

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-17-2004

A study of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of collaborative teaching

Ritaanna Bell
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bell, Ritaanna, "A study of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of collaborative teaching" (2004).
Theses and Dissertations. 1107.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1107>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

A STUDY OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEPTIONS OF
COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

By
RITAANNA BELL

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Science in Teaching
Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 2004

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved 5/17/04

ABSTRACT

RitaAnna Bell

A STUDY OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEPTIONS OF COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

2003/04

Dr. Steven Crites — Masters of Arts in Special Education

Laws such as The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (1990/1997) and No Child Left Behind (2001) have emphasized a need to serve students with disabilities in the general education setting. This inclusion has prompted several models of collaborative instruction. This study investigates the current state of practice from the perspective of Co-teaching partners (general and special education teachers) and their administrators in one New Jersey School District. The foci are on perceptions of current experience, recommended collaborative practices, teacher preparation for co-teaching and administrator effectiveness of the collaborative teaching classroom. 114 teachers and 23 administrators from a mid-sized New Jersey School District were invited to participate. Based on the most significant findings of the study, a conclusion was derived that differs from the current literature. The results of this study showed a consensus between both general and special educators that the roles in a collaborative teaching partnership are a shared responsibility.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Review of Literature	4
	Perception of Co-Teaching Partners	4
	Teacher Preparation	11
	Components of Co-Teaching Relationship	13
	Effective Teaching Practices	20
	School Based Support that Facilitates	24
	Cooperative Teaching	
III.	Methodology	28
	Participants	28
	Research/Design	34
	Procedure	34
	Data Collection	34
	Data Analysis	34
IV.	Results	36
V.	Discussion	44
VI.	References	48
VII.	Appendices	51
	A — IRB Approval Letter	51
	B — Survey : Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching For Teachers	53
	C- Survey: Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching For Administrators	60

List of Figures

Figure 1 — Area of Certification of Teachers	29
Figure 2 — Education Levels — Teachers	29
Figure 3 — Female/Male Participants	30
Figure 4 — Administrator Participants	31
Figure 5 - Education Levels — Administrators	32
Figure 6 — Mutual Planning Time — Value/Access — Teachers	32
Figure 7 - Mutual Planning Time — Value/Access — Administrator	40
Figure 8 — Pre-Service Preparation	40
Figure 9 — Teacher Perceptions of Responsibilities	41
Figure 10 — Administrator Perceptions of Responsibilities	42

List of Tables

Table 1 — Frequency Data — question 9	37
Table 2 — Frequency Data — question 10	37
Table 3 — Frequency Data — question 11	38
Table 4 — Frequency Data — question 12	38
Table 5 — Frequency Data — question 13	39

I. Introduction

The inclusive classroom has recently gained popularity as an instructional model to deliver the necessary educational instruction for special needs students. Inclusion, as it is currently defined, refers to the instruction of all students, with and without disabilities, in the general education classroom, unless substantial evidence is provided to show that such a placement wouldn't be in the students' best interests (Learning Disabilities Association [LDA], 1993; U.S Department of Education as cited in Wood, 1995). This has created a need to develop a model that would include both general and special educators in the delivery system: cooperative teaching. Cooperative teaching, as defined by Bauwens, Hourcade and Friend (cited in Adams, 1993, p. 135) is an educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e., general classrooms). In cooperative teaching both general and special education teachers are simultaneously present in the general classroom, maintaining joint responsibilities for specified education instruction that is to occur within that setting. Benefits associated with co-teaching include increased collegial exchanges of strategies, increased understanding of students' needs, increased support of teachers, enhanced educational programs, and increased acceptance of students with disabilities (Deiker, 2001, p. 1).

While several studies have examined the attitudes of general and special educators with respect to adaptations and interventions used in teaching students in

heterogeneous classrooms, very few have investigated these teachers' perceptions of collaboration and the perceptions of their administrators on the effectiveness of this instructional model. Austin (2001) examined several aspects of teachers' perceptions of collaborative teaching and recommended that further studies include data on the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of the collaborative teaching model. The purpose of this study is to replicate Austin's study on the collaborative teaching model.

This study provided some relevant information about the current state of practice of inclusion from the perspective of essential stakeholders: the collaborating teachers. Accordingly, this study was originally designed to provide information relative to the following questions: (Austin, 2001)

- How do co-teachers perceive their current experience in the classroom?
- What teaching practices do collaborative educators find effective?
- What kind of teacher preparation do co-teachers recommend?
- According to collaborative practitioners, what school-based supports facilitate collaborative teaching?
- Who does more in the collaborative partnership — the special educator or the general educator?

Modifications to the present study were based on recommendations made by Austin (2001, p.21). They include the following:

- How do administrators perceive the effectiveness of collaborative teaching classroom?

In the review of literature that follows, five elements are prominent: (a) components of co-teaching relationship (Gately & Gately, 2001), (b) perception of co-teaching partners (Austin 2001), (c) effective teaching practices, (d) teacher preparation (Reeve, 1994), and (e) school-based support that facilitates cooperative teaching. From this

review of the literature, this research study was constructed and analyzed. Certain assumptions on the part of the researcher will be inherent in the study; respondents truthfulness and understanding of the concept of co-teaching. These assumptions were made because of the lack of personal identifiers on the survey instrument, that encouraged a certain level of anonymous security in the respondents. Also the researcher possessed extensive first-hand knowledge of the background preparedness of the responding population on the topic of cooperative teaching. With the information derived from both the literature review and study, a discussion of the findings, and concluding remarks are included.

II. Review of Literature

Perception of Co-Teaching Partners

Since the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 mandated that students be served in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (i.e., the general education classroom), the inclusion of special needs students in the general education classroom has been controversial (Murawski & Swanson, 2001). The original model of special education was based on the medical model of deficiency; students were failing because they were deficit (Gibb, Young, Allred, Dyches, Egan & Igram, 1997, p. 243). The Individualized Education Program (IEP) process was established, in part, to give evidence of these deficiencies and to justify labeling, grouping, and segregating the students. Reynolds (as cited in Gibb et al., 1997, p. 243) referred to this process as the aptitude treatment interaction assumption. This process assumes that students with common disabilities require distinct forms of instruction that could only be offered by teachers with a specialized training. This approach focused more on the disability than needs of the individual student. During initial implementation of IDEA, school systems focused on establishing self-contained programs for students with disabilities, a service delivery model popular in the 1960s. During the early 1970s and 1980s, this emphasis changed when professionals thought the principles of normalization emphasized in IDEA were better served by the resource model of service delivery (Deno as cited in Reeve, 1994).

The Regular Education Initiative (REI) in the 1980 s advocated inclusion on the basis of efficacy studies that indicated that separated special education classrooms were not producing positive academic outcomes (Dunn as cited in Summey and Strahan, 1997). With governmental support of the REI, more emphasis was placed on mainstreaming special education students and educating them in the general classroom (Walberg, 1987).

In advocating more inclusive approaches, Will (1986) proposed that students with disabilities receive instruction in the general classroom with assistance from special educators in the form of consultation and team teaching. In 1987, Gartner & Lipky concluded from their review of literature and studying data from special education programs, that pullout programs for students with disabilities were not achieving desirable outcomes. In the separate systems of general and special education, strategies were disability focused, and as a result, the academic achievement of students with disabilities reflected lowered expectations and standards.

On the basis of these findings, Gartner and Lipky asserted that chances of students with disabilities to succeed in the prevailing system were slim (Summey & Strahan, 1997, p. 37). Fortunately for the field of special education, reforms like Project 2061: Science for All Americans, the National Science Education Standards, the Assessment Standards for School Mathematics, and Winners All, proposed changes that had the potential to develop and sustain more supportive learning environments for all students. The literature indicates that students with disabilities can thrive in activity-based classrooms that present content in a manner compatible with their learning/thinking needs (Dieker, 2001).

Furthering the controversy, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 and the amendments to IDEA in 1997 emphasized the need to serve students with disabilities in the general education setting whenever possible. The least restrictive environment provision of IDEA has forced educators to look more carefully at what actually happened to children with special needs. Placing the students in a segregated environment was not always least restrictive for the child but, rather, was less burdensome for the general educator (National Association of State Boards of Education as cited in Gibb, Young, Allred, Dyches, Egan & Ingram, 1997).

Inclusive education places an emphasis on improved instruction rather than the processes of classifying and labeling students. This emphasis was based on the principle that students with disabilities would be best served in settings most like their peers without disabilities. Therefore, these students needed to receive services and supports in the general education classroom. This new service option required that both the special needs students and the special needs teacher be included in the general education classroom (Murawski et al., 2001). Despite the fact that IDEA emphasizes the general education classroom as the starting point for all students, special education teachers cannot be expected to be masters of all content areas, and that is why collaboration with general education is essential (Dieker, 2001).

Austin's (2001) study found a significant percentage of both general and special educators indicated that they believed the general education co-teacher did the most in the inclusive classroom because of the disparity of content knowledge of the special educator. While together, these two professionals determine who teaches what, when, how, and whom not by student categorical labels but by a more global analysis of the

needs of the students in the class at any given time (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). The special education teacher and the classroom teacher would collaborate to provide instruction for students with disabilities. In cooperative teaching both general and special educators are simultaneously present in the general classroom, maintaining joint responsibilities for specified education instruction that is to occur within that setting (Bauwens & Hourcade 1995, p. 36). The most distinctive feature of cooperative teaching, and the one that differentiates it from other approaches to collaboration, is this joint direct provision of assistance (Bauwens & Hourcade 1995, p. 37). This joint direct provision would provide the opportunity to increase the level of curriculum provided to students with disabilities while also ensuring the execution of individualized education plans (IEP) (Deiker, 2001; Gately & Gately 2001). Dealing effectively with curriculum goals and modifications involves the planning of the specific goals and objectives for each student. When both general and special education teachers are responsible for the success of all students in the co-taught classroom, the teachers need to discuss goals, accommodations, and modifications that will be necessary for specific students to be successful (Gately & Gately 2001, p. 43).

Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989), posited that the cooperative teaching model brings together and uses effectively the unique and specific skills of each professional. The general educator is particularly knowledgeable about curriculum and curricular sequencing and is skilled and experienced in large-group management. The special educator is an expert in task analysis, curriculum modification and behavior management.

