix C), teachers noted that they felt more comfortable talking to each other about their practices than they did talking to the mentor/administrator (Appendix C; Appendix E). As a result, the program was adjusted to meet the teachers’ needs for mentoring and peer guidance. The mentors provided brief guidance to the teachers several days prior to observation cycles, and again after the observations in the form of the observation checklist (Appendix B, Appendix E). However, teachers collaborated with each other to discuss how to address the areas of improvement in their classrooms. Teachers’ discussions among each other were not recorded, however, the researcher observed teachers having discussions before and after peer and administrator observations, which led her to believe the teachers were using their discussions as appropriate opportunities to guide and support one another. To avoid breaking the teachers’ trust among each other, the researcher did not inquire about the teachers’ private discussions.

Although the mentoring component was not carried out as initially planned, the teachers’ collaboration toward implementing cooperative teaching in their classrooms is evidence of the organizational improvement within the school setting as a result of the applied research program. The teachers at C.E.S. worked collaboratively to achieve the common goal of improving cooperative teaching practices and indicated they would like to continue use the peer model for

future goal attainment. Peer mentorship and observations was not a teacher practice at C.E.S. prior to the applied research. The teachers' experiences, as a result of the research program, were a direct influence on teachers' desire to continue peer mentoring and observations, an unexpected result of the program implementation.

**Research question two.**

What elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods? The professional development was well received by the teachers who participated in the applied research. Most of the teachers were thankful that they were provided guidance for cooperative teaching. They noted that in the past they had been told to work together in the classroom, but had never been given guidance about how to teach in a collaborative manner (Appendix C). The cooperative teaching PowerPoint (Shelly, 2018) and notes from the professional development (Appendix D) along with Friend's (2016) guidance for developing co-teaching checklists were provided to each of the teachers after the training. They used these as a guide as they developed the cooperative teaching observation checklists. At the culmination of the program, in December 2019, the teachers had created four iterations of the checklist.

Information learned during the professional development was discussed by the teachers during their group discussions and helped guide the development of the observation checklists. They expressed that cooperative planning was the first item from the professional development they needed to work toward implementing. One teacher noted, "We can't teacher together if we don't plan together, so I think we need to do that first," (Appendix C). The idea of co-planning remained on two drafts of the checklist, at which point the teachers felt they were no longer practicing or working toward co-planning, but they were actually doing it in a natural manner.

The first checklist also included, from the professional development, the need for shared classroom management plans. In the past, teachers did not have conflicting classroom management, but it was not unified either. They wanted to become more cohesive in their management of their classrooms and develop a more streamlined plan to do so. Shared classroom management remained on the second checklist as well.

Student/teacher engagement was the next idea from the professional development that influenced cooperative teaching methods. Teachers shared that they commonly work only with students who were in a homogeneous sub-group; general education teachers worked with general education students and special education teachers worked with students with special needs. They agreed they need to work toward more cross-teaching of their students and viewing the students as “ours” rather than “hers.” The teachers revisited the notes from the professional development and remembered the presenter questioning, “Do the students consider us equal?” This led to the teachers’ desire to include ensuring that students’ needs are addressed from both teachers, not just the teacher linked to their homogeneous sub-group. Likewise, the next item from the professional development that teachers focused on was providing instruction to a blended group of students. In the past students had been somewhat ability-grouped, which meant that students with special needs were often grouped together while higher performing students were jointly grouped. The teachers agreed that all students need the opportunity to work with students of differing ability levels, which meant their teaching efforts would also have to adjust to the new groupings. In addition, teachers learned during the professional development that cooperative teaching can help decrease the stigma of resource classes. Teachers worked to ensure that they

provided general classroom instruction that was inclusive of all students in an effort to reduce the amount of time that students left the classroom for resource instruction.

Next, and most clearly present in the data, the six co-teaching models that were the focus of the professional development were found to be implemented in classroom practices. At first, the teachers practiced the easier co-teaching methods of one teach, one assist, and station teaching. Once these became easy habits for the teachers to include in their instruction, the more involved models were practiced. Toward the middle and end of the program, teachers were using more parallel teaching and team teaching. The teacher noted that they enjoyed the dynamic of team teaching, as it was sometimes an exciting break-away from the mundane teacher-to-student teaching style.

### ***Survey tool.***

The results of the survey tool (Appendix A) were very telling regarding the organizational changes and changes in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion during this process. Teachers were asked to complete the survey prior to participating in the October 2018, professional development session, and again at the culmination of the program in March 2020. Eighteen teachers participated in the pre and the post-survey.

As stated in chapter three, when responding to whether students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms rather than in special education classrooms, 44.44% (eight) of the teachers answered, *Neither Agree or Disagree*. On the same statement, four teachers' answers fell in the *Disagree* or *Disagree Very Strongly* categories. Results from the post-survey show improvement in teachers' attitudes toward including students with mild to moderate disabilities in the general education classroom. On the

same post-survey statement 27.78% (five) of the teachers answered *Agree Very Strongly*; only 11.11% (two) indicated *Neither Agree or Disagree*. None of the teachers disagreed to any degree with this statement on the post-survey. This quantitative data indicates teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities in the general education classroom improved during the course of the applied research program. Teachers were also asked to respond to the statement, "Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated." Pre-survey responses indicated 44.44% (eight) teachers selected *Disagree* and 5.56% (one) indicated *Strongly Disagree* with this statement. On the same post-survey item, 11.11% (two) teachers indicated they *Disagree* with this statement; none responded *Strongly Disagree*. Again, the change in teachers' responses indicate movement toward more positive attitudes toward inclusion during their participation in the applied research. On survey statements which addressed teachers' thoughts on including students with mild to moderate disabilities in the general education environment, the post-survey results revealed more teachers were in favor of this type of inclusion than they were on the pre-survey. Likewise, on the post-survey, when teachers were gauged about their hesitations, more teachers disagreed with negative statements regarding the appropriateness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in the general education classroom. Data from the survey tool indicates teachers' attitudes toward inclusion changed in a positive way during the applied action research program.

***Observation checklist.***

The observation checklist provided direct observable evidence of the cooperative teaching practices which were incorporated into the teachers' classroom practices during the applied research program. The checklist items were items which were directly taught during the

professional development. Elements that teachers struggled to implement or needed more time to master were carried over from one checklist draft to the next. Elements that the teachers were practicing consistently were moved off the list and another element was added in its place. Some items were expanded upon from one checklist to the next. For example, on the first checklist co-planning was initiated; this was mostly an unobservable behavior. On the second checklist, evidence of co-teaching was added. The intent was that the observer would be able to tell by the teachers' actions during a lesson that they had collaborated and planned prior to implementing the lesson in their classroom. The observer recorded evidence of the teachers' actions during instruction which were evident of cooperative pre-planning. The checklists evolved from simple to more complex and the teachers' cooperative teaching skills improved throughout the process.

### **Research question three.**

How did group discussions guide the development of the applied research program? Group meetings were planned to allow the teachers time to discuss elements of cooperative teaching with which they were experiencing success or difficulty, to develop and modify the observation checklist, and to discuss the progress of the program as a whole. The discussion sessions were utilized as intended, although not as frequently as originally planned. Teachers used the meeting discussions to make decisions about the program and how elements were implemented throughout the program. The overall goal of the group discussions was to give the teachers autonomy in making decisions regarding the changes they were making in their classroom.

During the first group meeting in January 2019, teachers were reluctant to share their thoughts about how to begin developing a checklist. Teachers at C.E.S. had never been given



this type of autonomy and were accustomed to being given directives, rather than being asked for ideas. After some coaxing, teachers began talking to develop the first observation checklist. During this time, they chose to prioritize the cooperative teaching elements from the professional development, in order of logical order and importance. They elected to begin working on implementing only a few items of most importance to avoid overwhelming themselves with making the necessary adjustments. The researcher's idea of administrator mentoring was discussed. At this time the teachers shared that they would rather talk through their ideas and problems with peer teachers, whom they felt most comfortable with, rather than the administrator as a mentor. The group agreed to proceed with peer mentorship throughout the program and they would consult the administrator as needed. They also used this time to talk about when administrators should begin observation rounds. It was agreed that observations would begin two weeks after the meeting, on a once weekly frequency. The observer would notify teachers two days prior to the observation.

The group met for a second group discussion when they returned from spring break which resulted in another iteration of the checklist. Teachers shared ideas more freely during this group meeting and were able to make progress on the checklist. The teachers decided to enhance two of the items from the first checklist draft and add to it the six co-teaching models. Teachers shared that they felt good about the progress they had made with cooperative planning and the unification of their classroom management plans.

The third group meeting took place during professional development days prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year. During this brief meeting teachers came to a consensus of

retaining the second checklist for use during the beginning of the school year. They did not want to start a new checklist and wanted to give themselves time to revisit the previous list.

During the third group meeting, teachers' discussions led to more involved changes in their checklist. As a result of recent coursework, the researcher introduced the idea of the teachers participating in peer observations, similar to those in the *Instructional Rounds* model (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; City, 2011). The teachers agreed this was a good idea and began reciprocal observations using the checklist they developed.

The final discussion meeting held by teachers took place near the end of the program. They agreed to make small changes to the final checklist and continue peer observations. During this discussion, teachers reflected on the changes they had made in their classroom teaching practices and how the students had responded.

