

General and Special Education Co-Teaching: Levels of Agreement Among High School Educators

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if general education and special education teachers shared similar, or different, views on multiple aspects and philosophies tied to a co-teaching classroom. Perspectives were surveyed regarding physical classroom space, interactions with parents and colleagues, behavior management, and various aspects of instruction, among other topics.

Quantitative data were collected via online survey tools. Surveys were sent to both general education and special education teachers at the secondary level in a large school district who were currently assigned to a co-teaching placement. Survey data was analyzed utilizing a Chi-Square test of Independence through JASP software. The results of the data collected indicate that both general education teachers and special education teachers felt that they shared similar, or very similar views regarding aspects of the co-teaching classroom with their co-teaching partner.

Dedication

This work is dedicated first to my family who have supported me every step of the way in this journey.

To my parents, who from a young age have held me to a the highest of standards; who always encouraged me to chase my dreams; who have provided me endless amounts of wisdom, I thank you. You both sacrificed so much to ensure that I had the greatest education available to lay the groundwork for where I am today. I can never repay you for your dedication and love.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose Statement.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	3
Delimitations.....	4
Assumptions.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	8
Overview of the Methodology.....	9
Organization of the Study.....	9
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature.....	11
History of Inclusion.....	11
Co-Teaching.....	14
Models of Co-teaching.....	15
Components of Co-teaching.....	20
Behavior Management and Co-teaching.....	27

Benefits of Co-Teaching.....	28
Barriers to Co-Teaching	29
Summary.....	30
Chapter Three: Methods	32
Research Design	32
Population and Sample	34
Sampling Procedures	34
Instrumentation	34
Measurement.....	35
Validity and reliability	35
Data Collection Procedures	36
Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing	37
Limitations.....	41
Summary.....	42
Chapter Four: Results	43
Descriptive Statistics	43
Hypothesis Testing	44
Summary.....	63
Chapter Five: Interpretation and Recommendations	64
Study Summary	64
Overview of the problem	64
Purpose statement and research questions	65
Review of the methodology.....	65

Major Findings.....	65
Findings Related to the Literature	66
Conclusions.....	67
Implications for action.....	67
Recommendations for future research	67
Concluding remarks.....	68
References.....	70
Appendices	77
Appendix A. Adapted Co-Teaching Relationship Scale	78
Appendix B. Research Proposal to School District A	81
Appendix C. Institutional Review Board Proposal.....	83
Appendix D. School District Approval	87
Appendix E. Institutional Review Board Approval Letter	89
Appendix F. Email to Sample Population for Survey Participation	91
Appendix G. Email for Permission for Survey Usage.....	93

List of Tables

Table 1. Study Variables and Corresponding Survey Item Number	33
Table 2. Summary of Descriptive Survey Item Analysis Results by High to Low	44
Table 3. Survey Item 1.....	45
Table 4. Survey Item 2.....	46
Table 5. Survey Item 3.....	47
Table 6. Survey Item 4.....	48
Table 7. Survey Item 5.....	49
Table 8. Survey Item 6.....	50
Table 9. Survey Item 7.....	51
Table 10. Survey Item 8.....	52
Table 11. Survey Item 9.....	53
Table 12. Survey Item 10.....	54
Table 13. Survey Item 11.....	55
Table 14. Survey Item 12.....	56
Table 15. Survey Item 13.....	57
Table 16. Survey Item 14.....	58
Table 17. Survey Item 15.....	59
Table 18. Survey Item 16.....	60
Table 19. Survey Item 17.....	61
Table 20. Survey Item 18.....	62
Table 21. Survey Item 19.....	63

Chapter One

Introduction

When effective collaboration occurs between general education and special education teachers, students with disabilities can successfully be included in general education programs and given access to curriculum previously unavailable to them. Collaboration, in educational terms, is defined as two professionals of equal standing, participating in co-planning on a voluntary basis to achieve common goals (Friend & Cook, 2006). One form of collaboration is cooperative teaching, or co-teaching.

Co-teaching is an instructional method that makes curriculum more accessible to a variety of students, regardless of disability or special need and reduces fragmentation of instructional services for students who receive support through resource classrooms and similar programs (Dettmer, Thurston, Knackendoffel, & Dyck, 2012). Co-teaching can further be defined as the process of "two or more educators possessing distinct sets of knowledge and skills working together to teach a heterogeneous group of students in the general education classroom" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 46). By allowing students access to the general education classroom, students are given access to better curriculum and highly qualified content area teachers.

However, for co-teaching to be successful, both teaching partners have to be committed to all aspects of this teaching relationship, often referred to as a professional marriage (Cook & Friend, 2010). In 2001, McCormick, Noonan, Ogata & Heck conducted a study that considered an association between the relationship between co-teachers regarding both the social and instructional aspects of the classroom environment. This study identified a significant relationship between the quality of program and instruction being delivered and the co-teacher

relationship. When there is a disconnect in this relationship, this method of teaching is unsuccessful. Co-teaching instructors need to understand the purpose of co-teaching and the different co-teaching approaches that exist for this instructional strategy to be effective. Understanding the perspective of both teaching parties is a critical component in making a co-teaching team successful.

Background

This study took place in a large suburban school district in the Midwest with an enrollment of over 27,000 students. The district has one early childhood center, 33 elementary schools, five middle schools, five high schools, and one alternative high school and spans over 72 square miles and 14 municipalities. School District A has a predominately white student body (63.7%), with 17.5% reporting as Hispanic, 9.9% reporting as Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or multiple ethnicities, and 8.9% reporting as African American (KSDE, 2015).

Over the last ten years, co-teaching was introduced gradually to School District A at the secondary level to increase service delivery to students with various needs throughout the district. This initiative graduated to the level that all secondary special education case managers co-teach a majority of the day.

Statement of the Problem

Co-teaching is a popular instructional model to serve the needs of students with identified disabilities. As many states prepare to roll out the Common Core Standards, co-teaching is a highly suggested instructional method to be used to aid students with special needs to succeed with these more rigorous standards.

All high schools in School District A currently have what are referred to as "co-taught classes." A significant problem identified by district administration over the years, is that these co-taught classes do not necessarily follow the model of co-teaching as written. This observation by administration raises the question if teachers truly understand what a co-taught class should look like. In the case that a co-teacher does understand the co-taught model, many continue to question how to implement this instructional method successfully.

To successfully implement the co-teaching model, the process must begin with a successful co-teaching partnership. When a discussion takes place with those involved in co-teaching, many teachers appear to have conflicting views on multiple aspects of education. This study sought to define how general education and special education teachers perceived themselves to be regarding multiple aspects and philosophies in a co-teaching relationship.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of general education and special education teachers who share responsibilities in co-teaching classrooms. The data regarding teacher perceptions will be used to create appropriate professional development that will provide teachers with the knowledge and tools to appropriately implement co-teaching as an instructional strategy across various curriculums. Data gathered will be used at a district level to evaluate existing co-teaching classrooms and to create successful co-taught partnerships in the future.