With the passing of NCLB in 2002, this service delivery option is being chosen by more schools. The new teacher qualifications mandated by NCLB is having an effect on who is qualified to teach certain content area (Murawski et al., 2001) . The perceptions by both general and special educators of this new service delivery option, co-teaching, were not always favorable or without controversy.

Both general and special needs educators have been used to a certain level of control of their classroom. Now they are being asked to incorporate a new perspective into their domain. Many of these educators are not comfortable with the change of their roles that is being expected in the co-taught classroom (Adams, 1993).

In a research study performed at Northwestern University, both special education and general education teachers expressed concerns about how collaboration would affect their particular field of education and their effectiveness as teachers. Special education teachers were concerned that the emphasis on inclusion would result in the elimination of ability groups and challenging activities for gift/talented education, and the curriculum was predetermined to such an extent that there would be a lack of flexibility on the part of the general education teachers. General education teachers seemed to have more concerns than their special education counterparts. In the initial planning meetings, they expressed concerns about having to share space with another teacher, adding more content to an already over-full curriculum, lack of knowledge about inclusion and special education, loss of autonomy, and loss of instructional time (Duchardt, Marlow, Inman, Christensen, Reeves, 1999).

Research has shown that the perception of the co-teaching partners is an important element in the successful co-teaching classroom (Dieker, 2001). Reeve and Hallahan

(1994), found from their case study in a New York City school district that effective collaboration requires more than two educators with good intentions. Teachers indicated that the lack of definitive teacher roles from the beginning, lack of administrative support, lack of joint planning and evaluation, lack of assertiveness on the part of the special educator, resistance to change on the part of a veteran general educator and the lack of technical skills on the part of both educators were factors that effected the successfulness of the collaborative partnership.

Austin (2001) indicated that 72% of co-teaching partners that had not volunteered for collaborative teaching had responded favorably to it. 86.9% of special education co-teachers and 95.6% of general education co-teachers agreed that collaborative teaching was a worthwhile professional experience. The development of collaborative relationships between general and special educators has been shown to increase the perceptions of general educators that they can provide effective services to students with disabilities (Idol- Maestas as cited in Olson, Chalmers & Hoover, 1997, p 28).

Cooperative teaching cannot be successful in the absence of consensus of the two educators in the classroom regarding basic philosophy of cooperative teaching specifically, and of education, in general (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991).

The literature supports perceptions about the qualities and values associated with effective collaboration. In interviewing five collaborating teachers Nowacek (1992) found that three of the five placed great importance on having the right person with whom to collaborate.

Bauwens & Hourcade, (1991, p48) cite three specific areas of philosophical disagreements in the co-teaching situation:

1. The general classroom as the appropriate site for delivery of instruction to special needs children.
2. Both the general and special educators bring skills to the general classroom that are applicable for both students with and without disabilities.
3. Both educators value and promote integration and diversity.

Even the most carefully planned cooperative teaching systems sometimes encounter unanticipated difficulties and problems. Both educators, general and special, need to have effective interpersonal skills to negotiate a resolution to differences (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991). Perceptions of co-teaching partners should be evaluated consistently throughout the partnership so that adequate feedback can be obtained to determine if, in fact, the partnership is effectively working (Gordon & Lopez-Vona, 2002). Both special and general educators must take responsibility to continually increase their knowledge about education – and examine their beliefs and attitudes (Jones & Rapport, 1997). One important indicator of success is the attitudes of both the special and general educator (Olson, Chalmers & Hoover, 1997). An attitude that reflects acceptance of diversity is critical to communicating the willingness to educate all children, and to work collaboratively with others (Jones & Rapport 1997).

West and Cannon (1988) surveyed a 100 member interdisciplinary, expert panel from 47 states on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and characteristics needed for engaging in the consultation process. These experts identified 47 competencies in eight categories as essential to the consultation process: the five categories receiving the highest mean ratings centered on interpersonal skills, personal and professional attitudes and beliefs, and personal attributes necessary for collaborative communication (Reeves, 1994). Both

the research literature and Reeve's case study suggest that compatibility of beliefs and attitudes and the ability to work together lead special and general educators to perceive collaboration positively (Reeves).

Teacher Preparation

As school personnel move into collaborative arrangements they must make adaptations to their teaching structures and features (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). The process of self-examination and commitment to change involves a three-phase sequence of adjustment. First, there must be a willingness to change; second, the current practices should be identified, and finally necessary changes must be implemented.

A fundamental feature of collaboration is the willingness of the involved educators. According to Bauwens & Hourcade, (1995, p.7), all educators should prepare for a collaborative partnership by:

- (a) Being ready to comprehensively evaluate themselves and the present service delivery system.
- (b) Being prepared to discard many of their old practices and procedures that are nonfunctional or irrelevant for contemporary educational programs.
- (c) Being active in seeking out or developing, implementing, and evaluating new and more effective procedures.

The roles and requirements inherent in collaboration demand that participants make substantive and fundamental changes in the way they go about their work as educators. According to a research study conducted at Northwestern State University (Duchardt; Marlow; Inman; Christensen & Reeves, 1999, p. 191), No longer can a teacher in a classroom of diverse learners meet all the educational, social, and emotional needs of his or her students. Special education faculty generally felt that with certain modifications the inclusion curriculum would fit nicely with the elementary education

curriculum in all areas. The general education faculty appeared to have a more negative perception about the collaborative effort. Their primary concerns included finding the time for planning, having to share space with another teacher, trying to add more content to an already overfull curriculum, lack of knowledge about inclusion and special education, loss of autonomy, and loss of instructional time.

The conclusions drawn from this study indicated that co-planning and co-teaching arrangements can result in nine positive outcomes: (1) collaborating and developing trust, (2) learning to be flexible and collegial, (3) finding pockets of time to co-plan, (4) learning through trial and error, (5) forming teaching and learning partnerships, (6) challenging oneself and developing professionally, (7) solving problems as a team, (8) meeting the needs of diverse learners, and (9) meeting the needs of teachers as problems solvers (Duchardt et al., 1999).

It takes collaboration among all professionals in a school system to educate all students. Most people are reluctant to accept change in their routine or autonomy (Brant as cited in Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). According to Rainforth, York, and MacDonald (as cited in Wood, 1998, p. 84) adopting a collaborative mode of interaction requires a change in existing organizational structures as well as in existing job roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, collaboration requires an evolution in educators thinking and behaving. The essential philosophy of cooperative teaching is all educators are responsible for all students (Bauwens & Hourcade 1995, p. 48).

According to Bauwens & Hourcade (1995), sharing, volunteering, valuing and overcoming barriers are prominent features in teacher preparation for collaboration. Traditionally educators have worked as self-contained units with a great deal of

autonomy. Developing a willingness to share the responsibility comes from voluntary participation in the collaborative process, valuing the contributions of other colleagues and overcoming the attitudinal, structural and competency barriers (National Board of Employment Education and Training Schools Council as cited in Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Components of Co-Teaching Relationship

Gately & Gately (2001) delineated eight components of the co-teaching classroom that contribute to the development of the collaborative learning environment: (a) interpersonal communication, (b) physical arrangement, (c) familiarity with the curriculum, (d) curriculum goals and modifications, (e) instructional planning, (f) instructional presentation, (g) classroom management, and (h) assessment (p. 43). Within each of these components, there are three stages that each co-teaching partnership should progress through as they develop: (1) beginning stage, (2) compromising stage, and (3) the collaborative stage.

Effective interpersonal communication is essential in the co-teaching relationship. Developing the skills to use verbal, nonverbal, and social cues often takes time, patience and flexibility. At the beginning stage of a co-teaching partnership, communication is often guarded because teachers are seeking to interpret verbal and nonverbal messages. According to Phillips, Sapona and Lubic (as cited in Duchardt, Marlow, Inman, Christensen, Reeves 1999, p. 187) teams were tentative at first in their communications with one another, as if they were cooking in someone else's kitchen. They may also have a clash of communication styles, lack of openness, and a level of dissatisfaction (Gately & Gately, 2001). Manner and style of communication reflect the

teacher's attitudes and beliefs. Teachers with good communication skills enhance collaboration through relaying and receiving information from a variety of sources supporting the educational program (Jones & Rapport 1997).

A study by Giangreco et al. (as cited in Jones & Rapport, 1997) described the negative feelings of teachers toward the presence of increased numbers of support personnel in the classroom when appropriate communication is lacking. Deiker (2001) observed a lack of clear articulation of curricular and instructional goals both from the special educator and the general educator. Unless the lesson was team taught, the special educators often indicated not clearly knowing where the lesson was headed. This problem was less apparent when teams had common planning time and had developed effective interpersonal communication.

As the partners develop their interpersonal communication and become more effective, they will begin to give and take ideas, develop respect for a different communication style and may appreciate humor in certain classroom situations. The longer the teams work together, the blending of each person's style strengthened the content of the lessons and the way they were presented. (Duchardt et al., 1999) The use of humor may mark the movement from the beginning stage to the compromising stage (Gately & Gately, 2001). Seeing the humorous elements in any situation requires a level of trust, respect, and mutual understanding in both of the partners. Humor can often be used to alleviate the stressful events that occur in the classroom everyday.

At the collaborative stage, co-teachers begin to model effective communication. The teachers use verbal as well as nonverbal communication. They become positive role models for effective communication skills to all the students. This may be especially

beneficial for students with disabilities because they often need to develop more effective social interaction skills. As they observe their co-teacher models, the students can see effective ways to listen, communicate, solve problems, and negotiate with each other (Wood, 1998). This open communication is particularly important in facilitating a smooth transition to a successful collaborative partnership.

An agreement about the physical arrangement of the classroom, students, materials and the roles of both co-teaching partners is the second component in Gately & Gately's (2001) model. In the beginning stage, the physical arrangement may seem like two separate classes in the same classroom. The special educator may not feel free to access or share materials, but asks permission to do so and oftentimes the students with disabilities are seated together. The general educator may assign a particular place for the special educator to sit, or the special educator may choose a space at the back of the room. There often appears to be invisible walls that separate the space of the two teachers that neither teacher nor student cross (Gately & Gately, 2001; Bauwen & Hourcade, 1995).