The group discussions were helpful to the development of the program and allowed teachers to have a voice in the changes being made in their school in a way they had never experienced before. Although teachers were guarded and reluctant to voice their opinions, share their experiences, and make decisions during the beginning stages of the program; they opened themselves to more vulnerable conversations in later stages of program development. The evolution of teachers' honesty in later discussions resulted in changes in the way they approached problem solving when adjusting their instructional approaches. An analysis of the teachers' total comments during discussions revealed a total of 110 positive and productive comments were made by the teachers, 25 questions were asked, and nine hesitant or comments of uncertainty were made. Because the teachers ultimately participated in making organizational changes in their practices in a collaborative manner, group discussions were found to be

beneficial to the program and met its intended goals of stakeholder collaboration and organizational improvement.

## **Conclusion**

This applied research provided professional development in the area of cooperative teaching to all teachers at Centurion Elementary School in order to bring about organizational changes in the way teachers planned for and delivered instruction to heterogenous groups of students. Using the information gained from the professional development, teachers developed observation checklists which were used during classroom observation. Classroom observations were conducted by school and district administrators, as well as teachers, mid-way through the program. Teachers used the peer observations to coach one another as well as to prompt reflection of their own cooperative practices. Additionally, teachers responded to a survey designed to gauge their attitudes toward inclusion before the program implementation and again at the end of the applied research. Positive changes were observed in teachers cooperative teaching practices, specifically the number of times teachers were observed participating in cooperative teaching activities within their classrooms increased from the beginning to the end of the program. Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion shifted in a positive direction during the course of the applied research, as well.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I provide the interpretation of the analysis of the program evaluation as it relates the research shared throughout the applied research program. This discussion will include an analysis of the outcomes of each research question and the identification of goals that were obtained throughout the process and factors contributing to the attainment of those goals. Likewise, goals which were not obtained to the expected degree, barriers of the process and goal attainment will be addressed. My conclusions of the program evaluation findings will be detailed. Finally, recommendations for future research and implications will be included.

The purpose of this applied research study was to improve cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School. The researcher, along with the principal of C.E.S. and special education administrators, applied the intervention strategies of professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, the development of a cooperative teaching observation checklist to be used during classroom observations, and teacher group conversations at C.E.S. Two elementary reading classrooms were the focus of the observations; all teachers participated in the professional development, group discussions, and development of the observation checklists.

Four research questions, one overarching question and three sub-questions, guided the study. The leading question asked how cooperative teaching practices between general and special educators could be improved at Centurion Elementary School. The first follow-up

question asked to what extent classroom observations with mentoring transformed classroom practices. The second follow-up question addressed the elements of professional development directly influenced cooperative teaching methods. The final question asked how group discussions guided the development of the applied research program. I will discuss the results of the study as they apply to each question.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Question one.**

To analyze the results of question one, “To what extent did classroom observations with mentoring transform classroom practices?” the teacher-developed observation checklists along with the resulting observations were used to gather qualitative data. Review of the observation data revealed teachers progressively improved their cooperative practices through gradual changes in the checklist development. Observations were implemented once per week, with the exception of six non-consecutive weeks during the process. Teachers were provided a copy of the completed observation checklist after each observation cycle. Comparisons of the observation checklists to the notes from content provided during the professional development revealed the elements of the professional development which were incorporated into their classroom practices. The teachers began with co-planning, unifying their classroom management plans, and making intentional efforts to work with all students in their classrooms. From there, teachers began incorporating the six co-teaching models into their classroom practices. Teachers were eager to add this to their list, but saw that they tended to gravitate to the lower level models of cooperative teaching, such as one teach-one assist and station teaching. However, by the end of the program the teachers were observed practicing parallel teaching and

team teaching. Teachers also felt it was necessary to work toward cooperative blending of students in their classrooms, as well as making additional efforts to ensure the students viewed them as equal teachers, rather than one teacher who is a guest in the lead teacher's classroom. As found in the literature review, students' success is largely influenced by how the teachers perceive one another's roles in the classroom (Hersi et al., 2016).

The mentoring component of this research element was not implemented as I planned. Teachers shared hesitations regarding the researcher's and principal's mentorship roles and requested to be able to consult each other when working through cooperative teaching implementation struggles. Because the researcher was adamant that the teachers were authentic stakeholders in the program development process, she encouraged the teachers to work together, but seek administrators' guidance when needed. Although none of the teachers reached out to the administrators for guidance, the researcher believes they did work together to overcome co-teaching implementation hurdles. This belief is based on the researcher's brief observations (in passing) of teachers working in classrooms and teachers making statements such as, "We're working on our co-teaching plans today," or "We are going to practice our script for team teaching this afternoon." Notes from these informal observations are found in Appendix E.

Growth trends which emerged throughout the applied research process were improved teacher collaboration, enhanced instructional methods (cooperative teaching), autonomy in developing teaching goals, and stakeholder engagement in organizational improvements. Teachers collaborated during planning in a way they had never attempted prior to the implementation of the applied research. While some teachers had previously participated in grade-level planning sessions, they did not regularly participate in active planning between

general and special educators. This co-planning resulted in enhanced delivery of instruction through cooperative teaching goals and outcomes. Teachers worked to intentionally incorporate cooperative teaching in their classrooms. This goal was attained, in part, due to the teachers helping develop the checklist which would be used to evaluate their teaching behaviors. Research has shown that teachers in cooperatively taught classrooms have a desire to know what is expected of them and how they will be evaluated (Wilson, 2005). Through this process, teachers were not only given information regarding cooperative teaching expectations, but they were also active participants in developing the very tool which would be used to assess them. This stakeholder involvement resulted in deeper knowledge and understanding of cooperative teaching processes and observation expectations.

#### **Question two.**

Question two sought to identify the elements of professional development which directly influenced cooperative teaching methods. Primarily, the teacher-developed observation checklist items provided direct evidence of the items from the professional development which influenced cooperative teaching methods. These items are co-planning, shared classroom management, a shared system of beliefs including student/teacher engagement and differentiated instruction, the six models of co-teaching, blended groups of students, shared student responsibility, differentiated instruction, and thoughtfulness of whether the students consider the teachers equal. The checklist items reflected the professional development elements listed. The checklist retained two items from Draft One to Draft Two, the six co-teaching models were added on Draft Two and remained on all subsequent drafts, cooperative student groups and shared responsibility for students' needs were added to Draft Three. The final draft of the checklist retained shared

responsibility of students' needs and added delivery of inclusive instruction in order to decrease pull-out instruction. Items which were repeated on checklist drafts were those which teachers needed more time to master, based on their experiences and results from the observation checklists.

Finally, the professional development was evaluated using a survey tool. The results of the survey revealed teachers' attitudes toward inclusion shifted in a positive direction during the course of the applied research program. The anonymous survey included 14 statements which were answered by teachers before participating in the professional development and again at the culmination of the program. Across the 14 statements, teachers responded *Neither Agree or Disagree* a total 36 times to statements on the pre-survey. On the post-survey the response of *Neither Agree or Disagree* was only noted seven times. More teachers were able to provide a definitive response, possibly due to participating in the professional development and building their knowledge and capacity regarding inclusion and cooperative teaching. Similarly, teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion increased, while negative attitudes toward inclusion decreased. This change in their attitudes toward inclusion could be attributed toward having a better understanding of cooperative teaching methods and inclusion definitions as a result of participating in the applied research and making organizational changes in their school.

### **Question three.**

The final research question asked how group discussions guided the development of the applied research program. During the process of group discussions a few teachers seemed to lead a majority of these conversations. Teacher Three and Teacher Six, Teacher Seven and Teacher Nine were cooperative teaching partners and were observed as part of the program



implementation. Teacher Three made the most comments, 34, during the course of the teachers' group discussions. Her partner, Teacher Six, made 20 comments during the discussions. Teacher Three's involvement in the program, along with her desire to learn to develop capacity in the area of cooperative teaching, may have been the reason she participated during group discussions more than some of the other teachers. Teacher Four, who was not one of the teachers observed as part of the program implementation, made 23 comments during the course of the program. Teacher Three's partner, Teacher Six, made a total of 20 comments during combined group discussion; Teacher Five also made 20 comments. Teacher Seven and Teacher Nine each made 12 comments during the group discussions. While they made more comments than most, their lack of confidence in making the needed changes in their classroom may have contributed to their lower number of comments as compared to the other observed cooperative teaching pair. It is suspected that many of the other teachers did not make as many comments because they were not actively involved in the observation cycles during the applied research process. Some teachers' hesitations regarding sharing input on the checklist and their lack of knowledge was shared during the discussions. On the other hand, Teacher Four and Teacher Five were not part of the observations and shared as many or more comments as Teacher Six. This may be because they both participated in co-teaching in their classrooms, although they were not observed as part of the applied research. However, through their participation in the program, they were invested in improving cooperative teaching outcomes in their classrooms. While some teachers made no comments during the process, discussions were productive and elicited appropriate observation checklists which were used to evaluate the teachers' incorporation of cooperative teaching practices in their classrooms.

During the process of the checklist development, teachers became active participants in changes being made in their classrooms. This type of stakeholder involvement provided the teachers with a voice in making school-wide instructional changes. They also experienced authentic autonomy when making suggestions for the program changes and implementation. The goal of improving cooperative teaching methods was attained during the applied research, in part, due to the teachers' ability to share ideas and make changes to the program, rather than having changes imposed on them by administrators.