Significance of the Study

As the Common Core State Standards are implemented across the country, schools need to discover ways to meet the needs of all learners, as students are challenged in ways that they have never been challenged before (Nichols, Dowdy & Nichols, 2010). The curriculum will

become harder and the depth of knowledge deeper. Co-teaching is one way to serve students with disabilities and special needs, in a general education setting, giving them equal access to the same curriculum as their typically developing peers (Schnorr, Black, & Davern, 2000). The inclusion of special education students has increased as federal mandates, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), mandated that all students, regardless of ability, be evaluated using state and district assessments (Moore, Gilbreath, & Maiuri, 1998). In addition, when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized, the act was mandated that all special education teachers need to be highly qualified in any content area that they are teaching. With the adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), in November 2015, programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are reauthorized for four years. ESSA continues to put provisions in place to see to the success of all children, regardless of ability (School Administrators Association of New York State, 2015). The prediction is that that the transition from NCLB to ESSA will cause a shift from more testing to less testing for all students. Co-teaching allows special education teachers to collaborate with highly qualified content area teachers, therefore providing a solution beyond having a special education teacher become highly qualified in every core content area.

For co-teaching to be successful, both parties have to understand how effective co-teaching works and truly collaborate with each other to better the opportunities for students in the classroom (Pugach, Johnson & Drame, 2012). For teachers to successfully collaborate, both parties need to be able to share resources and decision-making responsibilities, as well as understand and respect each other's roles and beliefs in the educational setting (Murawski, 2009).

Delimitations

“Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). The following delimiters were imposed on this study:

- Participants of this study were limited to high school teachers who were currently co-teaching during the 2016-2017 school year.
- Participants in this study were limited to employees of School District A and findings may not generalize to other school districts or settings.
- This study was conducted only in secondary classrooms in School District A that were approved by the building principals as well as district supervisors.
- This study was conducted only with teachers who had, at least, one year of co-teaching experience.

Assumptions

“Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 135). The researcher, while conducting this study, made the following assumptions:

1. An assumption was made that the participants would respond honestly to the survey questions presented.
2. An assumption was made that the recollections/information from the participants were accurate.
3. An assumption was made that survey instruments were appropriate forms of measurement to obtain survey participant's perceptions of existing co-teaching practices.

4. An assumption was made that the survey data were accurately downloaded from the survey software.
5. An assumption was made that responses were based upon personal professional experiences.

Research Questions

The research questions investigated in this study were:

RQ1. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ2. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding classroom scheduling in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ3. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to structure student activities in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ4. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be, in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ5. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how students learn in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ6. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding their beliefs about inclusion in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ7. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teachers views on how to adapt and individualize activities in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ8. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ9. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ10. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding views on parent involvement in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ11. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teacher desire to try new things in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ12. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding each individual teacher's confidence as an educator in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ13. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ14. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding approaches to education planning in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ15. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ16. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding sense of humor in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ17. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ18. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding interest in learning new things in a co-teaching partnership?

RQ19. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding dedication to teaching in a co-teaching partnership?

Definition of Terms

Co-Teacher. Two educators (one general education and one special education) who engage in lesson planning, delivering instruction, monitoring behavior, assessing instruction, and assessing academic progress for a single group of students with and without disabilities. (Pugach, Johnson, Drame & Williams, 2012).

Direct Instruction. A research-based instructional approach in which the instructor presents subject matter using a review of previously taught information, presentation of new concepts or skills, guided practice, feedback and correction, and independent practice (Friend & Bursuck, 2012).

General education. Curriculum and instruction delivered to students with and without disabilities. Students are not separated, and the majority of students spend their day in this setting (NCLB, 2001).

Incidental Instruction. Instruction conducted during unstructured activities for brief periods of time, typically when students show an interest in or are involved with materials and activities (Brown, McEvoy & Bishop, 1991).

Resource Room. Placement/setting in which the special education teacher delivers instruction outside of a general education setting for part of the day to students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004).

Self-contained. Placement/setting outside of the general education classroom in which the special education teacher delivers instruction for more than 50 % of the day to students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004).

Special education. Specially designed instruction for students with disabilities delivered by a school district or education agency in the general education or special education classroom (IDEA, 2004).

Overview of the Methodology

The population for this study included all secondary co-teachers and administrators in a Midwestern suburban school district. Purposive sampling was used for participant selection. The researcher conducted a survey and reported the data as collected. The district's Assessment Department assisted in collecting and interpreting the data results. The researcher analyzed the data collected to determine the effectiveness of the co-teaching model in the school district, according to the perspectives of those surveyed. Recommendations were made to district personnel regarding training and implementation of the co-teaching model.

Organization of the Study

The first chapter of this study presented the components of the study including background for the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations and assumptions, research questions, definition of terms, and an overview of the methodology used. Chapter two reviews pertinent literature related to the proposed research questions. This chapter contains the history of co-teaching in schools, rationale for utilizing the co-teaching method, various methods of co-teaching, and training available for the co-teaching model. Chapter three explains the design of the study and the methodology used to conduct the research. The results of the hypothesis testing for each research question are reported in chapter four. Chapter five provides a summary of the findings related to the literature, interpretation of the results of the data analysis, a statement of the conclusion drawn, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the literature relating to co-teaching and collaboration within schools. The information is organized into sections reviewing the history of inclusion, co-teaching, models of co-teaching, components of co-teaching, benefits of co-teaching and barriers of co-teaching.

History of Inclusion

The Department of Special Education was established by the United States Department of Education in 1931, which petitioned for all students, regardless of ability or disability to be included in a public school setting. By 1952, the majority of states had passed different forms of legislation that provided services within the public school setting for students with a variety of disabilities, both physical disabilities, as well as mental disabilities.

In 1972, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) brought suit against the State of Pennsylvania on a claim that all students, regardless of ability, are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (Yell, 2012). This case was the first step toward the passage of the Education of all Handicapped Children Act (Yell, 2012). In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act was enacted which required schools to provide education to all children in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The act also required that all children in the United States were entitled to FAPE. The LRE for every child should always begin with the general education classroom, providing appropriate supports and services as determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). When reviewing LRE, the IEP team, which consists of educators, administrators, related services providers, parents, and the student, must look at all environmental options and supports to determine where the child

will be able to obtain the maximum benefit to their education programming (United States Department of Education, 2004).

After the passage of the Act in 1975, the momentum gained for inclusive education for all students. The momentum behind the act forced school districts, educators, and parents to find ways to deliver service that would benefit all students, including those with disabilities. In 1997, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) added the provision that children with disabilities were *guaranteed* access to the general education curriculum (United States Department of Education, 2007). This meant that students with disabilities had the right to the same state, district, and school curriculum that was provided to students without disabilities, greatly raising expectations for the performance of students with disabilities.