At the compromising stage, both teachers, general and special, begin to share the space and materials in the classroom. Territoriality becomes less evident and the special educator moves more freely about the room but seldom takes the center stage. Small groups of students with disabilities are arranged together in several areas of the classroom. At this stage, if the partners continue with open communication and willingness to compromise, they will be on their way to the collaborative level (Gately & Gately, 2001). This physical arrangement of the classroom will promote interactions among children, although with some limitations. A child with a physical disability, who

is not independently mobile, is unable to interact with peers and participate in sand box play unless he or she is placed in the sand box (Jones & Rapport 1997, p 58).

At the collaborative level, the physical arrangement of the classroom has become more fluid. Both educators are engaged in the instruction, control the space, and are cognizant of each other's position in the room. All students participate in cooperative grouping assignments, and it is difficult to distinguish between the students with and without disabilities. Within this physical arrangement, a child with limited mobility would be the focal point of the collaborative partners, because they would naturally make accommodations of the learning environment to incorporate the needs of this student into their physical arrangement (Jones & Rapport, 1997) This fluid movement becomes unplanned and natural in the collaborative co-taught classroom. Space is truly jointly owned now and it becomes difficult to identify the general educator from the special educator (Gately & Gately, 2001).

Although Gately and Gately, (2001) presented the next four components of the co-teaching relationship: familiarity with the curriculum, curriculum goals and modifications, instructional planning and instructional presentation separately, many of the elements are interdependent, and will be discussed together.

Both the general and special educators bring their respective knowledge to the co-taught classroom. The general educator has knowledge in the content curriculum and the special educator has the knowledge in curriculum modification. Often, in the beginning stage of the co-teaching relationship, neither partner feels confident in the other's knowledge domain, and this lack of confidence creates a reluctance to give to the other the responsibility of the task at hand. It is important for the special educator to become

familiar with the content curriculum. It is also important for the general educator to become familiar with the modifications of the curriculum that are necessary from the IEP (Gately & Gately, 2001). If both teachers have a comparable knowledge of their partner's knowledge strength, they can effectively use instructional strategies that allow for incorporating the IEP and other individualized goals into classroom curriculum (Jones & Rapport 1997).

In the beginning stage, the instructional planning and presentation are often textbook driven. At times there are distinct and separate curricula being taught within the classroom to individuals or small groups. These separate curricula often do not parallel each other and do not lend themselves to occasional large group instruction. The instructional presentation places one teacher in the role of the boss who holds the chalk, and the other teacher in the role of helper. Often the special educator is seen circulating the room helping students to remain on task or helping to manage students behavior (Gately & Gately, 2001).

As the two teachers move toward the collaborative stage, the confidence of both teachers grows regarding the curriculum. However, through the compromising stage, the general education teacher may view modifications as giving up something or as watering down the curriculum. Teachers may not appreciate the specific curriculum competencies that they bring to the content area until the collaborative stage where both teachers begin to differentiate concepts (big ideas) that most students should know. It is also at this stage where instructional planning and presentation becomes mutual, and both educators realize the need for an on-the spot change in the lesson and agree to change course during the lesson to accommodate learners who may be struggling with a concept being

presented (Gately & Gately, 2001). The special educator needs to identify IEP goals that can be met in the general education setting and share with the general educator how these goals will be integrated into the big ideas of the general education curriculum (Deiker, 2001).

The last two components of the Gately and Gately (2001) model are classroom management and assessment. Although the authors present these topics separately so the reader can understand the complexities of both, two big ideas would describe their importance to the co-teaching relationship: consistence and flexibility. For a co-teaching relationship to be effective in classroom management, both educators have to be consistent about expectations for students' behavior and enforcement of the classroom rules. Neither educator can be relegated to behavior manager because this serves to undermine that teacher's position in the classroom as a teacher. This consistence must also apply to the assessment system in this co-taught classroom. Both educators must appreciate the need for a variety of options when assessing students' progress, and to consistently include options to meet the needs of all the students in the class (Gately & Gately, 2001).

Team members in the Deiker, (2001) study indicated that when they tried to make accommodations in a lecture or paper/pencil dominated environment, meeting the needs of all students was difficult. In over 90% of the lessons observed, students were involved at some point in activity-based learning. These findings support best practices proposed for secondary classrooms Burgstahler et al. (as cited in Deiker, 2001). Both general and special education teachers commented that when they designed lessons to meet the needs of all students, the lessons had to change; and often the focus became

more activity-based. One general education teacher shared, My lessons are more creative and activity-based because of my colleague and because I am trying to meet the needs of all students (Deiker, 2001, p. 20). During interviews students commented on the strength of the activity-based classrooms. One student said, With two teachers we do more fun stuff and spend a lot more time being busy. I know I learn more when I am busy (Deiker, 2001, p. 20).

Flexibility should be an element in all of the components of the co-teaching relationship, however, the two components in which flexibility is essential, are classroom management and assessment. Both educators have to be flexible, willing to compromise, to take a co-teaching partnership from the beginning stage to the collaborative stage. Each educator will have classroom management techniques and assessment procedures with which feel comfortable and are successful. In the beginning stage of the partnership, neither may want to give up what is comfortable, but each will need to be flexible in the approach to establishing classroom management and assessment systems. As both partners become more confident in each other's management and assessment styles, the flexibility in both of these areas will become more natural. All participants in the University project reported that they learned to be more flexible, and to focus on individual strengths. (Duchardt, Marlow, Inman, Christensen, & Reeves, 1999, p.187). By the time the partnership reaches the collaborative stage, both teachers are involved in developing classroom management and assessment systems that benefits all students (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Gately & Gately, 2001). They also agreed that they shared the primary goal of providing an effective instructional model for their students (Duchardt et al., 1999). The participants of the Duchardt et al., study concluded

that it was important that the teachers look at education from all perspectives, and not just from the perspective of special education, general education, or any content area.

According to a study by Olson, Chalmers and Hoover (1997, p. 30), seven themes emerged to describe teachers with an established reputation for working well with integrated students; these related to personality, attitude, expectations, teaching methods, and viewpoints about inclusion. Common among all the participants of the Olson et al study were the interpersonal characteristics of tolerance, reflectivity, and flexibility.

Effective Teaching Practices

Bauwens and Hourcade (as cited in Dieker, 2001) have identified five options teachers typically use when implementing a co-teaching model: (a) lead and support, (b) station teaching, (c) parallel teaching, (d) alternative teaching, and (e) team teaching. The Dieker study focused on collaborative teams that were perceived as effective in the middle and high school setting to determine (a) how are these teams structured? (b) what practices do they implement? 15 teams were identified that received three or more nominations. Through observations made 4 times over 16 weeks (videotaped when ever possible), field notes, journal entries by both of the teachers in a team, interviews with students to determine what practices they perceived were used to make these teams effective, and interviews with the teachers involved in the study, Deiker observed the five options of implementing a co-teaching model indicated by Bauwens and Hourcade.

In the lead and support model, one teacher leads and the other offers assistance and support to individuals and small groups. Although this an efficient option, in some co-teaching situations, the special needs educator is reduced to the status of an

instructional assistant. (Gordon & Lopez-Vona, 2002). Deiker (2001) indicated that 4 of the 15 teams in his study were functioning in the one teacher lead-one teacher support model.

In station teaching students are divided into heterogeneous groups and work at classroom stations with each teacher. Each station can include activities that meet the multi-ability levels of the heterogeneous group. (Gordon & Lopez-Vona, 2002).

In parallel teaching, teachers jointly plan instruction, but each may deliver it to half the class or small groups. This teaching model is effective in certain academic settings but is difficult to use on a daily basis. The students who are in the buffer zone between the two groups of instruction will have difficulty concentrating and learning because of the auditory overload (Deiker, 2001). One team in the Deiker study employed a variety of options due to the behavioral challenges presented by their students. They moved in and out of parallel teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching and team teaching. They often used different structures to ensure that behavioral issues did not interfere with other students' learning needs.

In alternative teaching, one teacher works with a small group of students to pre-teach, re-teach, supplement, or enrich, while the other teacher instructs the large group. This model is effective for re-teach, especially for absent students with or without disabilities, but if used as the main teaching model it reduces the co-taught classroom to a segregated service delivery option in one classroom (Deiker, 2001).

In the team teaching approach, both teachers share the planning and instruction of students in a coordinated fashion. These teachers negotiate the format of the presentation, the specific responsibilities for each part of the content, and the time frames for the

instruction. The decisions about responsibilities to be assumed by each teacher may be based on several factors, including each teacher's knowledge of, familiarity with and certification in the content areas, and the identified needs of the students. Some team teaching arrangements take the form of shadow teaching, in which one teacher initially presents the material and the second teacher follows up with further explanation, paraphrase/restatement for additional reinforcement (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991).

Team teaching can be an especially effective arrangement when the support services provider additionally possesses extensive education competencies (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 54). Deiker (2001) found that 4 teams were using the co-teaching option of team teaching. He also noted that these teams were unique in that they had a common planning period built into their daily schedules to assist in lesson development.

Austin (2001) indicated that three significant categories of recommended collaborative teaching practices: mutual daily planning time, classroom management and instruction. The majority of special and general educators agreed, in theory, that mutual daily planning was important, but those who actually met daily disagreed about the effectiveness of such a practice. Similarly, a majority of special and general educators indicated that whereas they valued shared classroom management and instructional duties, they did not in practice share these responsibilities.

Practices that appeared to affect the perception that collaborative teaching teams were successful in the Deiker (2001) study were (a) creating positive learning climates, (b) creating positive perceptions of the co-teaching process, (c) provide instruction that focuses on active learning, (d) setting and maintaining high expectations, (e) allocating time to plan for the co-teaching process and finding creative ways to evaluate student

progresses. Deiker s recommended that before starting to co-teach, teachers should be given time to identify their roles, share curriculum expectations and discuss individual students needs and their philosophies related to meeting the needs of all students. When this preplanning was not provided, teachers in the study noted that they had difficulty becoming comfortable in their roles.

Clarifying roles of both teachers is an important element of the collaborative partnership. It is apparent that a concern about the role of the special educator in the general education setting arose in the Deiker (2001) study. Although in many instances the special educator was in a support role, some of the special educators observed did not seem to be focused specifically on the needs of students with disabilities. No matter what the role of the special educator in the classrooms, should there not still be some level of preparation for the individual student? Special educators need to plan for and articulate with general educators the goals and objectives of a student s IEP to ensure the student s success Baker & Zigmund (as cited in Deiker, 2001).