### **Limitations**

During the program, minor changes were made to the delivery of the teacher survey which assessed their attitudes toward inclusion. Qualtrics was used to distribute the survey tool to the teachers and to analyze the survey results. During the course of the applied research, the accessibility requirements changed from the time the researcher administered the pre-survey to the administration of the post-survey. While the teachers were asked to respond to the same statements using a Likert scale on each survey, the formatting was enhanced on the post-survey. Qualtrics accessibility measures required the scale anchors to accompany each question on the post survey, which possibly led to better understanding of the questions and response indicators than the way the scale anchors were displayed on the pre-survey. The pre-survey scale anchors were displayed at the top of the survey and required the respondents to scroll up and down throughout the survey to see the responses categories. The favorable outcomes on the post-survey may be contributed, in part, to the respondents' ability to better view the survey response categories as a result of the enhancements to accessibility features made by Qualtrics.

As a school and district-level administrator, I must acknowledge the possibility of social desirability bias present in the applied research. Teachers at Centurion Elementary School were given information regarding the applied research and were given the option to elect to participate or withhold their participation. However, it must be considered, some teachers may have consented to participate in an effort to meet the researcher's expectations, based on their subordinate roles in the school setting. Although no teachers shared any negative thoughts or feelings regarding participation, the possibility that they only participated because they did not want to disappoint the researcher is a valid consideration.

### **Program Evaluation Standards**

To appropriately determine applicable program improvements, each of the 5 program evaluation standards must be addressed, in consideration of how they pertain to this applied research program. The goal of utilizing The Program Evaluation Standards is to provide a thorough evaluation of the program, which will, "foster human learning and performance across the life span," (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011). The 5 standards are utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability. The information that follows will assess the applied research program evaluation using these standards in order to determine whether the program was sufficient for its intended outcomes.

#### **Utility.**

The first standard to be addressed is utility, which evaluates the program's value or usability. This project gave teachers a voice in making decisions which would affect changes in their teaching practices. Through their collaboration during their program, the teachers were able to achieve the program's goal to improve cooperative teaching methods between general

and special educators. Organizational changes also occurred through teacher involvement in the decision-making processes throughout the program implementation. Teachers created multiple versions of observation checklists which were used in their classrooms to help determine what cooperative teaching practices were being implemented during the course of the program. Because teachers were stakeholders who played large roles as both developers of and participants in the program, stakeholders understood the goals and desired outcomes of the program.

### **Feasibility.**

Feasibility is the second standard which will be used to assess the program. Feasibility assesses the program's project management, practicality, contextual awareness, and use of resources (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Feasibility considerations for implementation of a similar project are numerous. A main consideration is who and how the program will be managed. Will school and district administrators allow teachers to make suggestions and changes to the program design? Administrators should consider whether the faculty is willing to identify deficiencies in their practices and adopt procedures to modify their teaching practices. Another factor is the school's programs which are already in progress and whether there is enough time and dedication to facilitate and carry out a new program with a lengthy process. The context of the program and whether stakeholders will consider the program a valuable use of their time is another factor to contemplate when determining whether this program is feasible for your school site. Finally, the resources needed to support the program should be well thought out prior to implementation. In this program, we were able to use professional development which was no cost to the school. Likewise, teachers and school and district leaders were invested in the

program and the activities they participated in were job embedded and did not require additional funding. While several items should be considered when planning a program similar to the one presented, many of these are straightforward and would be feasible to replicate. This program could be replicated in another setting with reasonable considerations in place.

### **Propriety.**

Propriety involves the ethical implementations of the program, with a focus on “What is proper, fair, legal, right, acceptable, and just in evaluations” (Yarbrough et al., 2011). A major concern is the privacy, protection, and ambiguity of the program participants. This project ensured the protection of all participants and gained approval of the Internal Review Board (IRB) prior to implementation. Teachers were provided with information about the program and gave consent prior their participation. Information gained from teachers’ survey responses was anonymous and group discussions were deidentified by the evaluator prior to reporting the results. Information gained during classroom observations was anonymous, as no names were ever recorded. The information was only used to facilitate talking points and to identify the group’s areas of growth and weaknesses during the program. Throughout the program, stakeholders’ input was elicited and program administrators were responsive and accommodating to their needs.

### **Accuracy.**

The fourth program evaluation standard is accuracy. Accuracy of the program’s results depend on the information presented to be reliable and consistent. Accuracy requires that the information presented in the evaluation is truthful. It must present sound theory, methods, designs and reasoning (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Multiple sources of data collection were used to

evaluate this program. Data was gathered from classroom observations recorded through the use of teacher-developed checklists, a teacher survey tool, group discussions, and notes from professional development. Some mentoring data was affected by the teachers' recommendation that mentoring sessions not occur between administrators and teachers, but requested that the teachers collaborate among themselves to work through problems. As a result, mentoring data is minimal. Because the teacher-developed survey tool evolved as teachers' needs changed throughout the program, the results were not linearly comparable from the beginning to the end of the program. However, results were able to be calculated and the number of times teachers were observed participating in cooperative teaching methods in their classrooms increased during the program. Results of the combined observations are found in Appendix B. The information gathered from all data sources was triangulated to determine whether the program met its goal of improving cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at Centurion Elementary School.

### **Accountability.**

Evaluation accountability provides the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on the processes involved in the evaluation as a means to support program accountability. Evaluation accountability includes analysis of implementation, improvement, significance, and cost to benefit analysis (Yarbrough et al., 2011). The evaluation of this program and its findings included gathering data from multiple sources, as outlined in the methods in Chapter III; the results of those findings were detailed in Chapter IV. Although there were limitations noted in the applied research, there is sufficient documentation to support the findings of the applied research. When analyzing findings, the researcher triangulated the data derived during the

program implementation to support all findings. The current applied research program contributes to the existing literature in that it supplies evidence to support the direct approach of providing teachers with intentional professional development for the attainment of identified outcomes and engaging stakeholders in organizational improvements.

### **Next Steps**

The purpose of this applied research was to improve cooperative teaching practices between general educators and special education teachers at C.E.S. Although the applied research program is complete, the researcher and school administrators evaluated the components of the program which should continue in order to sustain the organizational growth which was accomplished during the program. For the program to meet its goal of organizational improvement, teachers need to continue to receive the support needed for continuous growth and to build capacity within their setting.

In an effort to continue utilizing and expanding upon the information found through this applied research, I would like to continue using the observation cycles at C.E.S. to help teacher to continue to strengthen their cooperative teaching practices. Further, I would like to share the information learned through our applied research practices to implement the program at other schools within our school district. When repeating the program within our district, I plan to work more intensely with teachers through additional professional development and training to ensure the appropriate cooperative teaching methods are put in place in their classrooms.

### **Professional development.**

School and district leaders are committed to providing teachers and students with the tools they need to be successful across multiple settings. This program was pivotal for C.E.S.

because it provided training on a topic which was historically considered only a special education concern to both special and general education teachers. Likewise, further professional development is recommended for all of the teachers at C.E.S. The Mississippi Department of Education recently released the Access for All Guide (Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education, 2019), along with site-based training for using the guide. The purpose of the guide is to supply teachers with information on providing accommodations and modifications for all students in the general education setting. The training is intended for both general and special education teachers and will expand on their working knowledge of inclusive instruction.

### **Observations.**

During the program, teachers expressed the desire to continue to observe other teachers during classroom instruction. The idea of reciprocal observations supports the ideas presented in the instructional rounds model as an approach to improve teaching and learning outcomes (City et al., 2009). This practice also allows teachers, who may otherwise be confined to their individual classrooms, to develop collegiality among other teachers in a more meaningful and purposeful way while improving the outcomes of the school as a whole. Additionally, it is thought by the researcher that peer observations may be helpful for first-year teachers who tend to become nervous when administrators enter their classrooms.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Schools within and outside of Cybertron School District may consider using this program as a model for improving cooperative teaching methods between general educators and special education teachers at their site. It is recommended that administrators ensure the teachers are



genuinely interested in making the necessary changes to their teaching practices. Without so-called “buy-in,” the program will not yield the desired results. Teachers at C.E.S. dedicated their efforts to the planning and implementation efforts necessary to see the anticipated changes in their classrooms. Additionally, the school principal needs to make intentional co-teacher pairings when possible. In order for teachers to be able to successfully teach together, they need to have compatible personalities and a shared system of beliefs (Shelly, 2018).

Professional development in the area of cooperative teaching was the component which this program hinged upon. The teacher-developed checklists were based on the skills learned during the professional development, as was the teacher survey tool, and group discussions. Should this program be replicated, it is recommended that more professional development in the area of cooperative teaching be provided to teachers. During the development of this program, it was said that additional professional development would be provided if it was requested by teachers. However, the researcher and school administrators feel professional development should have been provided to the teachers at least once per academic year to reinforce previously learned skills and introduce new information as it becomes available. Multiple instances of professional development in the area of cooperative teaching, as well as training on incorporating the use of High-Leverage Practice in Special Education (McLesky et al., 2017) are recommended for future research models.

### **Recommendations for Educational Leadership**

Currently, in Mississippi, where this applied action research took place, there are no guidelines governing the amount of training an administrator must complete prior to becoming a special education administrator. Anyone with administrative and special education

endorsements may be appointed to the position, which happens often. Prior to becoming a special education director, I was fortunate to have had several years of classroom experience as a special education teacher, which provided me with an abundance of working knowledge regarding special education that would benefit in my new role. Sadly, many administrators enter the role of special education administrator with little to no experience in the realm of special education and the vast needs of the students whom they will serve. The problem presented in my research and resulting outcomes paint a detailed portrait explaining the importance of education leadership programs for special education administrators, as well as the possible implications resulting from a leader's lack of knowledge regarding special education. More guidance is needed from the Mississippi Department of Education to enhance education leadership programs in the area of special education administration.