Following the passage of IDEA, it was also determined that students with disabilities not only have access to the general education curriculum to be involved in the curriculum. The law stipulates that IEP goals must address how students will be involved in the general education curriculum. Furthermore, IDEA requires schools to identify how the individual student will progress through the curriculum, as well as identify the appropriate aids, services, accommodations and modifications for the student to do so. The IEP must also address if the student will not be participating in general education classes during any portion of their day and the justification for the team's decision regarding educational placement (United States Department of Education, 2004).

In 2004, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) required that students with disabilities be instructed in the least restrictive environment, to the greatest extent appropriate. The intent of the passage of IDEIA was to ensure that special education law was aligned with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB). NCLB stated that all children,

regardless of identification, are required to receive instruction and meet state assessment benchmarks (NCLB, 2002). During this latest revision of IDEA, the law focused on schools using the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and required that all students, regardless of ability, receive instruction from highly qualified teachers (Kupper & Guitierrez, 2000). RTI requires that students receive high-quality instruction and that all students are screened and monitored for academic needs. As students are identified as struggling, tiered interventions are put in place as a means of servicing the student's academic needs.

In 2008, the United States Department of Education reported that approximately 95% of students with disabilities received services in the general education setting during some point of their school day, with approximately half of these students being present in the general education classroom for more than 80% of their day (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). With the increasing numbers of identified students being served in general education classroom, something had to be done to better prepare our teachers and to ensure that all students were receiving the education they deserved. Teachers and leaders needed to be able to support the needs of all learners in an inclusive setting. Co-teaching has been one way that schools have found to meet the needs of students in the general education setting.

In November of 2015, the House passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for four years. ESSA was to be implemented in all schools during the 2016-2017 school year (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). A key change from NCLB that ESSA implements includes significantly less standardized testing, in addition to allowing nationally recognized tests, such as the ACT or SAT to be utilized at the high school level with state permission to measure progress. In addition to a transition period of testing, ESSA provided states with more

discretion in setting goals and how and when to hold school districts accountable regarding low-performance (School Administrators Association of New York State, 2015). States will no longer be able only to utilize test scores to determine accountability, and must factor in other factors such as students' opportunity to learn, teacher engagement, access to advanced curriculum, and school climate. ESSA will permit states to make their own decisions regarding testing and standards with limited interference from the U.S. Secretary of Education. Additionally, ESSA will provide states with more flexibility regarding Maintenance of Effort (MOE) (Texas Association of School Boards, 2015).

One key piece of ESSA that will strongly impact students identified as needing special education, will require schools to develop evidence-based plans to help specific sub-groups of struggling students. This provision requires schools to look at effective, research-based strategies such as co-Teaching to effectively meet the needs of all students to close the achievement gap (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).

Co-Teaching

Co-teaching has been identified as a preferred strategy for meeting the needs of a variety of learners within one setting (Friend & Cook, 2013). Within a co-taught classroom, there are two professionals: one general education teacher and one special education teacher. Studies have shown that it is imperative that co-teachers be committed to providing quality instruction for all students in the classroom, both general education students and students that are identified as special education (Austin, 2001). In a study in 2004, Keefe, Moore, and Duff identified the importance of the co-teaching relationship. The study revealed that both regular education teachers and special education teachers felt that having a choice of their partner, as well as being able to have open communication about their individual roles, responsibilities, grading and

planning, created positive outcomes for students. In addition, Deiker established that it is critical to clarify teacher's roles and expectations before beginning the co-teaching experience (2001). Multiple studies of both qualitative and anecdotal data have been conducted that have shown that how co-teachers relate to one another determines whether the collaboration survives, and whether effective instruction can take place within the co-teaching classroom (Lieber, Beckman, Hanson, Janko, Marquart, Horn & Odom, 1997; McCormick et al., 2001; Peck, Furman & Helmstetter, 1993).

Models of Co-teacher

There are six co-teaching models: (a) one-teach one-observe, (b) one-teach one-assist, (c) station teaching, (d) parallel teaching, (e) alternative teaching, and (f) team teaching (Friend & Cook, 2010). The majority of co-teaching observed in classrooms often reflects the one-teach one-assist model (Idol, 2006). In many cases, it appears as though the field of education has implemented the one-teach one-assist model, with the general education teacher typically being the lead teacher, while the special education teacher acts as a classroom assistant. Across the field, little attention appears to have been given to the other five models of co-teaching (Idol, 2006).

One-teach one-observe model. The one-teach one-observe model occurs when one teacher is observing specific characteristics while the other instructs. Typically, the general education teacher leads instruction, delivering content material, while the other teacher, typically a special educator, observes student behavior or other identified student needs. Many researchers do not consider this a true form of co-teaching and consider it a model that should only be used to collect student academic or behavioral data (Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Murawski, 2009).

One-teach one-assist model. In this model, one teacher (typically the general educator) has the primary responsibility for planning and teaching, while the secondary teacher (typically the special educator) moves about the classroom, assisting students as needed and observing particular behaviors. There are many advantages to this model of co-teaching:

- Students have access to individual help in a timely and relevant manner;
- The assisting teacher can observe behaviors that may not be seen by the teacher leading instruction;
- Students are more apt to be on task due to the proximity of teachers.

This model also contains disadvantages:

- Considered the least effective model of co-teaching as one educator is placed in the role of an educational assistant rather than a teacher (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001);
 - Students may view one teacher as having more control/power than another within the classroom;
 - Students can become dependent on the 1:1 assistance provided;
 - Students may receive conflicting directions if collaboration is not accurately followed.
- (Murawski, 2009)

Station teach model. This model of Co-teaching is defined as two teachers dividing a classroom into three or more groups to deliver instruction in a small group setting (Murawski, 2009). Teachers often divide the instructional content in regards to planning and teaching. Content material is divided among three teaching stations within the classroom and students are divided into equal groups. Students rotate between the groups (two which are teacher-led, one which is student directed) and spend equal time receiving instruction at each station (Friend & Cook, 2010).

There are advantages and disadvantages to this model of co-teaching:

Advantages:

- Each teacher maintains a clear level of responsibility towards instruction
- Students may benefit from working in small groups;
- Multiple aspects of material can be covered in a shorter matter of time;
- Students have access to a more active and hands-on learning approach, often resulting in lower discipline and behavior issues occurring;
- Maximizes the use of adults in the classroom.