How one defines collaboration or what form this collaboration takes in actual practice are as unique as students needs and philosophies of the teachers and administrators involved. In the case study by Reeve (1994), the expected roles for each teacher were not defined clearly. The special education teacher had expected to have a greater role in instruction in the classroom. It soon became apparent that his expected role was to be the floater in the classroom. Instead of doing instruction, he would help clarify instructions, organize students, administer positive reinforcement to those who behaved appropriately and defuse fights before they could erupt.

According to Bauwens and Hourcade (1991, p. 42) general and special educators should negotiate the basic mechanics of the cooperative instruction arrangements.

Procedural considerations should include the following:

1. The specific cooperative teaching arrangements (i.e. exactly who does exactly what, and when).
2. Scheduling
3. Classroom organization and overall management
4. Classroom rules and discipline techniques
5. Joint planning time
6. Student and parent communication
7. Paperwork responsibilities
8. Program monitoring
9. Assignment of grades
10. Acquisition and utilization of materials and equipment

Although many procedural issues can be managed easily, observations of and interviews with co-teachers indicates that specifically reviewing procedural matters is essential. If not addressed, miscommunication and frustration are likely outcomes.

Further investigation needs to focus on a clearer conceptualization of various roles of the special educator within each of the types of co-teaching and how these roles can be enhanced to ensure that IEP goals of students are being met in the general education setting. Further discussion and research are needed as to how to impart the necessary skills to beginning and practicing special and general educators and how to enhance the models effectiveness for students with disabilities (Deiker, 2001).

School- Based Support that Facilitates Cooperative Teaching

There is a consensus in the professional literature that administrative support services are essential to the success of any collaborative teaching program. There are several administrative indicators that suggest that an innovation such as cooperative teaching will be successful (Montgomery as cited in Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 96).

One of the most significant is a principal who knows the school's curriculum well and is involved actively in measuring the impact of that curriculum upon students' learning. These principals have an invested interest in ensuring that all students in the school have access to that curriculum. This interest precipitates a belief and willingness to participate in staff training/retraining and is likely to facilitate the development/implementation of collaborative structures in their schools (Bauwens & Hourcade).

A supportive administration is important in any successful instructional or support service change. One of the consistent findings in the literature is that change is most successful when it is not based on directives from above but instead evolves from the individuals who are actually responsible for implementing the day-to-day functions associated with the change. Administrators cannot unilaterally force educators to think in substantially different ways. For example, one school district seeking to implement cooperative teaching, the director of special education mandated that all special educators should be actively involved in teaching within general education classrooms for 1 hour each day in the 1989-90 school year, for 2 hours each day during the next year, and so on until each special educator was actively involved in delivery of instruction in the general classroom for at least half of his or her workday. This unilateral determination prevented teachers from seeking adequate training about the rationale underlying cooperative teaching and denied them adequate time to come to an agreement regarding their perceptions of the reasons for such a system. Many teachers responded with passive resistance or actually left the district (Deiker, 2001).

Administrative leadership sets the tone for innovative practices and their acceptance by teachers who follow the administrative lead (Reeves, 1994). Their support

for the change and knowledge of how the change will affect the learning of the students in their school can effectively persuade school professionals to overcome the inevitable fears and stresses associated with change (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

While change cannot be mandated from above, in the absence of administrative support it is unlikely to develop and thrive. If educators moving into cooperative teaching are considered change agents, it would be appropriate to consider supportive administrators as change facilitators. From a multiyear study of change facilitators, Hord et al. (as cited in Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p.105) identified six functions that collectively describe what effective change facilitators do to assist the development and implementation of innovative school restructuring plans such as cooperative teaching. They are:(a) develop supportive organizational arrangements, (b) provide for staff development, (c) consult and reinforce, (d) monitor, (e) communicate with others and (f) disseminate.

Developing supportive organizational arrangements includes things such as assisting in scheduling and planning, and providing the personnel, equipment, and other resources required before implementation of collaborative teaching. It also includes maintaining the resource support through implementation when too often the demand outweighs the supply. The administrator may have to become creative in acquiring resources by networking with their counterparts to maximize the use of local education agency resources (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Staff development is pre-requisite to the development of the co-teaching model. School professionals must receive diverse training, initially on a knowledge/awareness level, before the new instruction model can begin. Training will need to continue

throughout implementation, but can be tailored to fit the unique needs of the specific individuals and situations involved (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Bauwens and Hourcade (1995) describe consult/reinforce and monitor as two separate functions of a change facilitator. However, a supportive administrator/change facilitator can do both simultaneously. By consulting with or informally observing a collaborative partnership, the administrator can gather information, give support, make suggestions for improvement, and listen to concerns. By being an active participant in the development process, a supportive administrator can facilitate change while making the collaborative team comfortable with the new program, support their ideas, encourage when needed and monitor the overall success of the collaborative partnership.

The last two functions that Bauwens and Hourcade (1995) discussed are communicating with others and dissemination. These two also can be described interdependently. A significant role of change facilitators is to elicit support from individuals and agencies external to the school. Communicating with others can also be dissemination. In dissemination, the change facilitator assists other schools to adopt a collaborative teaching program. Strategies that they may use could include mailing descriptive brochures, offering implementation materials or providing training to potential collaborative teaching partners.

This review examined the studies of perceptions of general and special educators about the co-teaching partnership, their preparation for their co-teaching partnership, school based supports that facilitated their cooperative teaching partnership, and best practices in co-teaching. The next section will describe the methodology used in the current study.

III. Methodology

Participants

One hundred fourteen collaborative teachers (special needs [n=35], general education [n=79] from a mid-size school district in New Jersey who taught in sixth through twelfth grade and 21 administrators, (district administrators [n=5], principals [n=5], assistant principals [n=6] and content supervisors [n=5]) were invited to participate in this study. The names of potential participants in each school building were obtained through contact with the principals, the director of special education, each school building scheduling coordinator, and the school district's personnel directory. The teachers' names were cross-referenced for special education, general education, and subject areas. The names of district administrators were chosen based on content area supervision, building supervision, district management/supervision and the fact they had a direct effect on the district's curriculum.

Of the 114 teachers that were invited to participate in the survey, 50 (44%) responded to the survey; 22 (19%) special needs teachers, and 28 (25%) general education teachers. (see Figure 1 and 2) The content areas represented by the data were from across the curriculum. Several teachers reported co-teaching multiple content areas collaboratively. Science, Social Studies, Reading, English, Social Studies/Math, Language Arts, Science/English, English/Science/Math, and Math.

Figure 1. Area of Certification for Teacher Preparation

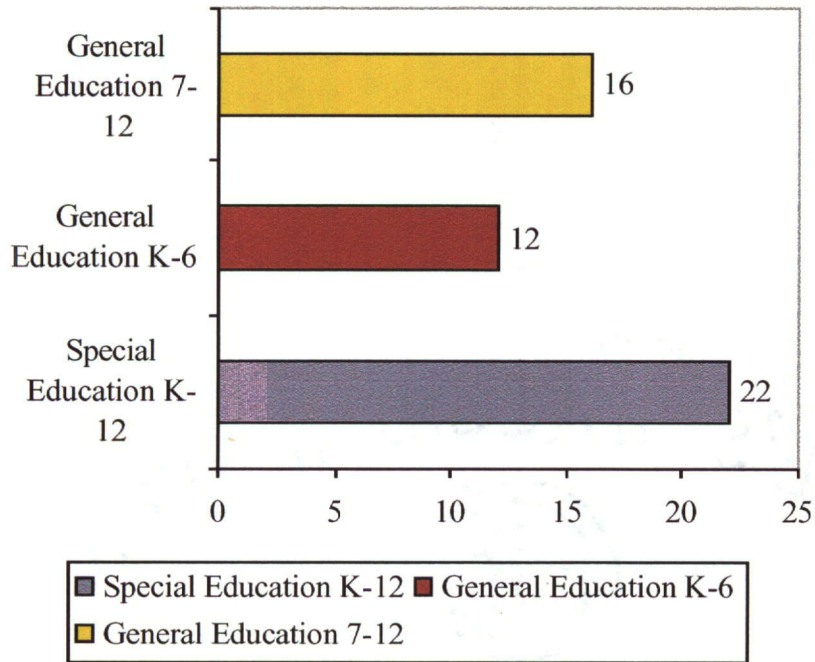
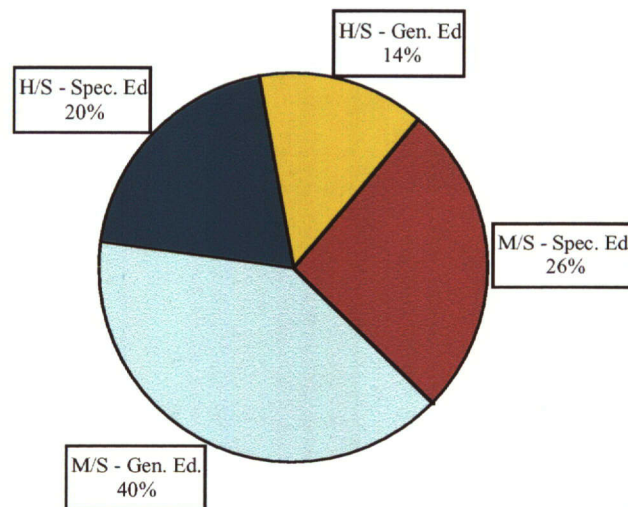


Figure 2. Collaborative Class By Area of Certification and Grade Level

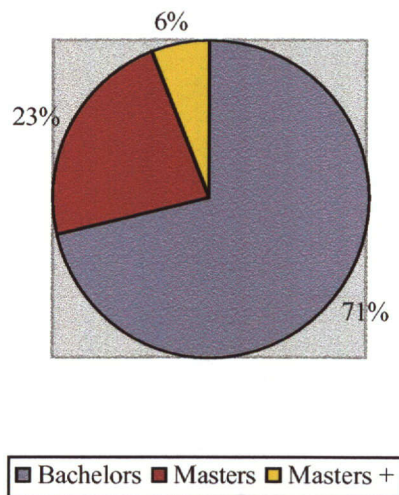


The areas of certification of the respondents were evenly distributed throughout the three categories: Special Education K-12, General Education K-6 and General

Education 7-12. 71% of the responding teachers reached the highest level of education of Bachelors Degree, 23% obtained their Masters and 6% were at Masters plus.