## **Conclusion**

During this program, teachers at Centurion Elementary School improved their cooperative teaching practices through participating in professional development, group discussions about cooperative teaching, and developing an observation checklist which was used during classroom observations. Teachers were given a voice which, in turn, gave them a sense of control over the changes which were implemented in their classrooms and practices. Teachers were true stakeholders in the process of designing and implementing this program. Although it was not part of the research evaluation, it is thought that teachers were more responsive and engaged in this program because they felt they were valued as developers who contributed to the program's design elements.

While much progress was made during the implementation of the applied research program, we will continue our efforts to improve cooperative teaching practices at C.E.S. and within Cybertron School District. Organizational outcomes of this program surfaced as enhanced internal professional development through teachers' group discussions, teachers mentoring one another, and reflective practices prompted through peer observations based on the instructional rounds model (City et al., 2009; City, 2011).

The leadership practices implemented during this program provided teachers with support to make the needed changes in their classrooms, as well as giving them the tools and guidance needed to become change-makers and teacher-leaders within their school. Prior to this program, the teachers knew changes were needed, but were unsure of the appropriate steps to facilitate those changes. When provided with supportive leadership, professional guidance, and autonomy in changing-making decisions, the teachers at C.E.S. were able to thrive throughout the transformative process of becoming active cooperative teaching partners.

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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A**

## Default Report

### *Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion - Pre*

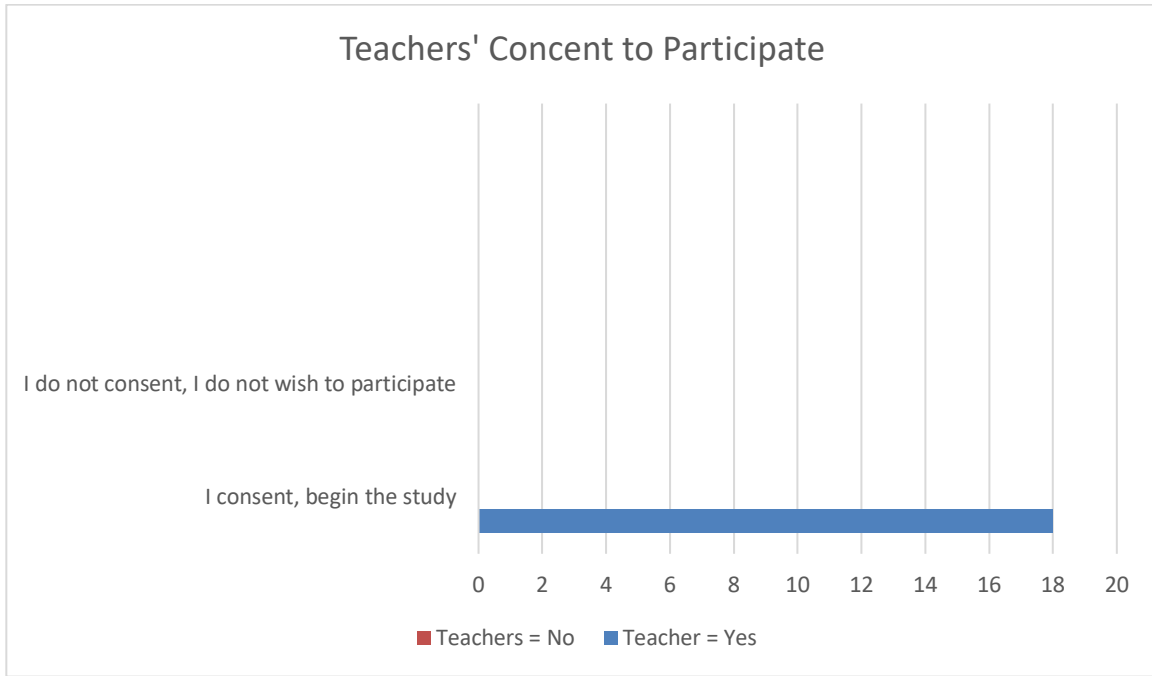
October 9, 2018

Welcome to the research study! We are interested in understanding inclusion teaching practices and student outcomes. You will be presented with information relevant to inclusion classrooms and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The study should take you around [5 MINUTES] to complete, and you will receive gratitude for your participation. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail [krruth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:krruth@go.olemiss.edu).

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

Directions: The purpose of this confidential survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. It also contains questions pertaining to your beliefs about professional roles, attitudes toward collegiality, and perceptions of the efficacy of inclusion (i.e., whether or not you believe that inclusion can succeed). Because there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these items, please respond candidly.

Definition of Full Inclusion: For the purposes of this survey, full inclusion is defined as the integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities into the regular classrooms for 80% or more of the school day. Under federal special education law, mild to moderate disabilities include Learning Disabilities; Hearing Impairments; Visual Impairments; Physical Handicaps; Attention Deficit Disorders; Speech/Language Impairments; and mild/moderate Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Autism, or Traumatic Brain Injury.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Count
1	All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.	1.00	7.00	2.39	1.57	2.46	18



<b>2</b>	<b>It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classroom in order to meet their educational needs.</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3</b>	Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	2.00	6.00	4.22	1.08	1.17	18
<b>4</b>	Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate special disabilities.	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.12	1.25	18
<b>5</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	1.00	7.00	3.78.	1.36	1.84	18

<b>6</b>	Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).	1.00	5.00	3.00	1.29	1.67	18
<b>7</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.	3.00	7.00	5.11	0.94	0.88	18
<b>8</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	3.00	7.00	4.61	1.11	1.24	18
<b>9</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills	2.00	7.00	4.83	1.07	1.14	18

necessary for success.

<b>10</b>	I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	3.00	7.00	4.83	0.96	0.92	18
<b>11</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	1.00	6.00	3.44	1.30	1.69	18
<b>12</b>	All students benefit from team teaching; that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.	1.00	7.00	3.11	1.37	1.88	18
<b>13</b>	The responsibility for educating students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classroom	1.00	7.00	2.50	1.46	2.14	18

should be shared between general and special education teachers.

<b>14</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in a regular classroom.	1.00	7.00	3.22	1.36	1.84	18
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#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Count	
<b>#</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Agree Very Strongly</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree Very Strongly</b>
<b>1</b>	All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped	38.89% (7)	16.67% (3)	33.33% (6)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)

	peers to the fullest extent possible.							
2	It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classroom in order to meet their educational needs.	11.11% (2)	22.22% (4)	33.33% (6)	5.56% (1)	27.78% (5)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
3	Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	0.00% (0)	11.11% (2)	11.11% (2)	27.78% (5)	44.44% (8)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)
4	Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate special disabilities.	11.11% (2)	27.78% (5)	38.89% (7)	11.11% (2)	11.11% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)

5	Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	11,11% (2)	0.00% (0)	22.22 % (4)	44.44% (8)	16.67% (3)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)
6	Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).	16.67% (3)	16.67% (3)	33.33 % (6)	16.67% (3)	16.67% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
7	Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	11.11% (2)	61.11% (11)	11.11% (2)	11.11% (2)

	because they will require too much of the teacher's time.							
<b>8</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	22.22% (4)	16.67% (3)	44.44% (8)	11.11% (2)	5.56% (1)
<b>9</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	5.56% (1)	11.11% (2)	61.11% (11)	11.11% (2)	5.56% (1)
<b>10</b>	I find that general education teachers often do not	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	16.67% (3)	0.00% (0)	72.22% (13)	5.56% (1)	5.56% (1)

succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.

<b>1</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	5.56% (1)	16.67% (3)	38.89% (7)	11.11% (2)	22.22% (4)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)
<b>1</b>	All students benefit from team teaching; that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.	11.11% (2)	16.67% (3)	44.44% (8)	16.67% (3)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)
<b>1</b>	The responsibility for educating students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classroom	33.33% (6)	11.11% (2)	44.44% (8)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)



should be shared between general and special education teachers.

<b>1</b>	I would	11.11%	11.11%	44.44	2.22%	5.56%	0.00%	5.56%
<b>4</b>	welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in a regular classroom.	(2)	(2)	% (8)	(4)	(1)	(0)	(1)