Disadvantages:

- Large amounts of pre-planning is required for effective instruction;
- Materials must be prepared and organized in advanced;
- Noise level will be increased, making it difficult for some students to focus;
- Pacing is critical to ensure students have equal access to instruction;
- Students must be capable of working independently from the teacher for a minimum of one station. (Friend & Cook, 2010)

Parallel teaching model. The parallel teaching model occurs when co-teachers monitor, facilitate, or instruct the work of different groups of students simultaneously within one classroom setting. Parallel teachers may be found teaching the same or different content. Students may be split into equal groups, or one person may work with the majority while another targets a small group of students. To ensure that instruction has been presented to all students as intended, it is critical the proper pre-planning take place. As both teachers will be actively engaged with students, there will not be an opportunity for members of the co-teaching team to monitor each other to ensure instructional integrity (Villa). Other apparent advantages

include better instruction and teaching due to the pre-planning required, teacher access to smaller groups that improve individualized education, and allowing teachers to provide multiple methods of instruction to better meet the needs of all students (Friend & Cook, 2010, Murawski, 2009). Added disadvantages include the need for both teachers to be equally competent in the material being delivered to allow students equal access to the curriculum as well as critical pacing to ensure all students are engaged at the same level and same time (Murawski, 2009). An additional disadvantage that teachers face is the noise level that comes with this method, which can cause significant disruption to instruction and make it difficult for some students to engage and learn (Friend & Cook, 2010).

Alternative teaching model. The alternative teaching model can be defined as one teacher delivering instruction to a large group while the second teacher is delivering instruction to a smaller group. Unlike parallel teaching, these teachers are not teaching the same material, and the separate instruction does not have to occur within the same classroom. The teacher delivering instruction in the smaller group (typically the special education teacher), utilizes re-teaching, pre-teaching and/or enrichment lessons to target the individual needs of a specific group of students (Friend & Cook, 2010). Additionally, there are also advantages and disadvantages to this model.

Advantages:

- Small group instruction allows teachers to meet the individual needs of students;
- Teachers can remain in the same classroom which allows for feedback when necessary from teaching partners.

Disadvantages

- Groups must vary, and there needs to be interaction with both teachers to avoid labeling of groups or tracking;
- Students often view the teacher of the larger group as the teacher in control; it is beneficial for teachers to switch roles periodically;
- Noise level need to be controlled if both groups remain in the classroom. (Friend & Cook, 2010)

Team teaching model. The team teaching model has been defined as two teachers delivering content simultaneously to a whole group of students (Murawski, 2009). Both teachers are engaged in instructional activities at an equal level and have equal responsibilities in regards to planning and delivery of instruction (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). Multiple forms of instruction have been used to deliver content including, role-play, modeling and demonstrating appropriate behaviors, debating, and providing different viewpoints (Cook & Friend, 1995). Both teachers are responsible for classroom management and discipline in addition to curriculum instruction. Advantages and disadvantages continue to exist with this model.

Advantages:

- Both teachers have an active role in student learning and engagement;
- Students view both teachers as equals;
- Both teachers are equally involved in classroom instruction, organization, and management;
- Allows the opportunity for risk taking with limited negative effects.

Disadvantages

- A considerable amount of time needs to be dedicated to preplanning all instruction;

- Teachers need to be truly collaborative and define their roles for equal and shared responsibilities. (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Friend & Cook, 2010)

Components of Co-Teaching

Research and theory have identified and outlined components of a successful co-teaching framework. Administrative support and a shared vision for positive student outcomes are a key factor. Additionally, clearly defined and identified general and special education teacher roles and responsibilities are a great predictor of success, as well as the pairing of co-teachers and the desire to collaborate between the co-teachers. Another key component of successful co-teaching is having a special education teacher that has content area knowledge in the subject they are co-teaching. Logistically, it is important for co-teachers to have common plan time, as well as ongoing professional development in the area of co-teaching and content knowledge (Friend & Cook, 2007; Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi & McDuffie, 2005).

Administrator support. Generally, administrative support within a school is critical to the success of a co-teaching classroom to provide the essential resources to teachers, as well as to influence a positive culture surrounding the area of inclusion in regards to students with special needs. Within any school setting, change, and successful instruction requires the assistance and support of the building administrator. Administrative support must be the driving force to maintain a positive culture in a school setting (Adelman & Taylor, 2007).

Administrators first need to recognize the importance of their role in creating an environment that supports true collaboration between teachers. Most administrators lack the knowledge that is necessary to address the needs of a co-teaching classroom. Often, administrators lack the understanding to determine how they can program and schedule co-teaching classrooms in a

way to set up successful environments in which two heterogeneous groups of learners can access their education simultaneously (Murawski and Lochner, 2011).

As schools are faced with increased pressure from the local, state, and federal level to meet testing standards for all students, regardless of ability level (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013), many look towards school buildings, and consequently, their administrators to find ways to meet the needs of all students. As administrators are likely motivated by the hope of improving tests scores, their motivation may consequently increase to improve the success of the co-teaching model within their schools (Murawski & Lochner, 2011). For administrators to successfully support co-teaching programs within their schools, it is critical that they are trained to understand the major factors that can impact co-teaching as they can single-handedly influence these factors, such as scheduling and plan time (Walsh, 2012). With a better understanding of the factors and components of co-teaching, school administrators can become better supporters and evaluators of teachers within the co-teaching setting to ensure that programs are running effectively and efficiently (Murawski & Lochner, 2011).

Co-teacher roles and responsibilities. One of the biggest hurdles within a co-teaching classroom is establishing an equal partnership between the general education and special education teacher (Friend & Cook, 2007). Special education teachers often report that they feel as though they are a glorified para-professional, or a guest in the classroom of the general education teacher (Austin, 2001). This discrepancy between co-teaching partners starts in pre-service courses, with the varied differences of courses offered, as well as perception presented to pre-service teachers when comparing general education and special education. According to Austin (2011), only 37% of general education teachers perceived co-teaching courses as useful, whereas 65% of special education perceive the courses as a vital part of their education.

By nature and through education, special education teachers are trained to differentiate instruction, modify behavioral supports, and supplement and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of a variety of students. This training is a critical component of a special education classroom. However, when there is a lack of collaboration between the two teachers, the result is often the general education teacher simply delivering the instruction, while the special education assists children in the room in need (Austin, 2001.) When true collaboration occurs, scaffolding and modification can occur throughout the instruction and allows the teaching team to be proactive in making the curriculum accessible to all students within the classroom.

One key piece to establishing an effective co-teaching team is to utilize a needs assessment to establish strengths and weaknesses of all professionals involved to make an informed decision on the best possible co-teaching pairs. This needs assessment will also allow administrators to make any organizational changes in regards to scheduling and planning time, allowing co-teaching partners to reach their full potential. This needs-assessment will also allow staff to look at an often overlooked factor, the content area knowledge of special education teachers. As in any profession, building on the strengths of the teaching team will only result in a positive impact on the delivery of instruction.

Special education content knowledge. No Child Left Behind (2008) mandates that all general education content area teachers be "highly qualified" in that specific content area. It is because of this mandate that many special education programs had to change their delivery of content, shifting towards the co-teaching model to ensure that all students had access to high-quality instruction in the content area. Within a co-teaching setting, there are no restrictions on a special education teacher's ability to instruct, regardless of content area knowledge or highly

qualified status (Greer & Meyen, 2009) since there is a highly qualified content teacher in the classroom.