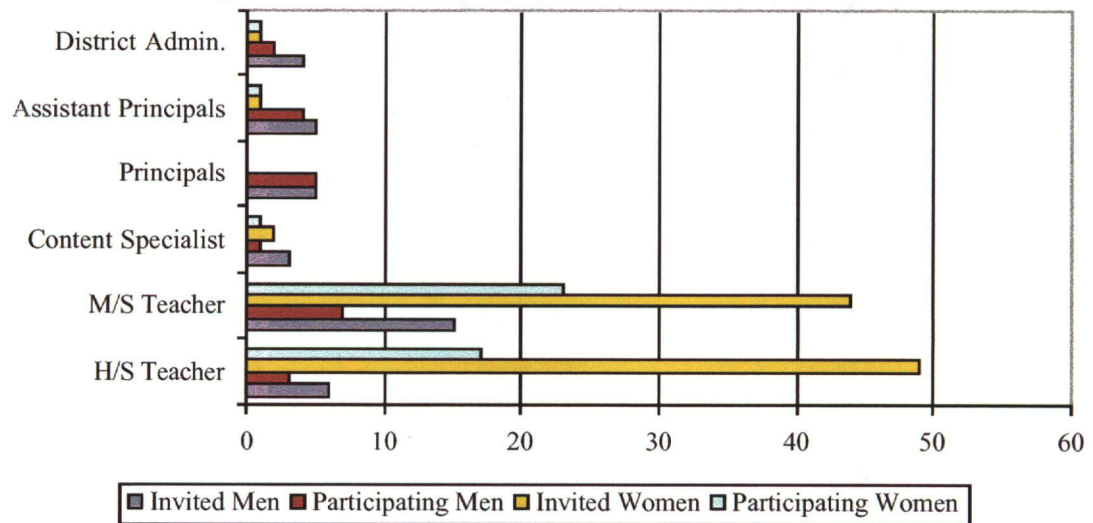
(see Figure 3) Years of teaching experience ranged from one to twenty-nine; with the highest percentage being at the ten and fifteen year marks. There was a significant correlation for the total years teaching between special education and general education partnerships. Also a correlation was found between years of collaborative teaching and years teaching with the same co-teacher, with the highest percentages being at the 2 and 3 year marks. The areas of certification of the respondents were evenly distributed throughout the three categories: Special Education K-12, General Education K-6 and General Education 7-12.

Figure 3. Highest Level of Education - Teachers



79% of the respondents were female and 21% were male. Considering that the school levels surveyed were middle school and high school in the same school district and their administrators, the researcher anticipated the female/male participants would be more evenly distributed (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Female and Male Participants



Of the 23 administrators who were invited to participate in the survey, 15 (65%) responded to the survey, 3 (60%) district administrators, 5 (100%) principals, 5 (83%) assistant principals and 2 (40%) content specialists. (see Figure 5) All levels of administration from the selected population were represented in the data. 27% were female and 73% were male. (See Figure 4 on the previous page) The majority of the responding administrators were certified general education, secondary level, as teachers. The highest level of education achieved by the administrators were 13% Doctorate, 47% Masters plus and 40% Masters. (Figure 6) The range of years teaching experience before becoming an administrator was 5 — 38, and the range of administrator experience was 1-30 years. 47% of the administrators participated in collaborative teaching partnership as a teacher.

Figure 5. Administration - Participants

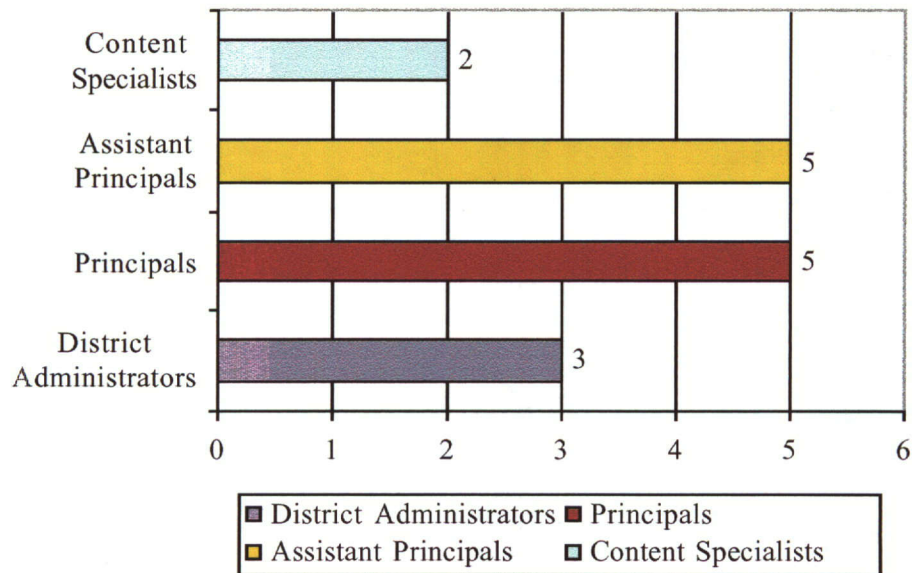
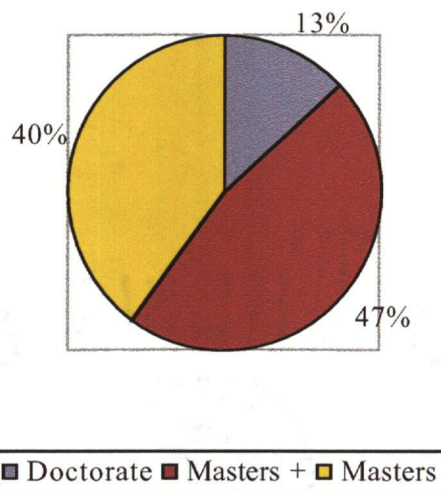


Figure 6. Highest Level of Education - Administration



Research Design/Survey Design

A survey, Perceptions of Co-teaching (see Appendix A), was modified from Austin's (2001) survey to meet the needs of this study. The original survey consisted of 60 questions, included a broader selection of content areas across the curriculum (e.g.,

physical education) that were taught collaboratively and did not contain any questions that were directed toward administration. The modified survey consisted of 35 questions, reduced the selection of content areas that were taught cooperatively, grouped common questions together in a more easily read chart, and included a section that appeared in the follow up interview instead of the original survey.

Both surveys asked the participants to answer questions on teacher perception of co-teaching, recommended collaborative practices, school-based supports that facilitate collaborative teaching, and teacher preparation. The teachers selected their degree of agreement by choosing from the various options of (a) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree in two sections of the survey; (b) very important, important, or not important in two sections, and (c) my job, shared responsibility and my partner's job in one section.

Since this survey was also given to administrators (see Appendix B), the section on perception of co-teaching was addressed to administrators instead of teachers for these participants. The survey was administered as a blind survey. Each survey was given an identifying code that corresponded with whether the person being surveyed was either a general education teacher or a special needs teacher: (GS (General/Special) and a number assigned to a special education teacher was coded for a general educator; SG (Special/General) and a number assigned to the content area of the collaborative general education teacher was coded for a special needs teacher). If the general educator or special educator were in multiple co-teaching assignments their codes were grouped in numerical cluster (e.g.: SG13IX — would be a special educator with code number 13 that collaboratively taught in I- Science and X- Math). This identified to the researcher that

the special needs educator was in two co-teaching assignments and the researcher could determine a correlation between the perception of the special needs educator and each of their co-teaching partners.

Procedure

Data Collection.. The researcher distributed the survey via the teachers' mailboxes in the school's office. The survey contained a disclaimer that explained the purpose of the survey, described the researcher's expectations of the participant teachers, and informed them of their right to decline or withdraw from participation at any time. At the end of the survey, in bold lettering, the researcher directed the participants to place the completed survey in a box on the countertop in the office marked "Survey" and requested that they do so by a given date. The researcher returned at the end of the day of the chosen date to collect the completed surveys from the box in the office.

Next the researcher prepared intra-office envelopes and a cover letter to distribute the survey to the district administrators, principals, assistant principals and content supervisors. The cover letter identified the researcher, the purpose for the survey and contained the disclaimer, referenced above, that advised the administrators of their right to decline or withdraw their participation at any time. It also directed that the completed surveys should be returned to the researcher by a given date. The cover letter and survey were placed into the envelopes and sent to the administrators via the intra-office mail system of the school district. The researcher received the completed surveys via the intra-office mail system of the school district by the specified date.

Data Analysis. The survey data were analyzed by using the statistical package SPSS 11.0 for Windows. The data was given a rating scale of 1 to 5, which corresponds with the five

options the teachers were given referenced above in the data collection section. Analyses were conducted to determine the frequency of responses of collaborative general education teachers, special education teachers, and district administrators across certain categories (i.e.: years of experience – both a teacher and administrator, areas of certification, highest level of education, male teachers vs. female teachers, mutual planning time, specific areas of responsibility, and pre-service preparation. Cross tabulations were conducted on the data from each survey item in Part II to determine frequency of responses of the special education co-teachers and the general education co-teachers, and district administrators.

IV: Results

Part II of the survey solicited the perceptions of co-teacher participants relative to current experience, recommended collaborative practices, teacher preparation, and school based supports that facilitate co-teaching. Part II of the survey for the administrators asked similar questions, but the section on perception of co-teaching partner was eliminated because it did not apply to the administrators. Analysis of each item involved the use of cross-tabulation to record the frequencies of responses of both the general and special education co-teachers.