Default Report

*Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion - Post*

March 3, 2020

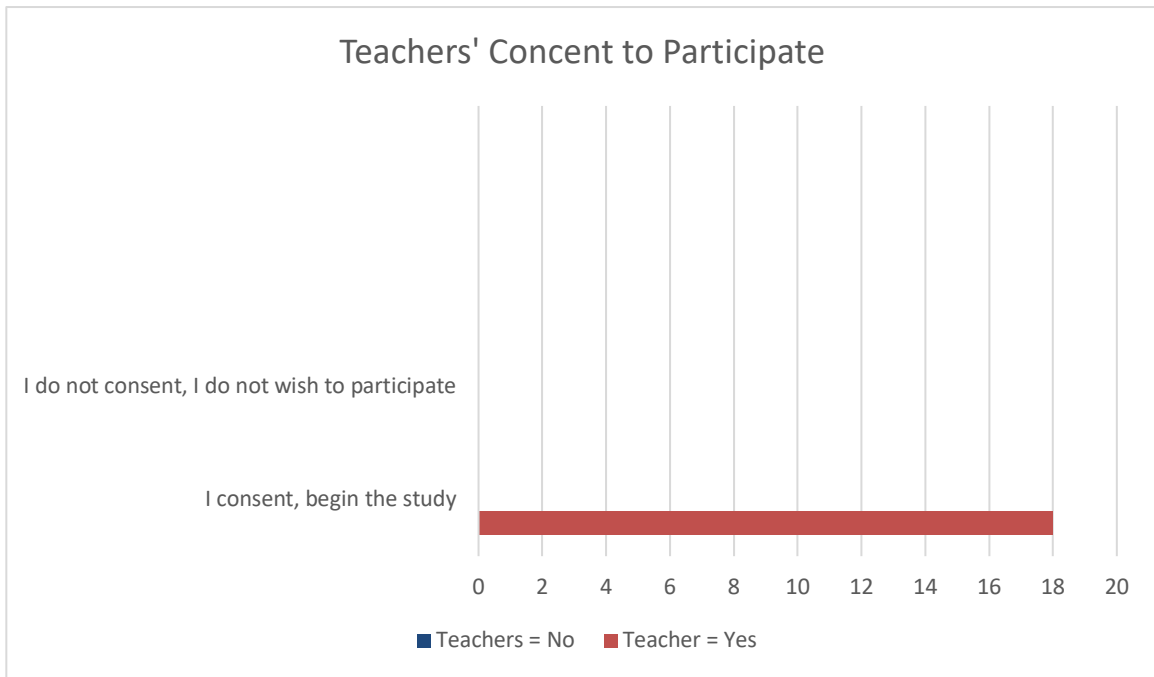
Welcome to the research study! We are interested in understanding inclusion teaching practices and student outcomes. You will be presented with information relevant to inclusion classrooms and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The study should take you around [5 MINUTES] to complete, and you will receive gratitude for your participation. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail [krruth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:krruth@go.olemiss.edu)

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

Directions: The purpose of this confidential survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. It also contains questions pertaining to your beliefs about professional roles, attitudes toward collegiality, and perceptions of the efficacy of inclusion (i.e., whether or not you believe that inclusion can succeed). Because there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these items, please respond candidly.

Definition of Full Inclusion: For the purposes of this survey, full inclusion is defined as the integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities into the regular classrooms for 80% or more of the school day. Under federal special education law, mild to moderate disabilities include Learning Disabilities; Hearing

Impairments; Visual Impairments; Physical Handicaps; Attention Deficit Disorders; Speech/Language Impairments; and mild/moderate Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Autism, or Traumatic Brain Injury.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Count
1	All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.	1.00	5.00	1.83	1.07	1.14	18

<b>2</b>	<b>It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classroom in order to meet their educational needs.</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3</b>	Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	1.00	5.00	2.72	1.15	1.31	18
<b>4</b>	Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate special disabilities.	1.00	3.00	2.11	0.74	.54	18
<b>5</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	1	4.00	2.33	1.00	1.00	18
<b>6</b>	Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).	1.00	5.00	2.17	1.07	1.14	18
<b>7</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with	4.00	7.00	6.61	0.83	0.68	18

	non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.						
<b>8</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	3.00	7.00	5.33	1.15	1.33	18
<b>9</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	5.00	7.00	6.00	0.82	0.67	18
<b>10</b>	I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	5.00	7.00	5.72	0.73	0.53	18
<b>11</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	1.00	5.00	2.22	1.03	1.06	18
<b>12</b>	All students benefit from team teaching;	1.00	3.00	2.00	0.82	0.67	18

that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.

<b>13</b>	The responsibility for educating students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classroom should be shared between general and special education teachers.	1.00	4.00	2.00	0.94	0.89	18
<b>14</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in a regular classroom.	1.00	4.00	2.28	0.87	0.76	18

#	Field	Agree Very Strongly	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	#
<b>1</b>	All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in	50.00% (9)	27.78% (5)	16.67% (3)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	1

	regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.							
<b>2</b>	It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classroom in order to meet their educational needs.	16.67% (3)	33.33% (6)	38.89% (7)	0.00% (0)	11.11% (2)	0.00% (0)	2
<b>3</b>	Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	16.67% (3)	22.22% (4)	44.44% (8)	5.56% (1)	11.11% (2)	0.00% (0)	3
<b>4</b>	Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with	22.22% (4)	44.44% (8)	33.33% (6)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	4

	mild to moderate special disabilities.							
<b>5</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	27.78% (5)	22.22% (4)	38.89% (7)	11.11% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5
<b>6</b>	Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).	33.33% (6)	27.78% (5)	33.33% (6)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	6
<b>7</b>	Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	44.44% (8)	33.33% (6)	7



	regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.							
<b>8</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	11.11% (2)	5.56% (1)	38.89% (7)	27.78% (5)	8
<b>9</b>	I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	33.33% (6)	33.33% (6)	9

<b>10</b>	I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	00.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	44.44% (8)	38.89% (7)	10
<b>11</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	27.78% (5)	33.33% (6)	33.33% (6)	0.00% (0)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	11
<b>12</b>	All students benefit from team teaching; that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.	33.33% (6)	33.33% (6)	33.33% (6)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	12
<b>13</b>	The responsibility for educating	38.89% (7)	27.78% (5)	27.78% (5)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	13

	students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classroom should be shared between general and special education teachers.							
<b>14</b>	I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in a regular classroom.	22.22% (4)	33.33% (6)	38.89% (7)	5.56% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	14

## **Appendix B**

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning
- General and Special Education teachers work with all students in the general education classroom
- Shared classroom management plan

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning
- General and Special Education teachers work with all students in the general education classroom
- Shared classroom management plan

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning
- General and Special Education teachers work with all students in the general education classroom
- Shared classroom management plan

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning
- General and Special Education teachers work with all students in the general education classroom
- Shared classroom management plan

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning, Evidence:
- Shared rules/procedures/classroom management are evident (notes)
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning, Evidence:
- Shared rules/procedures/classroom management are evident (notes)
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Co-planning, Evidence:
- Shared rules/procedures/classroom management are evident (notes)
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:**  Administrator  Peer Teacher

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Cooperative grouping of all students
- Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

NOTES:

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**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:**  Administrator  Peer Teacher

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Cooperative grouping of all students
- Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

NOTES:

**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:**  Administrator  Peer Teacher

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Instruction is inclusive of all students
- Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

NOTES:

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**Date of Observation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:**  Administrator  Peer Teacher

**Observing:**  Class 1  Class 2

- Instruction is inclusive of all students
- Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher
- General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models
  - One teach, one assist
  - One teach, one observe
  - Station Teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - Team Teaching

NOTES:



## **OBSERVATION RESULTS:**

**Results noted as:** Number of times observed /out of/number of observations completed

### **Observation Checklist: Draft 1**

**(50%) 5/10** Co-planning

**(90%) 9/10** General and Special Education teachers work with all students in the general education classroom

**(60%) 6/10** Shared classroom management plan

### **Observation Checklist: Draft 2**

**(68%) 19/28** Co-planning, Evidence:

**(71%) 20/28** Shared rules/procedures/classroom management are evident (notes)

**(64%) 18/28** General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models

**(28%) 8/28** One teach, one assist

**(36%) 10/28** One teach, one observe

Station Teaching

Parallel teaching

Alternative/differentiated teaching

Team Teaching

### **Observation Checklist: Draft 3**

**(72%) 13/18** Cooperative grouping of all students

**(83%) 15/18** Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher

**(67%) 12/18** General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models

One teach, one assist

One teach, one observe

**(39%) 7/18** Station Teaching

**(28%) 5/18** Parallel teaching

Alternative/differentiated teaching

Team Teaching

### **Observation Checklist: Draft 4**

**(90%) 9/10** Instruction is inclusive of all students

**(90%) 9/10** Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher

**(100%) 8/10** General and Special Education teachers teaching using one of the co-teaching models

**(10%) 1/10** One teach, one assist

One teach, one observe

**(20%) 2/10** Station Teaching

**(30%) 3/10** Parallel teaching

Alternative/differentiated teaching

**(40%) 4/10** Team Teaching

## **Appendix C**

R: Hello everyone today we are meeting to discuss how we want to create an observation checklist based on the PD we received in October from MDE. We've talked about it briefly before, when we did the PD - I emailed you all the PowerPoint and notes from the PD along with some additional checklist development guidance. So, today we are meeting to collaborate on the checklist. Mrs. P and I will work with you – specifically the ones we are observing, and we will mentor you, We will talk with you before and after the process to help through the process and answer your questions. Does anyone have any questions? Does anyone have any ideas?

T1: I'm not sure about how we should do it. I don't want to say something and it be wrong.

T2: I don't think we should do too much, it will be a lot to work on. Just like when we create behavior plans, I think we should just pick just a few important items for the checklist.

T3: Can I just say, I'm so glad we had that presentation! They've been saying co-teach, co-teach forever, but no one has ever told us what that means or what we're supposed to do.

*...teachers mumble in agreement with "Yeah", "Me too", "I knew some of it, but all that", and Other positive comments...*

T3: I think we need to work on planning together. We can't teach together if we don't plan together, so I think we need to do that first.

T4: In the PD, they explicitly said that planning isn't a part of cooperative teaching.

T3: No, they said it is.

T5: Yeah, you do have to plan together.

*...brief silence...*

R: Let's look back at the slides and notes. Does everyone have that with you?

*...teachers nod heads yes, responds with affirmative remarks...*

R: We all should have reviewed the notes before meeting today, but let's take about five minutes to look over our notes and slides and make sure we all understand/remember what the expectations of cooperative teaching are.

*...wait time...*

T4: Oh, I see. they were talking about supported instruction, not co-teaching. I guess I was wrong, because it does have here that we should plan together. Okay, so we should add that.

T3: That's what I was thinking.