While a bulk of the content knowledge will come from the general education teacher, the content area knowledge of the teacher can also impact student outcomes. Due to the high stakes situations brought about by national and state standards and testing, many teachers are attempting to cover more material at a quicker rate than ever before, leaving many students struggling to keep up with the pace of the regular classroom (Nichols, Dowdy & Nichols, 2010). Through effective use of co-teaching strategies, teachers can re-teach material to students within the general education classroom during regular classroom activities. In these situations, it is critical that the special education teacher has content area knowledge so that he or she can effectively instruct and assist students who might be struggling and otherwise fall behind the pace of the class.

Often, we stretch the limits of our special education teachers, placing them in co-teaching situations that span multiple grade levels and content areas. This prevents teachers from mastering the curriculum of the classes they co-teach. When teachers are placed in several different classrooms throughout the day, with several different co-teaching partners, it becomes extremely difficult, even with the most supportive administrator, to establish common planning times (Nichols et al. 2010). According to Keefe, Moore, & Duff (2004), many special education teachers cite their lack of content area knowledge as playing a major role in them taking a subordinate role in a co-taught classroom.

When teachers are working within an effective co-teaching classroom, they can better understand the general education curriculum, which reflects directly in their instruction of students with special needs (Walsh, 2012). Scheduling teachers to teach in one specific content

area and/or grade level allows them to master the content and co-teach with their general education partner. Allowing them the opportunity to master content in one area not only benefits the students within the co-teaching classroom but allows teachers to carry over this knowledge into the pull-out setting at other points in their teaching day, impacting the education of even more students.

Another instance where the expertise of co-teachers can greatly benefit the classroom is in regards to grading policies. In many instances, the general education teacher has focused on the grading of general education students, while the special education teacher focuses on the grading of the special education students based on their IEP goals, accommodations, and modifications (Kamens, Susko & Elliot, 2013). This is often due to the general education teacher's lack of knowledge and understanding of the IEPs of students, as well as the purpose and legal ramifications of the IEP. When collaborating on the grading of all students, it provides the opportunity for the general education teacher to grow in their knowledge of IEP goals and can allow the general education teacher to become a greater participant in both the implementation and development of IEP goals for his or her students.

Pairing of co-teachers. Friend and Cook (2007) began to refer to co-teaching partnerships as a marriage between teachers. Having teachers that are compatible can single-handedly dictate the success or failure of a co-teaching classes. Often teachers are placed together in pairs regardless of differing ideas, opinions, and teaching philosophies. Although incompatible philosophies can bring challenges to a co-teaching partnership, it does not necessarily dictate the success or failure of the program; rather success is dependent on both teachers being able to maintain an open mind, respect each other's similar and differing opinions, and a willingness to compromise (Solis, Vaughn, Swanson & McCulley, 2012). Co-

teaching pairs should be matched based on their potential to work together and in ideal situations, co-teaching pairs should be able to have a hand in choosing their partner (Nichols et al., 2010). Solis et al., (2012) conducted a study synthesizing over 146 previously completed studies on co-teaching which found that teacher compatibility is a critical component to co-teaching success.

When in a co-teaching partnership, it is critical that both teachers have similar perceptions and beliefs about working in a collaborative environment. Their beliefs have a significant impact on their motivation to work together and the quality of instruction within a co-teaching model (Solis et al., 2012). When both teachers have similar beliefs about the importance of collaboration, they can effectively work together as a team to properly prepare lessons and ensure that they cover all areas of material in instruction and presentation. To successfully co-teach a lesson, it is suggested that effective co-teachers should set aside a minimum of 45 minutes per week of uninterrupted planning (Bos & Vaughn, 2006).

Understanding co-teaching models. When working in a co-taught setting, one of the most critical attributes is an agreed upon approach to instruction as well as an agreed upon service delivery model (model of co-teaching). Each of the six models outlined by Friend and Cook (2007) is designed with purpose and should be considered based on the material, students, and teachers involved within the co-teaching environment. Co-teachers should not necessarily utilize just one model of co-teaching, rather they should continue to be flexible and change their approach based on the lesson and material being presented to students. During common planning time (another key component to co-teaching), teachers should review the lesson and decide on the most effective model to facilitate instruction. These decisions can also be driven by knowledge of student's IEPs, which allows teachers to better meet the goals and objectives of

students within the classroom requiring specially designed instruction (Friend, et al., 2010). Knowing the needs of all students in the classroom allows teachers to plan accordingly.

Professional development. A common issue that arises in the co-teaching model is the "us – them" mentality of general education versus special education. Ongoing professional development for co-teaching partners assists in bridging these gaps and tackle many other common challenges of co-teaching. As with any educational initiative, continued professional development is vital to have a lasting impact on the education of students. Continued professional development for co-teachers can increase the amount of differentiated instruction provided within the classroom and a variety of strategies utilized to instruct students (Walsh, 2012). One popular method to provide ongoing professional development opportunities to co-teachers is to utilize the model of a Professional Learning Community or PLC. A professional learning community was defined in 2014 by The Glossary of Education Reform as "a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students" (Professional learning communities, 2014, Para. 1). Utilizing PLCs allows teachers to work together to explore the various models of co-teaching, plan for differentiation of instruction, create behavioral interventions and supports, as well as the opportunity to reflect on their experiences; arguably the most important piece of a PLC.

Professional development should also provide educators the opportunity to grow in their partnership, something that is key to the success of co-teaching (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). A lack of understanding of the partner and recognizing unique roles, responsibilities, and contributions, often leads to the underutilization of one partner's areas of expertise; often this is the special education teacher. According to Nichols et al. in 2010, many special education

teachers report that they are dissatisfied with their co-teaching experience and/or partner. In the same study, general education teachers reported they did not feel their classroom was greatly impacted by the presence of a special education co-teacher within the classroom. This should serve as a major red flag that the teaching arrangement is not adhering to the principals of co-teaching. Panscofar and Petroff (2013) found that when more professional development is providing to co-teaching partners, the self-confidence that was self-reported by the teachers increased significantly, as measured by the *Co-teaching Experiences and Attitudes Survey*. When knowledge and understanding of the principals of co-teaching are increased, it can be surmised that the confidence of both partners also increases.

Behavior Management and Co-Teaching

A critical area that is often overlooked when planning with a co-teaching partner is in regards to classroom and behavior management. Often, in co-teaching settings, there are students with not only academic needs but diverse behavioral needs as well (Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway & Landers, 2007). When there are two educators in the room, it is imperative that there be consistency regarding classroom discipline to implement the most effective classroom management. In co-taught scenarios (and in all classroom scenarios), incorporating Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) into the classroom has proven through research to be the most effective form of classroom management. When teachers collaborate in advance regarding their styles of classroom management and discipline, it helps to foster a productive learning and teaching environment for all students and maximize instructional time in the classroom.