Co-Teaching partners were asked if they worked well with their partner and if the partnership improved their teaching. The concordance between the co-teaching partners was high in relationship to working well together and collaborative teaching improving individual teaching, 63% of special educators strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% disagreed that the co-teaching partnership worked well together. 45% of the general educators strongly agreed, 39% agreed, and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Both general and special education teachers responded favorably about the affect of co-teaching on their individual teaching. 55% of special educators indicated they strongly agree, 35% agreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed. 21% of general educators strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 29% neither agreed nor disagreed and 18% disagreed. 55% of the special educators indicated that they strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% disagreed. This agreement was the highest in Math and Language Arts with 52%. (See Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

Frequency Data for Co-Teachers' Responses to Survey Item – Number 9

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Strongly Agree	63	14	45	12
Agree	27	6	39	11
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	1	18	5
Disagree	5	1	--	--

Table 2

Frequency Data for Co-Teachers' Responses to Survey Item – Number 10

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Strongly Agree	55	12	21	6
Agree	35	8	32	9
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	1	29	8
Disagree	5	1	18	5

Both general and special educators indicated opposing perceptions in the category of who does more in the collaborative classroom. 46% of the general educators indicated that they did do more than their partner while 65% of the special educators responded that they disagreed that they did more than their partner. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Frequency Data for Co-Teachers' Responses to Survey Item – Number 11

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Strongly Agree	--	--	7	2
Agree	--	--	39	11
Neither Agree or Disagree	35	8	29	8
Disagree	50	11	18	5
Strongly Disagree	15	3	7	2

Further, both groups generally agreed that co-teaching was a worthwhile experience that contributed to the improvement of their teaching. 86% of special educators agreed it was a worthwhile professional experience and 72% of the general educators indicated the same. 90% of special educator responded that they solicit feedback from their partner and 64% of general educator indicated they benefited from this feedback as well. (See Table 4 and 5)

Table 4

Frequency Data for Co-Teachers' Responses to Survey Item – Number 12

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Strongly Agree	45	10	15	4
Agree	41	9	57	16

Table 4 (continued)

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	2	2	6
Disagree	--	--	7	2
Strongly Disagree	5	1	--	--

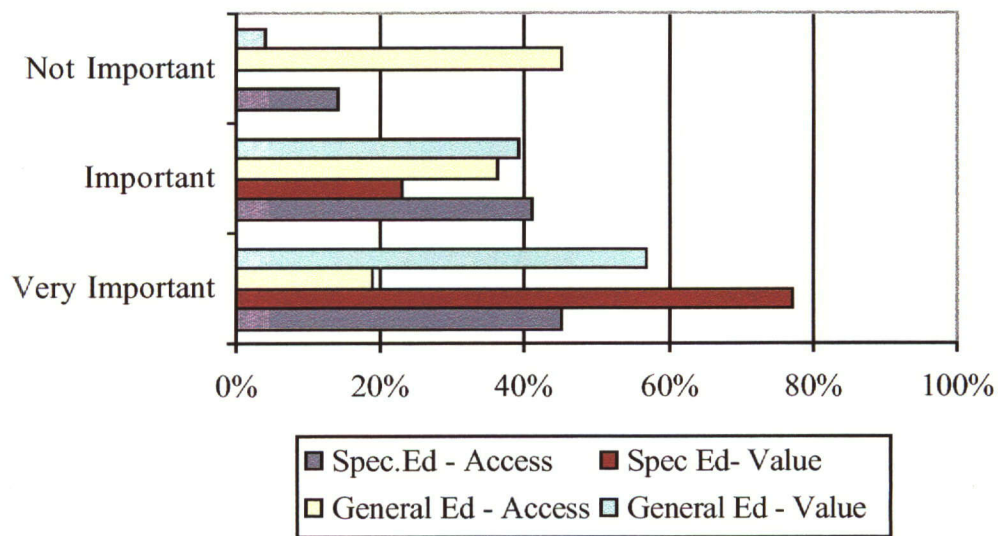
Table 5

Frequency Data for Co-Teachers' Responses to Survey Item – Number 13

Scale	Special ed.		General ed.	
	%	N	%	N
Strongly Agree	58	13	18	5
Agree	32	7	46	13
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	1	18	5
Disagree	--	--	18	5
Strongly Disagree	5	1	--	--

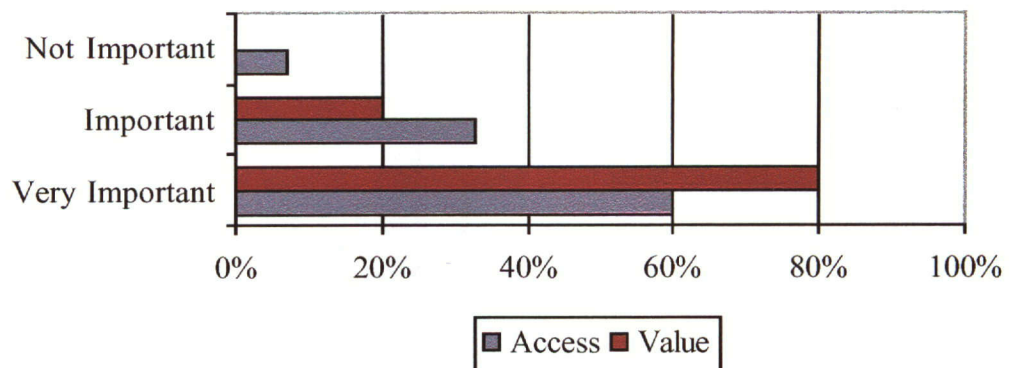
A strong concordance exists between special and general educators on valuing and having access to daily mutual planning time. 77% of special education teachers responded that they valued mutual planning time and 45% responded that having access to this time is very important. 57% of general education teachers responded that they valued mutual planning time and 19% responded that having access to this planning time very important. (see Figure 7)

Figure 7. Mutual Planning



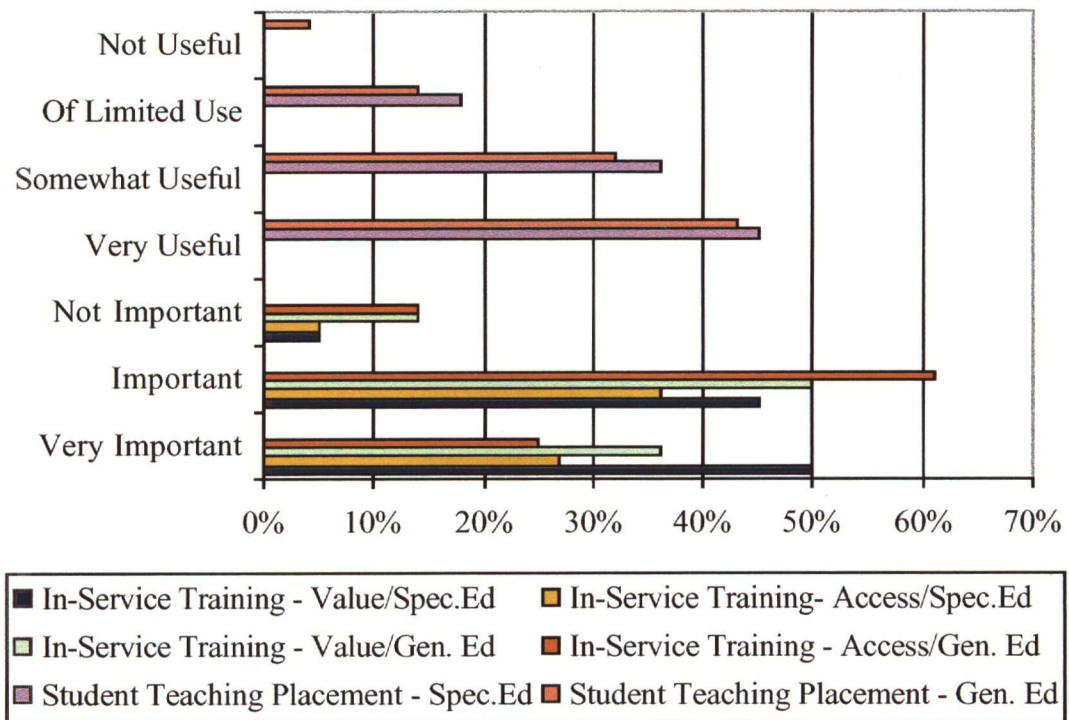
80% of the administrators indicated that they valued scheduled mutual planning time for collaborative partners and 93% responded that access to mutual planning time was very important. (see Figure 8)

Figure 8. Mutual Planning Time (Value/Access) Administrators



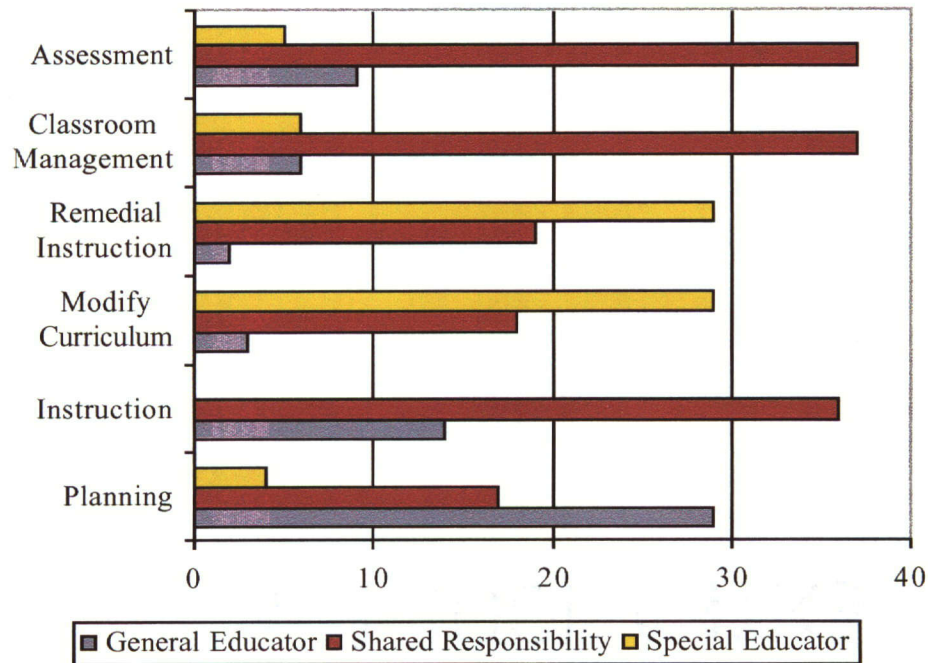
80% of all the participating teachers perceived in-service training on collaborative teaching very important, while 53% responded that having access to in-service training was very important. Student teacher placement in the collaborative class was found to have a 47% favorable response. (see Figure 9)