T6: I don't want to be rude, so please don't think I am. I was just thinking about something you said before, do you care if we just talk with each other, like, - in place of the mentoring? Sometimes, I just feel like it's easier to talk it out with T3. I don't know, I'm just more relaxed that way. I'll be able to talk better.

T3: Yeah, I see what you're saying, but I don't want to mess up your thing (to R).

R: No, if that's how you feel, this is for you. I don't want to force something on you that you're not comfortable with. I want this process to help you, not make you uncomfortable. So, what if we say this, you can talk with each other – I don't know if we'll really call that mentoring, but that's fine. IF you need me, I want you to come to me. I'll just check in with you before we do observations, just a simple, 'Hey, I'm coming to observe in a couple of days. Do we need to talk about anything before I come?' Does that sound good? And then afterward I can do the same thing and give you a copy of the observation. Is that ok with everyone?

T7: I think I'd feel better with that too.

T9: and we can ask you if we need something, but don't have to do it every single

- week. Because I think, if we can just use the notes and PowerPoint, we can figure it out.  
And hey, look, sometimes we're going to complain, and you don't need to hear it. Laughs  
*...teachers chuckle...*
- R: I'm fine with all of that; I'll make a note of it. I don't want any of you to worry about it, about me being upset or anything. I get it, sometimes I need to just talk to someone close, who I trust, to talk about what I need help with or just to gripe. I get it.  
Moving on... Okay, what else do we want to work on?
- T6: Well, I am a sped teacher and I think we need to do better with working with my students in the regular classroom. I'm always the one who works with them and that's not fair. I mean, not fair to them since they are in the regular room too. They shouldn't have to wait on me to do their work with them. And on #23 it says the teachers should share the classroom and provide instruction to a blended group of students, and that two teachers are actively engaged in instructions. I think that means we are both teaching all of them.
- T5: I think that's a good idea. I know in my room we aren't always doing that. It's more like I teach my kids and she just works with hers.
- T1: I'm just going to go with what y'all say because I don't know.
- R: Ok. So, let's add, Work with all students in the gen ed environment, right?
- T7: And where it says what co-teaching is NOT, we are mostly doing that right now. I mean, I don't want to throw anyone under the bus or anything, but if we are going to work on it...
- T9: Well, I work with sped kids and I feel like we don't always do right with our rules. It did mention classroom management in there too.
- T4: Yeah, it says you should have shared classroom management to start with.
- T10: That would help us instead of having one thing in my room and something else in hers.
- R: We have co-planning, both teachers working with students, and classroom management. Do we want to add anything else?
- T2: I think we need to let that be it. We don't want to get too much with all of our other things we have to do, too.
- T3: When will y'all start coming in our rooms? Not this week, I hope.
- R: When do you all think it would be a good time to start?  
*...teachers discuss among each other...*
- T6: I say we need at least a week or so.
- T5: Let's say two weeks before we will start observations. That give us time to decide how we want to start working before you come in the classrooms. How many times will you come?
- T7: Like once a week?
- T3: I think one time a week is good. I don't think more than that.
- T4: Yeah, once a week is good with me too.
- R: So we are saying that we will start observations in two weeks, one time per week, correct?  
*...teachers agreed...*
- R: Do we need to discuss anything else before we dismiss? I'll get this checklist typed up and emailed to all of you so you can look at it to guide your plans and instruction. We talked about this some before, remember we want everyone who has two teachers to work on improving co-teaching. However, for the purposes of the study, we're only going to focus our observations on Mrs. 3 and Ms. 6's, and Mrs. 7 and Ms. 9's reading instruction.

R: Hello, How was your day today?

*teacher chatters respond....*

I think we've all been doing good with the planning, working with students, and observations. What do you all think?

T9: I can tell we are doing better with our kids. Like both of us working with them. They still want me to help them with certain stuff, but they aren't always looking at me to give them the go-ahead anymore. Like my kids need a lot of reassurance. You got to tell them all the time they are doing a good job or they get scared or something. They are okay with her doing that more now and not just me.

T6: I don't really feel any different. I mean, we're doing different things and planning together more, but it's not a big deal to me. I think it's fine. You know I just go with the flow.

T8: Yes, some of the kids wouldn't work for me before and now they are starting to.

T6: We've been doing a lot more planning together, but I feel like... How are you supposed to see that when you do an observation?

T4: Yeah, how are you supposed to be able to tell from coming in the class that we're planning together

T3: I think if we are, you can tell it. Like, instead of how it used to be with me teaching and the sped teacher just walking around checking up on students, you can tell we are both prepared for the lesson. I know we've been both doing centers in my room. So now I have kids at my table, she has kids at a table, and less kids are doing independent work when we have centers.

R: I think that's a good point and exactly what we will be looking for.

T5: So, on the checklist do we need to write that somehow?

R: Yes, I think that would be appropriate. Do you all want to add that to the checklist? We can keep the planning part and add a place to write examples or evidence.

T9: That makes sense to me.

T2: Yeah, I think so too.

T6: Would we do the same thing with the classroom management plans now too?

T3: It would make sense to do that. Is that enough of a change to the checklist?

R: It's your checklist to help you all make changes in your classrooms, so if you feel like you want to keep those items and add to them, that's fine.

T4: Well let's just do that then.

R: Okay, you also had working with all students on your last checklist. How do you feel about that one?

T6: I feel like we can change it.

T10: Me too. I mean, we're doing it.

T11: Sometimes, I feel like I, kind of, don't want to put my opinion in since you aren't coming in my classroom. I feel like it should be more their decision.

T12: I pretty much felt that way too.

R: Okay, those of you who are being observed, what do you think?

T3: Well, my thinking is you may have some of our kids next year when they move to your classroom. OR you could get a new student or anything. You still need to know what's going on.

T6: Yeah, I think so too. Even if you don't want to give input, you need to stay with us and know what we're doing. Anything can happen that you'll be doing it too.

T11: I guess you're right. I wasn't thinking about it like that. I'm not trying to get out of doing

anything, I just don't want to make decisions that affect someone else and have nothing to do with me, but I see what you're saying.

T13: I'm glad y'all said that because I was wondering about that too.

R: Does everyone feel comfortable moving forward now?

*...teachers agree...*

R: We still need to talk about what else we want to do with the checklist.

T7: Right now we still have planning and our classroom management, right?

R: Yes.

T5: What about all of those types of co-teaching?

R: Are you talking about the six co-teaching models?

T4: What all was it? Team teaching, one teach-one walk around

R: One teach-one assist, one teach-one observe, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative/differentiated teaching, team teaching

T3: Why don't we start trying to do some of that? Like, when we are planning, say which one we are doing?

R: I think that would be a great idea. That way you are working on incorporating the models into your classroom and identifying them during planning.

T4: I think we'd do better if we just start with some of the easy ones. I know they are already doing the centers, I guess that's the same as station teaching, but I don't know if we are ready for the team and parallel teaching yet.

T5: I think so too. Start small and we can add more later.

R: So we have a new checklist with three items. Do you want to add more or keep it like this?

T6: I think we're good with just that. You know we're about to start testing, so we don't need to try to do too much.

T5: Good point. I'll be doing all of that since I'm the testing person.

R: I think this will be good then. We don't want to overwhelm ourselves. Thank you all so much for working hard on this. I know you all have a lot on your plate.

T3: No, I'm glad we're doing it. We've been asking for help and no one ever told us anything. This doesn't bother me.

T8: Me too. I mean, I've been teaching a long time and we've never done this before. I think this can help everybody.

R: Thank you, I'm glad to hear you both say that. If no one has any more questions, we can go home. I'll type this up and send it out. Thanks for your hard work!

R: Did you all have a good summer break? Glad to be back?

*...teachers chatter...*

R: Let's talk about our observation checklist. The last one we did was in March, after Spring Break. How do you feel about moving forward for the new school year?

T5: I feel like with testing and all of the end-of-year stuff we didn't get to do as much. Y'all couldn't even observe as much because of testing and field trips and stuff.

T3: Me too. Can we just keep this checklist a little longer?

T4: Yeah, let's do that.

*...several teachers comment in agreement...*

R: I think if you all want to spend more time on this checklist that is completely fine. Let's go over what we have. Co-planning w/evidence, classroom management w/evidence/notes, and the six co-teaching models. Correct?

*...teachers agree...*

T6: I think we were good with all that before, just not ready to do something different right now with getting back to school, learning new kids, and schedules. Yeah, I think that's good.

R: Right, and I think that is probably wise of you all to do. Just keep this checklist. Mrs. Principal

and I will continue observations like we were before and you all will have time to settle in before we make any more changes.

P: That's fine with me too. Goodness knows this is always a crazy busy time for everybody.

R: Okay, if everyone is good with that, we won't waste time. I know you want to get back in your classrooms and get ready for Open House. Thanks!

R: Hello everyone. We are here to look at the checklist again. Do you feel comfortable with the current checklist? What do you think is going well, or not?

T7: We've been doing some groups in my room. You know, each of us teach during centers. The sped students aren't leaving during that time anymore.

T8: Yeah, that's been working really good for us.

T3: We were already doing that some last year too, so this year it was easy to keep doing it like that. Sometimes she's in another class when we have centers, but we try to make sure we plan for our centers on the days she's in my reading group.

T4: I want to do something different with our groups. I brought my notes with me. It says we are teaching to a blended group of students. Mine are still, I mean, different kids are in my room, but I want help creating better, more mixed up groups.

T6: Yeah, it does talk about that. It really don't do any good to keep them in the same room if they're still being separated. I see what you're saying.

T9: So you're talking about the way we have it now, they're – all the low kids are in a group and the high ones are in a group? You've been using your STAR and CASE to group yours, haven't you?