Benefits of Co-Teaching

There are many benefits of including students with disabilities into the regular education classroom. One of the largest benefits noted are the academic gains special education students make when included in the general education classroom. In 1994, Fishbaugh and Gum conducted a study with the Billings School District in Montana; their study noted that when the schools implemented full inclusion, students were able to make academic gains of two to three years. Multiple studies have shown that students with disabilities show greater gains when placed in inclusive settings for their core subjects than their peers that received their education in those core subject areas through pull out services (Rea, McLaughlin & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Weiner, 2003).

Many studies have shown that co-teaching, along with other inclusive practices, often benefit all students, not just students with special education needs (Schnoor, Black & Davern, 2000). Students with and without disabilities have reported that they prefer the co-teaching model. In 1999, Gerber and Popp found that students without disabilities expressed their appreciation for the collaborative teaching model, because of positive instructional and behavioral advantages that the model had on both their grades and self-esteem. This model allowed the students to receive more assistance and the opportunity to ask more questions. Students identified with disabilities agreed with their general education counterparts, stating that they too received more help and attention in the classroom. They felt more organized and displayed better grades when they had the opportunity to participate in a co-taught classroom. In Austin's study, both groups of students expressed their desire to continue receiving their education in a co-taught setting.

In addition to academic benefits of the co-taught classroom, many students display the social gains that are attributed to a student's participation in the co-taught classroom. Students with disabilities often increase and show noted improvement in their social skills while in the inclusive setting due to the opportunity to participate and socialize with same-age peers (Moore, Gilbreath, & Maiuri, 1998). Being around same-age peers without disabilities gave students the opportunity to observe socially appropriate behaviors, social skills, and problem-solving skills, allowing the students to be able to demonstrate and generalize the skills in other settings.

Students are not the only population that benefits from the co-teaching model. Regular education teachers report that after participating in a co-taught classroom, they feel that they have strengthened their classroom management skills and their ability to modify and differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of a variety of learners. Special Education teachers report that participating in a co-taught classroom allowed for growth in knowledge of content areas (Austin, 2001). Both general education and special education teachers felt that that co-teaching enhanced their overall competency as educators.

Barriers to Co-Teaching

Collaboration is one of the key factors in developing an effective co-teaching scenario; while most educators agree that this important, it is a challenge to develop due to limited resources, other priorities and responsibilities, and lack of access to ongoing professional development. Hand in hand with collaboration is effective communication. In Austin's 2001 study, many general education teachers responded that they felt that the general education teacher did most of the work in a co-teaching partnership. Without effective communication, these assumptions and feelings will not change.

Lack of communication creates unnecessary barriers within the classroom and the co-teaching partnership. Teachers need to be prepared to discuss how their partnership will most benefit their students and how they can each bring a different perspective and expertise to the classroom. Developing respect for each other is vital to make an effective partnership. Due to the fact that general education and special education teachers are trained separately during their schooling, there are many fundamental philosophical differences that can exist between the two parties. Friend and Cook (1996) stated that "understanding each other's instructional beliefs, especially those that affect decisions about instruction, is essential to a strong co-teaching relationship" (p. 52).

One of the greatest barriers to successful co-teaching is ineffective leadership (Villa & Thousand, 1996). Building administrators need to possess knowledge of collaborative activities to help make co-teaching possible (Friend & Cook, 1996). Administrative support is key to addressing planning and scheduling issues, as well as helping teachers understand the importance of co-teaching within their buildings. As with all educational practices, the building administrator and central office leadership set the tone when new instructional practices are implemented within a building. By understanding co-teaching and collaboration, a building principal can effectively model productive collaboration for all staff, enhancing their understanding of the collaboration and co-teaching process (Meyen, Vergason, & Whelen, 1996).

Summary

To comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004), all students must be educated within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). IDEA states that all students, regardless of disability, should be educated in the general education environment, to

the fullest extent possible. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) established that all students participate in statewide assessments and must meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) by the year 2014. NCLB also established that all students must be taught by highly qualified teachers. One way that school districts can meet the requirements of all these acts and recommendations is for special education teachers to work in a collaborative teaching environment with their general education peers.

For co-teaching to be successful, it is important that both members of the co-teaching team participate in professional development. This professional development should be ongoing and emphasize instructional strategies, behavioral management techniques, and communication strategies. Although the co-teaching model is not the most effective strategy for inclusion or instruction for all special education students, it is an effective choice for many that should be considered carefully by teachers, administrators, and school districts when identifying the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Chapter Three

Methods

In this chapter, the methodology used to assess the research questions, and hypotheses of the study are presented. The chapter outlines the research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, and instrumentation. The chapter also delineates data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations of the study.

Before the introduction of co-teaching in the 1960s, there were few opportunities for general education and special education teachers to collaborate in a way that students received significant benefits. With the recent movement of the Common Core, in addition to the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there is a greater push for districts to utilize collaboration so that students with special needs can interact with their peers (Kohler-Evans, 2006). The changes also ensure that students are allowed access to the same curriculum as their general education peers (Kohler-Evans, 2006). For this collaboration to be successful, there must be a solid working relationship between both parties of the co-teaching team (special education teacher and general education teacher).

In 2006, Kohler-Evans discussed that although co-teaching was implemented within a district or school, teachers were not always ready and willing participants in a co-teaching relationship. This study sought to gather information and compare the perceptions of co-teaching from a special education perspective and a general education perspective in one northeast Kansas School District (School District A).

Research Design

A non-experimental research design was used in this study, using survey methods to address the research questions. Quantitative research methods require a specific

approach to statistical analysis and data sampling (Gall, M., Gall, J. & Borg. 2007); more specifically, this study utilized a descriptive quantitative design. Descriptive research involves describing the phenomena in our world through the perspective of the researcher and/or participants in the study (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008).

A survey design creates a "quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell, p 145). Using this data, the researcher can then make claims regarding the entire population. The research utilized an online survey to collect data for this study. This online survey consisted of 21 items for respondents to answer.

The variables of this study were as listed in the following table:

Table 1

Study Variables and Corresponding Survey Item Number

Survey Item Number	Variable
1	Physical arrangement of classroom
2	Classroom scheduling
3	Structure of student activities
4	Curriculum
5	How students learn
6	Teacher beliefs about inclusion
7	Adapting and individualizing activities
8	Managing inappropriate behavior
9	Beliefs about teacher Roles and Responsibilities
10	Parent Involvement
11	Teacher desire to try new things
12	Individual teacher confidence
13	Ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals
14	Approach to educational planning
15	Flexibility
16	Sense of humor
17	Ability to be supportive of colleagues
18	Interest in learning new things
19	Dedication to the profession

Population and Sample

The population for this research study was composed of 34 general and 27 special education teachers, grades nine through 12, in School District A's high schools at the start of the 2016-2017 school year. There were 127 teachers that met the criteria for this study. Of the 127 teachers, 61 chose to respond to the survey. The general education teachers who participated in this study taught students in the following areas: English language arts, science, and mathematics. The special education teachers who participated in this research study taught students with mild to moderate disabilities, severe to profound disabilities, and emotional disturbances.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling was utilized in this study. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled" (p. 175). This study was limited to secondary teachers who had a minimum of one-year experience in a co-taught classroom, in a high school within the School District A, in the fall of 2016. There were 127 teachers in School District A that met the criteria for this study. The sample for this study resulted in 27 special education teachers and 34 general education teachers who responded to the survey. The participants self-selected as they chose to respond to the anonymous survey via the survey website after receiving an email asking for participation.