Figure 9. Pre-Service Preparation



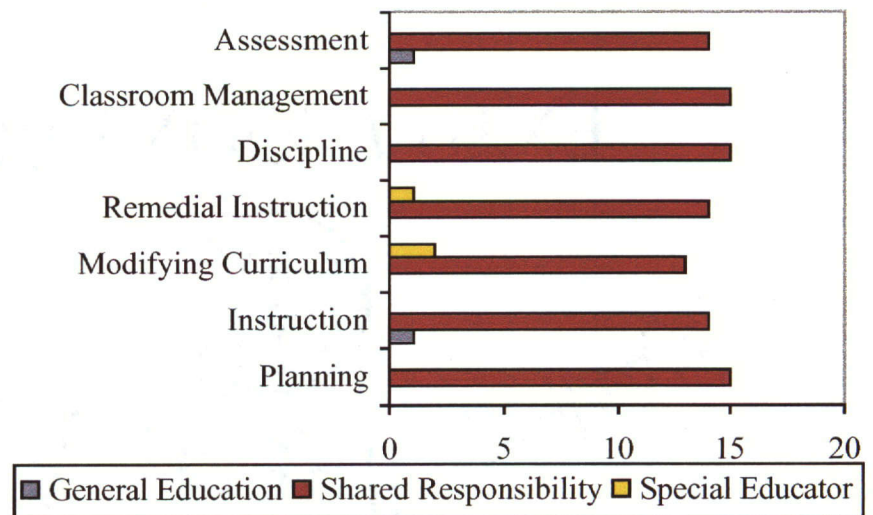
Finally, both general and special education teachers agreed that the general education teacher was responsible for planning the instruction while the special education teacher was responsible for modification of curriculum and remedial instruction. 67% agreed that co-teaching partners should meet daily to discuss lessons and modifications. They also agreed that instruction, classroom management, and assessment and grading were a shared responsibility. (see Figure10)

Figure 10. Teacher-Perceptions of Responsibilities



. The administrators valued pre-service preparation with 80% indicating that it is very important and 20% indicating it was important. Teacher access to this training was perceived by 53% of the administrators as very important. The administrators were divided on whether student teaching placement in a collaborative class was useful for preparation for the collaborative teaching partnership. 40% found this placement to be very useful, 47% found it to be somewhat useful, 7% found it to be of limited use and 6% found it not to be useful at all (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Administrator — Perception of Teacher Responsibility



Finally, the majority of the administrators agreed that the responsibilities of the inclusive classroom should be shared between the general and special educator. 100% agreed that responsibility should be shared in three categories: planning, discipline and classroom management; 93% agreed in the areas of instruction, remedial instruction and assessment and grading; 87% agreed in the area of modifying curriculum.

V. Discussion

Most of the findings of this study in the areas of collaborative teaching partners were consistent with the research findings referenced in the literature review. The data revealed that the majority of the co-teaching partnerships taught in the content areas of math, language arts, social studies and science. Bixler (as cited in Austin, 2001, p 10) posed an explanation for this outcome as English may be a more comfortable and familiar subject to instruct for both the special education and general education co-teacher. The concepts in Math and Science usually require more hands-on instruction and therefore would require the existence of a co-teaching partnership to meet the learning needs of the diverse population of the class.

The data in this study revealed a difference of perception by the teachers in the category of job responsibility from the findings found in the literature review. The literature indicated that teacher perception of the co-taught classroom was that instruction was the responsibility of the general education teacher while the support instruction was the responsibility of the special educator. Austin's (2001) study found a significant percentage of both general and special educators indicated that they believed the general education co-teacher did the most of the instruction in the inclusive classroom. Bauwens and Hourcade (1994) indicated that the special educator provide most of the support instruction, curriculum modification, remedial instruction and behavior management. The findings of this study revealed that the general and special education teachers perceived instruction, classroom management and assessment as shared responsibilities.

The literature indicated that administrators are change facilitators and it is important for them to value the change for it to be successfully implemented. The data from this study indicates that the administrators in this school district have a positive attitude toward collaborative teaching. Therefore, if the statistics in the current literature are correct, the instruction model change for this school district should be implemented successfully. The data overwhelmingly indicates that these administrators value collaborative teaching as a service model, and they perceive the general and special education teachers as equal partners, in relationship to responsibility, for success of the delivery of the new service model.

Going into this study, this researcher had some preconceived ideas on what the results of this study would show. An overwhelming negative perception of collaborative teaching by the general education teachers, and a somewhat indecisive perception from the special education teachers was anticipated. These ideas were based on the literature review, and observations. However, the outcomes from the data reveal that these perceptions were incorrect.

Most of the teachers that responded to the survey had a positive perception of collaborating teaching. The results from this study differed from the studies in the literature because most of the teachers perceived their partners as equally responsible for the workings of an inclusive classroom. The results indicated open communication between co-teaching partners, a perception of professional reliance, a development of teacher preparation practices and a presence of school-based supports that facilitate collaborative teaching. These results may have been positively influenced by the administrative support for collaborative teaching, the correlation between the number of

years teaching collaboratively and the number of years teaching with the same collaborative partner, and this district's apparent initiative to develop a successful collaborative teaching service delivery model.

The administrators who responded to the survey projected an overwhelmingly positive perception of collaborative teaching as an instruction delivery model for both students with and without disabilities. The results from this study exemplify what the literature indicates as a positive change facilitator (Hord et al., as cited in Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). The influence of a positive administrator is apparently encouraging an effective change in the co-teaching model of this school district.

Limitations

There are limitations that are indicated by the results of this study. The design of the survey, Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching, and the accuracy of the responses from both the teachers and administrators based on this instrument and their perceived use for the study. Comments written on the surveys indicated that certain questions were not completely understood but the respondent selected an answer based on their interpretation of the meaning of the question. These respondents only represented 5% of the overall responding populations, however, in a larger population sample its impact may negatively skew the results.

Based on this information, another aspect of the data would need to be examined. The accuracy (truthfulness) of the responses would have to be verified. With this school district's initiative in Collaborative Teaching, the perceived expected correct answer may be a positive perception of the Collaborative Teaching Model. The survey did not ask questions that allowed a separation of responses for multi-collaborative partners and

therefore their response may only be based on the positive partnership instead of their entire collaborative teaching experience.

This study was done in a mid-sized school district and the number of participants was lower than anticipated. Therefore, a generalization of the data is not possible.

Based on these elements, if the study was to be done again, the design flaws in the survey (Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching, Austin 2000), the limited respondent totals and the truthfulness of the respondents would need to be addressed.

Recommendations

The recommendations this researcher would make to further this study would be include the perceptions of both the students that are receiving the instruction in the collaborative teaching classroom and their parents. The perceptions of one or both groups could have an impact on the effectiveness of the Collaborative Teaching Partnership. Broadening the scope of the study to include several school districts instead of only using one.

References

- Adams, L. (1993). Metaphors of the co-taught classroom. *Preventing School Failure*; 37, 28-35.
- Austin, Vance L. (2001) Teachers beliefs about co-teaching. *Remedial & Special Education*; 22, 245-256.
- Bäuwens, J. & Hourcade, J. (1991) Making co-teaching a mainstreaming strategy. *Preventing School Failure*; 35, 1-19.
- Bäuwens, J & Hourcade, J. (1995) Cooperative teaching: Rebuilding the schoolhouse for all students. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- DeBoer, A. & Fister, S. (1995). Working together: Tools for collaborative teaching, Longmont, CO: Sopris Est
- Dieker, L. (2001) What are the characteristics of effective middle and high school co-taught teams for students with disabilities? *Preventing school failure*; 46, 14-24.
- Duchardt, B., Marlow, L., Inman, D., Christensen, P.(1999) Collaboration and co-teaching:general and special education faculty. *Clearing House*,72, 186-192.
- Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1996) Interactions: Collaboration skills for school Professionals (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gibb, G., Young, J., Allred, K., Dyches, T., Egan, W., & Ingram, C. (1997) A team-based junior high inclusion program, *Remedial and Special Education*, 18, 243-244.

- Gartner, A. & Lipsky, D. (1987). Beyond special education: Toward a quality system for all students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57, 367-375.
- Gately, S. & Gately, F. (2001, Mar/Apr) Understanding co-teaching components. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40-45.
- Jones, H. & Rapport, M. (1997, Nov/Dec) Research to practice in inclusive early childhood education. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 57-64.
- Mayberry, S. (2002) Teaching students with special needs in the 21st century classroom, Lanham, Md. :Scarecrow Press.
- Murawski, W., Weichel, Swanson, H. (2001) A Meta-analysis of co-teaching research, *Remedial & Special Education*, 22, 1-23
- Nowacek, J.E. (1992) Professional talk about teaching together: Interviews with five collaborating teachers. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 27, 262-276.
- Olson, M., Chalmers, L., & Hoover, J. (1997) Attitudes and attributes of general education teachers identified as effective inclusionists. *Remedial and Special Education*, 18, 28-35.
- Reeve, P. (1994) Practical questions about collaboration between general and special educators. *Focus on Exceptional Children*; 26, 245-259.
- Summey, H & Strahan, D. (1997). An exploratory study of mainstreamed seventh graders' perceptions of an inclusive approach to instruction. *Remedial and Special Education*, 18, 36-48.
- Will, M.C. (1986). Educating students with learning problems: A shared responsibility. *Exceptional Children*, 52, 411-415.

Wood, M. (1998). Whose job is it anyway? Educational roles in inclusion.

Exceptional Children, 64, 181-195.

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

2004-58

RECEIVED FEB 04 2004

Appendix C

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
DISPOSITION FORM**

RitaAnna Bell

Principal Investigator

Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable)

420 Woodstown Rd

Address of Principal Investigator

Address of Co-Principal Investigator

Woolwich Twp, NJ 08085

City, State, and Zip Code

City, State, and Zip Code

856-467-4087

Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

TITLE OF

RESEARCH: Perceptions of Co-teaching

ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITION - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Your claim for exemption for the research study identified above has been reviewed. The action taken is indicated below:

_____ **APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION AS CLAIMED: CATEGORY #** _____

Note: Anything that materially changes the exempt status of this study must be presented to the IRB for approval before the changes are implemented. Such modifications should be sent to the IRB Office at the address above.