T4: Yes. I think this is saying we need to mix them up.

T1: I agree. That's better for the kids. I know I always have a lot of the low ones in our grade and they never get a chance to work with the higher kids. I think they need to work with other kids. You know doing stuff, you know, to help them see the right way to do it.

T6: Yes, modeling correct behaviors and reading fluency. I see exactly what you're saying.

R: I think that sounds good. How do we want to word that on your checklist?

T3: Something about grouping the students, mixed groups...

T5: Cooperative?

T3: Yeah, cooperative groups

R: How does "Cooperative grouping of all students" sound?

T3: I like that.

T6: I'm good with it.

...teachers agree...

T6: So what are we taking off?

T3: I think we are good with the planning part. We've been doing it since January and the beginning of this year, we started out that way.

*...teachers talk among themselves for a minute and conclude the planning component can be removed from the checklist...*

T8: Okay, I was reading on here. One of the questions they asked was, "Do the students consider us equal?" I know I've talked about it before, where mine will want me to answer them, and our last checklist kind of had that, - us working with all students. I think we need to still work on that.

T7: Me too. I know what she's talking about. I think they still think of my room, her room. And the ones we have this year are new to us, so what we did work on with the others last year – I mean, it's new students now. And we've been still working on it with this new group, but we still need to make that more...

T4: I see what you mean, I agree. Like when one of our students has a question or needs something, they shouldn't expect that only one of us can help them. They need to be able to trust both of us; And we're the ones who have to make that happen. That's hard too,



- because just how we start the year. When the parents ask whose room their kid is in, they say mine name. They don't ever say both. Maybe that's something we need to think about for starting next school year. If we know both of us are in the room, we can start out saying Mrs. 4 and Ms. 6's room and always say it that way and that's just how it is.
- P: Yeah, we can work on that. I'll tell Ms. Secretary to start doing it now. It won't hurt anything. We just have to get used to saying it that way.
- T8: How will we say that? What will they look for when they come observe – on the checklist?
- T10: Well, they should be able to tell if we are helping all of the students, and really watching how the students act toward us.
- T4: It can say something like, helping all students. Well, I guess that's what the first one says, now that I look at it.
- T5: What about something about sharing the students?
- T1: I think that sounds better, not just one teacher, both teachers.
- T4: Addressing students' needs...
- R: Let me see if this captures what you're wanting to say, Teachers address students' needs in a shared manner.
- T3: Can you add, "not just from one teacher"? To me, that helps explain what we're talking about.
- R: Students' needs are addressed in a shared manner, not just from one teacher. How's that.
- T3: That's good.
- T8: I like it. And this just helps us remember what we're working on now, and still doing the others from the first two checklists.
- T5: Right. We keep doing it all. Right, R?
- R: Yes, the idea is that we are building on the skills we've already made common practice and adding a few more each time. Basically, the same thing you do when you're teaching reading or math concepts to your students.
- T3: Yes, that makes sense. Perfect!
- T5: Well, that's two new ones. I think we need to leave the co-teaching models on there the whole time, from now on. That's what we are trying to do, and we'll always be looking for one of those.
- T4: Well, yeah that makes sense.
- T2: That sounds right to me, 'cause that's what we are trying to do. The point of the whole thing is co-teaching.
- T11: I still don't have any sped students in my room, but I'm glad I'm listening to what all y'all say. Even though they aren't doing the checklists in my room. Sometimes I'm thinking about what y'all are doing and how it can work in my room. I mean, I don't have another teacher coming in my room. But like, trying to do a better job of mixing my high and low students. I think I'll try to re-group some of mine next week after we do the STAR test.
- T3: See, I told you this can help you too! Aren't ya glad you stayed and listened.
- T11: Laugh
- T9: So are we done? We're keeping the last one and adding those two new ones?
- T4: Adding cooperative groups and addressing students' needs from both teachers
- R: That's what I have down. Does anyone have any other suggestions or questions?
- T5: I mean, I think this is good. We're keeping it simple and we are getting it done.
- T3: Well, yeah, but we're really doing it, not just 'getting it done', I mean, we are doing this stuff in my classroom. Right, T6?

T6: Oh yeah, we are definitely doing it. And my day goes faster too. When I was just going in and walking around checking on my kids, it felt like I was in there forever and not doing anything. I was doing something, but now I'm doing more. And we like working together. I know it's made her life easier.

T3: For sure. I think we are doing good in our room.

R: That's great. That's what we want to hear.

T7: I'm going to come talk to y'all. I guess, T9, you need to come too. We just need some help getting some things worked out.

R: I'm glad you said that, I almost forgot to tell y'all. In the class I'm taking now, we are talking about Instructional Rounds, it's a model that was done for some research at Harvard. Anyway, the teachers do rounds and observe each other. How do you feel about that.

T7: Yes, T3, T6 – I want to come in y'all's room. I want to see some of your groups, and what you

do when they aren't in groups.

T3: Girl, come on. We aren't perfect, but you can come.

R: I can get you copies of some of those articles, but I wanted to see how you felt about having each other observe you. So you would be using the checklists we've made to observe each other, but remember, you're not just checking stuff off, but thinking about you can take it back to your classroom too.

T9: I would like that. I know I have more time to go from room to room, but T8 is always with the kids. What will we do about that?

R: P, can we look at schedules and give them time to observe each other.

P: Yeah, I can make that work. We do that all the time when they have change schedules for stuff. That's not a problem.

T4: That's exactly what I want to do! So can we start doing that, like now?

P: I mean, yeah. Just let me know when you need someone to cover your room. If you can work it out for you to go to her room, like when your kids are at recess or specials, do that and you don't have to tell me. If you can't work it out that way just let me know. If you do it during specials, I don't care if you go every day, but if you need someone to watch your room... I mean, once a week should be plenty.

T5: I think so too. We won't need more than once a week. That's how often you're doing it now, right? I know you don't come in my room, but I may want to go in theirs so I can see too, is that okay?

P: That's fine with me, but just try to go during specials.

T4: Are you still going in their rooms too?

R: Yes, but maybe not as much since you'll be observing each other too. I'm going to add something to the checklist so we will know if it was me and Mrs. P observing or another teacher.

T3: Yeah, that's good. Can you email us those articles? I want to see how they did that.

R: Yes, I'll do it now. And don't think too much about how in-depth the articles are. There's a lot

going on in this program and we aren't doing all that they're doing. Their goals are much different than what we are doing in this program. We can't go in-depth into what they're doing, b/c that's not our goal. I just want you to get an idea for what they're doing and how and why it's important for you all to be able to observe each other; it's not always just me and Mrs. P.

P: Yeah, she showed it to me the other day and I think some of y'all will really like it.

R: Yes, and if you have questions after you read those articles, please come to me and talk about it. I'm not a pro on it either, but we've talked about it in my class and practiced it some, so I should be able to clear up any questions you have or get us an answer. Good? Okay, are you ready to wrap up? I know I've kept you longer than normal, but I think we've gotten a lot of good work done. Thank you so much for being involved with this.

- R: Hello everyone! Well, we're at the end. How do you all feel about what we've been doing? I know I ask you this every time, but y'all, I think we've made some moves here.
- T3: Yes, absolutely. We have been doing some of the team teaching, the way it says in the PowerPoint, and it's fun!
- T6: Yeah, I know I said it last time, but my days go quicker now because I'm actually doing something all day long.
- T5: I know I'm not one of the ones you've been observing, but I think it's helped us too. We are able to do things in Math that they're doing in reading. Like she's bringing it to my room too and it's working good.
- R: I'm so glad to hear all of that. I can tell you have been working hard and making changes in your classrooms, and I'm proud of those changes. We are ready to make the last of our checklists for the program. So what do you want to do?
- T5: I've said it before and I'll say it again, we need to keep the six co-teaching models on there forever!
- T4: Agreed!
- ...teachers talk in agreement...
- R: What do you all think about observing each other? How has that gone?
- T3: I feel like it's good. You know I'm not one to really be intimidated, but I do think It took the pressure down a notch and helped us when we were working together to plan for the next checklist.
- T7: I think so too. Sometimes when y'all come in my room I get anxious, and to be honest, my kids act different too. Like, they are wondering who is in trouble or something. When it's another teacher coming in, they just keep going. My biggest problem is that I want to stop and get feedback right then. I have to make myself wait to chat about it later.
- T9: Yeah, and when we went in their room together to watch, well I guess you say 'observe' them, we could go back when we were planning and talk about what we wanted to do like they were doing it or how we could change it for our kids. I can say it was good for us.
- T3: Y'all know how I am. I liked helping the other group. I'm not saying I do everything right, but I just know I have, like, a helpful personality. I like to give suggestions. You know what I mean.
- T6: You do. You'll be Mrs. P one day!
- ...teachers laugh...
- R: I'm glad that's helped you and you feel good about it. It helps when you can see if from both sides and not just from the inside, right? So what else do we want to work on?
- T3: When I was looking through there, I saw that co-teaching helps decrease the stigma of resource class. We need to try to find a way to keep our kids in our regular classroom more. I know they have to go out sometimes, but maybe find a way to not do it as much.
- T6: Yeah, me and you have talked about that. I mean, our kids like to go, but it does single them out and I think the older they get the more they'll realize it.
- T7: Ours still go out too.
- T9: What if we used some of the center time to do the resource, just a thought. That way we're still giving them the extra help we have in the IEP, but just staying the room.
- T5: Whew! I know one of mine can't focus to do that. I don't know about doing that.
- T4: They're not saying you have to do it all the time for everyone, right?
- T6: No, I mean sometimes you have to. Just try to keep them in longer when you can. Isn't that

what you were saying, T3.