Instrumentation

An electronic survey was developed using tools through SurveyMonkey.com (See Appendix A). This website was used to record responses to the survey and raw data were obtained to be used for analysis. The survey was adapted from a scale created by Noonan,

McCormick, and Heck (2003), which was created with a small sample of educators in Hawaii and two supervisors. The Co-Teacher Relationship Scale (CRS) addresses attitude, beliefs, and personal characteristics of co-teachers. The purpose of this scale development was to rate how co-teachers relate to one another and their perceptions of co-teaching (Noonan, McCormick & Heck, 2003). The CRS was designed to gather data on co-teachers' perceptions of their relationships with their co-teacher partners regarding both personal and professional qualities.

Permission was obtained from the original author of the survey to edit the survey for more appropriate use for this study. The content of the survey was not changed, in regards to what data was being collected, however, the wording was changed to make it appropriate for the target sample. For example, the word "children" in the survey questions was changed to "students" to make it age appropriate for the secondary level.

Measurement. The Co-Teacher Relationship Scale (CRS) is primarily a Likert-scale type survey, which is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research (McLeod, 2008) and is often used to measure attitudes of respondents. Likert scales use fixed-choice response formats that are typically ordinal scales that measure levels of disagreement or agreement (Bowling 1997). The CRS utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale that provided respondents with various levels of agreement (same or different) in regards to their co-teacher partner: 1 = extremely different, 2 = fairly different, 3 = similar, 4 = almost the same, 5 = same.

Validity and reliability. Noonan et al. (2003) reported the CRS had an internal consistency co-efficient (alpha) of .90. Based on these results, Noonan et al. (2003) encouraged systematic replications of the instrument to increase generalizability across other multi-cultural environments, grade levels, and subject matter expertise. In 2006, Cramer and Nevin systematically replicated and validated the CRS using a mixed method study of a convenience

sample of elementary and secondary teachers in the Miami-Dade Public Schools. The study using the CRS in Florida produced similar results to the Hawaii sample of the original test conducted by Noonan et al that reported an internal consistency coefficient (alpha) of .90. Cramer and Nevin (2006) therefore concluded that the CRS was valid and had generalizability to other populations. Utilizing the JASP software, a reliability analysis was conducted on the survey utilized for this study, which reported an internal consistency coefficient (alpha) of .922.

Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data, a Proposal for Research was submitted to School District A (Appendix B) on February 2, 2016. An electronic proposal form was mailed to the school district's Director of Research and Assessment for approval. Upon review, verbal permission was granted on May 6, 2016. At that time, the researcher began the process of obtaining permission from Baker University to conduct the study by submitting a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IBR) to Baker University on June 23rd, 2016 (see Appendix C). Written documentation of approval was provided by School District A on June 24, 2016 (see Appendix D). The Baker University IRB committee granted approval for this study on July 21, 2016 (see Appendix E).

Upon final approval from Baker University, an email was sent to all current teachers serving in a co-teaching role within the high schools of School District A on August 24, 2016 (See Appendix F). This email asked for participation in the study by responding to the survey utilizing the SurveyMonkey link attached to the email.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants acknowledged consent by clicking on the survey link in the email. The email that was sent to the participants explained that all responses would remain anonymous, and no individual results would be released. There

was no risk involved to any participant who elected to respond to the electronic survey. The survey link was open for nine days and the respondents received one email reminder two days before the close of the window to maximize results. Upon the close of the response window, data was retrieved from the SurveyMonkey website.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The Chi-square test of independent was used to compare percentage responses in the survey regarding perceptions of co-teaching. This test was used to evaluate each research hypotheses. Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were proposed and were tested at the $\alpha = .10$ level of significance and a confidence level of 90%:

RQ1. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom in a co-teaching partnership?

H1. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom.

RQ2. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding classroom scheduling in a co-teaching partnership?

H2. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding classroom scheduling.

RQ3. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to structure student activities in a co-teaching partnership?

H3. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to structure student activities.

RQ4. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be, in a co-teaching partnership?

H4. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding their beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be.

RQ5. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how students learn in a co-teaching partnership?

H5. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how students learn.

RQ6. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding their beliefs about inclusion in a co-teaching partnership?

H6. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding inclusion.

RQ7. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teachers views on how to adapt and individualize activities in a co-teaching partnership?

H7. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to adapt and individualize activities in a co-teaching partnership.

RQ8. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior in a co-teaching partnership?

H8. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior.

RQ9. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities in a co-teaching partnership?

H9. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities.

RQ10. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding views on parent involvement in a co-teaching partnership?

H10. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding parent involvement.

RQ11. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teacher desire to try new things in a co-teaching partnership?

H11. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding teacher desire to try new things.

RQ12. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding each individual teacher's confidence as an educator in a co-teaching partnership?

H12. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding each individual teacher's confidence as an educator.

RQ13. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals in a co-teaching partnership?

H13. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom.

RQ14. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding approaches to education planning in a co-teaching partnership?

H14. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom.

RQ15. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events in a co-teaching partnership?

H15. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events.

RQ16. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding sense of humor in a co-teaching partnership?

H16. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding sense of humor.

RQ17. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff in a co-teaching partnership?

H17. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff.

RQ18. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding interest in learning new things in a co-teaching partnership?

H18. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding interest in learning new things.

RQ19. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding dedication to teaching in a co-teaching partnership?

H19. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding dedication to teaching.

Limitations

Limitations of a study “are factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings or on the generalizability of the results” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). This study contained the following limitations:

1. The survey link was emailed only to co-teachers of one school district. Therefore, results cannot be generalized beyond the specific population from which the sample was drawn.
2. The respondent's survey responses are self-reported and participants may not accurately report their opinions and interpretations of the co-teaching program in School District A.

Summary

The current study was a quantitative design using descriptive research methods. This chapter re-examined the purpose of the study and outlined the methods used to complete the study. This included the research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Chapter Four

Results

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if general education teachers and special education teachers had greatly varying perceptions of the co-teaching model as a means of providing services and delivering education to students with identified special education needs.

The researcher examined survey data gathered from 34 general education teachers and 27 special education teachers. This chapter presents information gathered from the Survey experience regarding the perceptions of teachers in a co-teaching partnership, both general education and special education.