_____ **APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION - BUT NOT AS CLAIMED.** Your claim for exemption does not fit the criteria for exemption designated in your proposal. However, the study does meet the criteria for exemption under CATEGORY # _____.

_____ **A determination regarding the exempt status of this study cannot be made at this time.** Additional information is required.

_____ **Your proposal does not meet the criteria for exemption, and a full review will be provided by the IRB.**

EXPEDITED REVIEW: _____ ☒ Approved _____ Denied

FULL REVIEW : _____ Approved _____ Approved with modifications _____ Denied

DENIED: _____

See attached Committee Action Letter for additional comments.

Appendix B

Survey : Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching For Teachers

Perceptions of Co-teaching Survey

This survey is a research project that I am conducting for my Master's thesis. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested.

Part One Teacher Information

Definition of Terms:

Collaborative Teaching or Co-Teaching refers to the assignment of a general education teacher and a special education teacher to work together, sharing responsibility for the planning and execution of instruction.

Collaborative teachers or co-teachers, as defined for the purposes of this study, are general and special education teachers who are teamed for providing instruction to a heterogeneous class of one or more periods of instruction per day.

1. Please mark the grade level of the collaborative class that you teach. (*Mark Only One*)

____ Elementary

____ Middle School

____ High School

2. Check the content area(s) of the class(es) that you teach collaboratively. (*Mark all that apply.*)

____ Reading

____ Social Studies

____ Science

____ English/Language Arts

____ Mathematics

3. Please mark the area of certification in which you are currently employed. *(Mark only one)*

_____ Special Education K-12

_____ General Education (Elementary K-6)

_____ General Education (Secondary 7 – 12)

4. Check the *highest* level of education you have achieved. *(Mark only one)*

_____ Bachelors

_____ Masters

_____ Master +

_____ Doctorate

5. How many total years of teaching experience do you have?

_____ years

6. What is your gender? *(Mark only one)*

_____ Male

_____ Female

7. Please write the number of:

Years as a collaborative teacher _____ years

Years taught with this co-teacher _____ years

Number of teachers with whom you co-teach daily _____ teachers

Number of classes you teach collaboratively daily _____ classes

Number of subjects you teach collaboratively daily _____ subjects

8. Did you volunteer for this collaborative teaching experience? *(Mark only one)*

_____ Yes

_____ No

Part Two
Co-teacher Perceptions of Current Experience

Please circle a number from 1 to 5 to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below about co-teaching. *(Mark one response for each item)*

#	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	My co-teaching partner and I work very well together.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Collaboration has improved my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
11	In my collaborative experience, I do more than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Co-teaching is a worthwhile professional experience	1	2	3	4	5
13	My partner and I solicit each other's feedback and benefit from it.	1	2	3	4	5

Recommended Collaborative Practices

#	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	Co-teachers should meet daily to plan lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Co-teachers should share classroom management	1	2	3	4	5
16	Co-teachers should share classroom instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Co-teachers should establish and maintain specific areas of responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5

School-based Supports that Facilitate Collaborative Teaching

What kinds of **school-based services** should be provided in order to facilitate collaborative teaching? For the purpose of this study, **school-based services** are defined as services including teaching materials/equipment, administrative support, and provision of adequate planning time.

Please circle a number from 1 to 3 to indicate the importance you place on each of the following school-based supports. You are asked to rate each statement according to

- (a) your belief in the value of the school-based service (**Column titled "Value"**) and
- (b) whether you currently have access to or receive the school-based service (**Column titled "Access"**). *(For this question, mark two responses for each item).*

			VALUE			ACCESS TO	
#	Statement	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important
18	Mutual planning time (scheduled)	1	2	3	1	2	3
19	Administrative support of collaboration	1	2	3	1	2	3
20	Adequate teaching aids and supplies	1	2	3	1	2	3
21	In-service training (workshops)	1	2	3	1	2	3
22	Summer planning time allocated	1	2	3	1	2	3
23	Opportunities to modify classroom configuration	1	2	3	1	2	3

Part Three
Teacher Preparation for Collaborative Teaching

What kinds of academic preparation do you think would be beneficial to collaborative teaching? Please circle 1 to 4 beside the following academic preparation that best describes your perception of its usefulness to a collaborative teacher. (*Mark only one for each item*)

#	Statement	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Of limited Use	Not Useful
24	Student teaching placement in a collaborative class.	1	2	3	4
25	School district in-service presentations on alternative assessments	1	2	3	4
26	School district workshops on facilitating collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
27	Mentoring by experienced collaborative teacher(s)	1	2	3	4
28	Pre-service courses in collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
29	Pre-service special education courses for general education teachers	1	2	3	4
30	Pre-service general education courses for special education teachers	1	2	3	4

Part Four
Responsibilities in the Inclusive Classroom

What are your responsibilities in the inclusive classroom? Which of these are exclusively your responsibilities? Which of these are exclusively the responsibilities of your partner? Which of these do you share? Please check the appropriate response.
(Mark only one column for each item)

	My job	Shared responsibility	My partner's job
Planning lessons	_____	_____	_____
Instruction	_____	_____	_____
Modifying curriculum	_____	_____	_____
Remedial instruction	_____	_____	_____
Administering discipline	_____	_____	_____
Classroom management	_____	_____	_____
Assessment and grading	_____	_____	_____

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. Your responses have provided valuable information that will contribute to this study.

Survey adapted from: Austin, V. (2001) Teachers' Beliefs About Co-Teaching: Survey: Perceptions of Co-Teaching, Remedial & Special Education, Jul/Aug, Vol. 22, Issue 4.

Please return to Rita Bell – WMS via the inter-office mail envelope by February 4.

Appendix C

Survey: Perceptions of Collaborative Teaching For Administrators

Perceptions of Co-teaching Survey Administrators

This survey is a research project that I am conducting. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested.

Part One Administrator Information

Definition of Terms:

Collaborative Teaching or Co-Teaching refers to the assignment of a general education teacher and a special education teacher to work together, sharing responsibility for the planning and execution of instruction.

Collaborative teachers or co-teachers, as defined for the purposes of this study, are general and special education teachers who are teamed for providing instruction to a heterogeneous class of one or more periods of instruction per day.

Administrator - refers to district administrators, principals, assistant principals and supervisory staff that are responsible for the supervision of certified staff.

1. Please mark the grade level of the school that you are the administrator. (*Mark all that apply*)

☐ Elementary

☐ Middle School

☐ High School

2. What is your administrative position? (*Mark only one*)

☐ District Administrator

☐ Principal

☐ Assistant Principal

☐ Content Supervisor

3. How many total years of administrative experience do you have?

_____ years.

4. Check the *highest* level of education you have achieved. (*Mark only one*)

_____ Masters

_____ Master +

_____ Doctorate

5. When you were a teacher, what area(s) of certification were you employed?
(*Check all that apply*)

_____ Special Education K-12

_____ General Education (Elementary K-6)

_____ General Education (Secondary 7 – 12)

6. How many total years of teaching experience do you have?

_____ years

7. Do you have teaching experience in a collaborative classroom? (*Mark only one*)

_____ Yes

_____ No

8. What is your gender? (*Mark only one*)

_____ Male

_____ Female

Part Two
Administrator perception of co-teaching

Please circle a number from 1 to 5 to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below about co-teaching. (*Mark one response for each item*)

#	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	Co-teachers should meet daily to plan lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Co-teachers should share classroom management	1	2	3	4	5
11	Co-teachers should share classroom instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Co-teachers should establish and maintain specific areas of responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Co-teachers share responsibility for all aspects of the co-taught classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

School-based Supports that Facilitate Collaborative Teaching

What kinds of **school-based services** should be provided in order to facilitate collaborative teaching? For the purpose of this study, **school-based services** are defined as services including teaching materials/equipment, administrative support, and provision of adequate planning time.

Please circle a number from 1 to 3 to indicate the importance you place on each of the following school-based supports. You are asked to rate each statement according to

- (a) your belief in the value of the school-based service (**Column titled "Value"**) and
- (b) whether your staff currently has access to or receive the school-based service (**Column titled "Access"**). *(For this question, mark two responses for each item)*

#	Statement	VALUE			ACCESS		
		Very Important	Important	Not Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important
14	Mutual planning time (scheduled)	1	2	3	1	2	3
15	Administrative support of collaboration	1	2	3	1	2	3
16	Adequate teaching aids and supplies	1	2	3	1	2	3
17	In-service training (workshops)	1	2	3	1	2	3
18	Summer planning time allocated	1	2	3	1	2	3
19	Opportunities to modify classroom configuration	1	2	3	1	2	3

Part Three
Teacher Preparation for Collaborative Teaching

What kinds of academic preparation do you think would be beneficial to collaborative teaching? Please circle 1 to 4 beside the following academic preparation that best describes your perception of its usefulness to a collaborative teacher. *(Mark one only)*

#	Statement	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Of limited Use	Not Useful
20	Student teaching placement in a collaborative class.	1	2	3	4
21	School district in-service presentations on alternative assessments	1	2	3	4
22	School district workshops on facilitating collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
23	Mentoring by experienced collaborative teacher(s)	1	2	3	4
24	Pre-service courses in collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
25	Pre-service special education courses for general education teachers	1	2	3	4
26	Pre-service general education courses for special education teachers	1	2	3	4

Part Four
Responsibilities in the Inclusive Classroom

What are responsibilities of the co-teaching partner's in the inclusive classroom? Which of these are exclusively the general educator's responsibilities? Which of these are exclusively the special educator's responsibilities? **Which** of these are shared responsibilities of both the general and special educators? Please check the appropriate response. *(Mark only one column for each item)*

	General Educator	Shared responsibility	Special Educator
Planning lessons	_____	_____	_____
Instruction	_____	_____	_____
Modifying curriculum	_____	_____	_____
Remedial instruction	_____	_____	_____
Administering discipline	_____	_____	_____
Classroom management	_____	_____	_____
Assessment and grading	_____	_____	_____

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. Your responses have provided valuable information that will contribute to this study.

Survey adapted from: Austin, V. (2001) Teachers' Beliefs About Co-Teaching: Survey: Perceptions of Co-Teaching, Remedial & Special Education, Jul/Aug, Vol. 22, Issue 4.

Please return the completed survey to Rita Bell at WMS by November 17.