T3: Yes, just saying try to do as much as we can with all of our students in the regular room. Do better at differentiating our lessons. I know we should already be doing that, but maybe this will give us the push to do it.

T9: Yep, we need to be doing that.

R: I can add that to the list.

T7: I think we still need to work on the other one too. The one about both of us helping the students. We are still sometimes gravitating to the same students. Not on purpose, we just need to keep being more intentional with that one.

T5: Yeah, us too.

T4: I know this is back to the other thing, but I want to try the parallel teaching. We haven't done that one yet. Has anyone else done it?

T3: We tried it once. It went okay. It was definitely easier with some of our kids who like to talk out, to have them in a smaller/closer group.

T4: Let me know when y'all do that again. I want to come to watch.

T3: Ok, Will do.

T6: I mean, I think if we just keep doing this, we will be good to go. I feel good about it; it's more like what they tell us when we go to the sped trainings. Now we are all on the same page.

R: Yes, and that was the goal. I agree that you all have done really good at moving things in the right direction. We still have struggles, and nothing is perfect, but we are still trying and that's what's important.

T9: You know I was thinking, remember at the first of the year when *Student* cried every morning? She's not doing that anymore and I just wonder if some of this, what we're doing in the classroom has helped with that.

T7: Wouldn't it have to?

T4: That and she's more used to coming to school now. We're mid-way through the year.

T9: Yeah, I was just saying.

T5: So, what about this checklist? What's on it now?

R: I have that you want to keep the six co-teaching models, make your instruction more inclusive, T7 said keep the one about addressing students' needs in a shared manner. Right?

T5: Just checking to see where we were.

T3: I mean, I think that's it.

R: Are y'all ready to call it done? ... Okay, well, I've enjoyed working through this with you. We probably won't meet again before Christmas, but after we get back from the break we will meet up again and see what else we want to do. Sound good?

...all agree...

## **Appendix D**

October 9, 2018

Cooperative Teaching Professional Development  
Calhoun City Elementary School

Amy Shelley & Devin Boone

What movie title reminds you of your year in inclusion?

1. How is co-teaching currently addressed in your school?
2. How would you like to see it addressed in the future?
3. What concerns or questions do you have about co-teaching?

What should cooperative teaching look like?

Cooperative teaching vs. supportive instruction

IDEA & ESSA both require:

- Research-based methods
- High expectations
- Access to general education curriculum
- Inclusion is NOT required in IDEA. IDEA mandates instruction of students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Educators must consider the continuum of services, starting with general education.

#### Definition of Inclusion

Does NOT refer to where a student sits

Inclusion gives **all students access to general education curriculum**. Inclusion is a single, unified, educational system in which **all students are entitled to the same quality of education and held to high expectations**.

Don't serve hotdogs to students with special needs while you're feeding everyone else steaks!

Why should we co-teach?

Benefits the students and the teacher

Two brains to bring something to the lesson that the other may not bring

- Wider range of instructional alternatives for ALL students

- Allows students with disabilities to access general education curriculum taught by highly qualified subject area teachers
- Creates an environment in which all students can make adequate yearly progress
- Provides powerful support for educators
- Decreases stigma of being in a resource class

Co-teaching is NOT:

- One teaches while one watches without a purpose
- One teaches while one grades papers or makes materials
- One teaches while one tutors.
- Used to remediate weak teachers
- When one person's ideas drive all the decisions in the classroom
- A teacher and a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals provide instructional support.

Co-teaching IS:

- Two or more teachers, one general educator and the other a special service provider, share a classroom to provide instruction to a blended group of students
- Who teachers are actively engaged in the teaching process and provide purposeful instruction
- Co-planning, co-instruction, and co-assessment
- Flexible and may vary based on needs of students

Benefits and Barriers:

FIVE essential components of co-teaching:

1. Shared system of beliefs
2. Prerequisite skills
3. Collaboration
4. Classroom practices
5. Administrative roles and perspectives

What are your professional beliefs about teaching and learning that must be considered in co-teaching?

What are the areas in which teachers have strong beliefs?

Shared system of Beliefs:

- Classroom management
- Student assessment
- Student/teacher engagement
- Differentiated instruction
- Inclusion
- Accommodations



- Student responsibility
- Communication
- How could two co-teachers reconcile differences in beliefs or teaching styles?
- Do you have any non-negotiables?
- How would you address those with your co-teachers?
- Can teachers with different beliefs or pedagogies work together successfully?

Personal qualities & skills to contribute to a co-teaching situation:

- Personal skills (communication styles, personality, flexibility, willingness to give up control, cooperation)
- General Pedagogical Skills
- Discipline Specific Skills
  - General – content specific
  - Sped – accommodations

### Stages of Collaboration

Beginning Stage

Compromise Stage

Collaborative Stage

Classroom Practice

Prioritize Planning Time (plan to plan)

- Scheduled time
- Face-to-face collaboration is essential when starting
- Common planning time when possible
- Come to meeting prepared
- Focus on topics related to instruction
- Email, google docs, skype, phone conversations

Administrative Roles and Perspectives

- Facilitate problems-solving related to staffing, scheduling, and students
- Have a working understanding of the needs of students with disabilities
- Allocate and focus resources
- Navigate practical matters such as master schedules for teachers and students and assigning co-teachers
- Monitoring progress and accountability. Is it working? What adjustments are needed?
- Provide teachers ongoing, relevant professional development throughout process
- Create and protect planning time.

## Six Approaches to co-teaching

1. One teach, one assist
  - a. Lesson is best delivered by one teacher
  - b. One teacher has expertise on the topic
  - c. New co-teaching situations
  - d. Lesson requires student monitoring
2. One teach, one observe
  - a. Gathering evidence (anecdotal) about student behavior
  - b. Monitor student progress
  - c. Provide feedback on instruction
  - d. Build trust among teachers and students in no co-teaching situations (high level of trust and comfort)
3. Station teaching
  - a. Content is complex, but does not need to be taught in sequential order
  - b. Students understand the procedures for moving through the stations
4. Parallel teaching
  - a. Benefit: smaller student:teacher ratio
  - b. Increase student participation
  - c. For activities such as reteaching, review for tests, additional practice and application
5. Alternative/differentiated teaching
  - a. Pull-in model working on the standards
  - b. Remediation, enrichment, pre-teaching, warm-up,
6. Team teaching
  - a. One teacher provides instruction while the other provides examples, notes, or questions
  - b. Both teachers role-play or debate

## Choosing a Co-Teaching Approach

Methods should vary based on the needs of the class. DO not rely heavily on any one method.

Determine methods based on:

- Student needs
- Content being taught
- Teaching styles
- Structure of class

Evaluate effectiveness: should be an ongoing process.

Questions to consider:

1. Do the students consider us equal?
2. Is our class management plan working?
3. Is the division of work equitable?
4. Are strategies, accommodations and/or modifications effective?

## **Appendix E**

Although the researcher did not mentor teachers as planned, notes from the researcher's informal, in-passing, observations were transcribed from the researcher's personal calendar. They are listed chronologically below:

1/15/2019 – Teacher states she is planning to work with co-teacher this afternoon

1/17/2019 – Researcher sees co-teachers planning together during their planning period

2/4/2019 – Teacher tells researcher she and her co-teaching partner are working on classroom management plans

2/21/2019 – Teachers tell researcher they are incorporating classroom management plans in both classrooms; it seems to be a smooth transition for the students

3/25/2019 – Teachers tell researcher they are trying to incorporate co-teaching models in their classroom

4/2/2019 – Researcher sees co-teachers working on plans together after school

8/12/2019 – Teachers tell researcher they are anxious to get back to the checklist and adding more co-teaching. They want to go on and start the year off with a solid co-model

8/29/2019 – teachers tell researcher they are already thinking about more ways they can co-teach in their classroom. They say because they are trying to start right from the beginning of the school year, the students are responding well to their practices. They are using the same classroom management plan from last year since it seemed to work out good for them.

10/10/2019 – Co-teachers express excitement about station teaching and parallel teaching. They tell the researcher they are going to practice their center rotations the following school day.

10/30/2019 – Co-teachers share that Halloween is always a tough week, but they feel having a co-teacher actually in the classroom – working together – made it easier to handle

11/14/2019 – Co-teachers share that they are going to practice their script for team teaching that afternoon

12/3/2019 – Researcher observes co-teachers planning for instruction

## VITA

Kellie Logan

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### EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

Ed.D.	2020	University of Mississippi	K-12 Leadership
M.S.	2015	Arkansas State University	Educational Leadership
B.A.	2010	University of Mississippi	Elementary Education

### PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

#### Mississippi Certifications

Career Level Administrator  
Mild/Moderate Disabilities (K-12)  
English (7-12)  
Elementary Education (K-6)  
Social Studies (7-12)  
Medial Librarian (K-12)

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Calhoun County School District  
Special Education Case Manager  
Professional Development Coordinator  
July 2018 – Present
- Coffeenville School District  
Director of Special Education  
July 2016 – June 2018
- Calhoun County School District  
Special Education Teacher  
July 2014 – June 20

- Water Valley School District  
General Education Teacher  
Special Education Teacher  
July 2010 – June 2014

#### SERVICE

- Mississippi Department of Education
  - Chairperson of MS Educator and Leader Effectiveness Steering Committee, Teacher Subcommittee

#### MEMBERSHIPS

- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
- Mississippi Professional Educators Association