Descriptive Statistics

The population for this study was secondary teachers, both general education and special education, who have been a part of a co-teaching partnership. This sample included 61 teachers. Teachers were from five high schools located in School District A, in a suburban school district in Northeast Kansas. As stated in Chapter 3, there were 127 individuals that met the criteria for this study, creating a 49% level of participation in the survey.

Table 2

Summary of Descriptive Survey Item Analysis Results by High to Low

Survey Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dedication	4.66	0.5127	3	5
Supportive	4.54	0.6474	2	5
Confidence	4.48	0.6978	2	5
Humor	4.46	0.7433	2	5
Parents	4.33	0.6553	3	5
Scheduling	4.30	0.5872	3	5
Interest	4.30	0.9371	1	5
Arrangement	4.28	0.6863	3	5
Inclusion	4.28	0.8589	2	5
Desire	4.28	0.7102	2	5
Unforeseen	4.23	0.9017	2	5
Roles	4.21	0.8586	2	5
Curriculum	4.16	0.9342	2	5
Dealing	4.16	0.8202	2	5
Structure	4.12	0.7325	2	5
Learn	4.05	0.8252	1	5
Individualize	4.05	0.7837	2	5
Inappropriate	3.90	0.8772	2	5
Planning	3.85	0.9804	1	5

Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the testing results are reported, in addition to providing the descriptive statistics associated with each test.

RQ1. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom in a co-teaching partnership?

H1. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding the physical arrangement of a classroom.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($X^2 (df = 2, n = 61) = 1.036, p = .596$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding physical arrangement of the classroom was found. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Classroom arrangement was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views on classroom arrangement.

Table 3

Survey Item 1: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views on the physical arrangement of the classroom.”

Response	General Education (n=32)	Special Education (n=27)
Neutral	62.5 %	37.5 %
Similar	60.7 %	39.3 %
Very Similar	48.0 %	52.0 %

RQ2. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding classroom scheduling in a co-teaching partnership?

H2. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding classroom scheduling.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($X^2 (df = 2, n = 61) = 4.147, p = .126$) association between special education and general education teachers

perceptions regarding classroom scheduling was found. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Classroom scheduling was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views on classroom scheduling.

Table 4

Survey Item 2: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views on classroom scheduling.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> =32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> =27)
Neutral	11.80%	0.00%
Similar	58.80%	55.60%
Very Similar	29.40%	44.40%

RQ3. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to structure student activities in a co-teaching partnership?

H3. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to structure student activities.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, a significant ($X^2 (df = 3, n = 61) = 8.531, p = .036$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding classroom scheduling was found. The alternative hypothesis was supported. How to structure student activities was perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, general education teachers had a more neutral stance on this survey item as compared to their special education

counterparts. Special education teachers perceived their views to be more similar than general education teachers reported.

Table 5

Survey Item 3: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views on how to structure student activities.”

Response	General Education (n=32)	Special Education (n=27)
Different	0.00%	7.40%
Neutral	20.60%	0.00%
Similar	50.00%	63.00%
Very Similar	29.40%	29.60%

RQ4. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be, in a co-teaching partnership?

H4. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding their beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($X^2 (df = 3, n = 61) = 2.535, p = .469$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding curriculum for students. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Classroom scheduling was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 70% of general education teachers and over 80% of special education teachers had similar, or very similar, views on the curriculum to use with students.

Table 6

Survey Item 4: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your beliefs on what the curriculum should be for students.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> =32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> =27)
Different	11.80%	3.70%
Neutral	14.70%	7.40%
Similar	35.30%	37.00%
Very Similar	38.20%	51.90%

RQ5. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how students learn in a co-teaching partnership?

H5. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how students learn.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 4$, $n = 61$) = 4.121, $p = .390$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions how students learn. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. How students learn was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 75% of general education teachers and over 85% of special education teachers had similar, or very similar, views on the how students learn.

Table 7

Survey Item 5: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your beliefs on how students learn.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> =32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> =27)
Very Different	2.90%	0.00%
Different	2.90%	0.00%
Neutral	17.60%	14.80%
Similar	55.90%	44.40%
Very Similar	20.60%	40.70%

RQ6. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding their beliefs about inclusion in a co-teaching partnership?

H6. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding inclusion.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3$, $n = 61$) = 3.723, $p = .293$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions on their beliefs about inclusion. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The philosophy of inclusion was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, nearly 85% of general education teachers and special education teachers had similar, or very similar, views on the philosophy of inclusion.

Table 8

Survey Item 6: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your beliefs about inclusion.”

Response	General Education (n=32)	Special Education (n=27)
Different	5.90%	7.40%
Neutral	5.90%	7.40%
Similar	50.00%	25.90%
Very Similar	38.20%	59.30%

RQ7. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teachers’ views on how to adapt and individualize activities in a co-teaching partnership?

H7. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to adapt and individualize activities in a co-teaching partnership.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($X^2 (df = 3, n = 61) = 1.624, p = .654$) association between special education and general education teachers’ perceptions on how to adapt and individualize activities for students. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. How to adapt and individualize activities for students was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 80% of general education teachers and special education teachers had similar, or very similar, views on how to adapt and individualize activities for students in the co-teaching classroom.

Table 9

Survey Item 7: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views about how to adapt and individualize activities.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	2.90%	3.70%
Neutral	23.50%	11.10%
Similar	47.10%	51.90%
Very Similar	26.50%	33.35%

RQ8. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior in a co-teaching partnership?

H8. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3$, $n = 60$) = 4.901, $p = .179$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding how to manage inappropriate behavior in the co-taught classroom was found. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. How to manage inappropriate behavior was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had neutral, similar, or very similar, views on classroom arrangement.

Table 10

Survey Item 8: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views about how to manage inappropriate behavior.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	12.10%	7.40%
Neutral	21.20%	3.70%
Similar	48.50%	59.30%
Very Similar	18.20%	29.60%

RQ9. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities in a co-teaching partnership?

H9. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3, n = 61$) = 3.492, $p = .322$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities in the co-taught classroom. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Classroom arrangement was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 80% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views on teacher roles and responsibilities.

Table 11

Survey Item 9: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	5.90%	11.10%
Neutral	0.00%	7.45
Similar	52.90%	40.70%
Very Similar	41.20%	40.70%

RQ10. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding views on parent involvement in a co-teaching partnership?

H10. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding parent involvement.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 2$, $n = 61$) = 2.211, $p = .331$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding parent involvement was found. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Parental involvement was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views on parent involvement.

Table 12

Survey Item 10: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your views regarding parent involvement.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Neutral	14.70%	3.80%
Similar	47.10%	46.20%
Very Similar	38.20%	50.00%

RQ11. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding teacher desire to try new things in a co-teaching partnership?

H11. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding teacher desire to try new things.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 2$, $n = 61$) = 1.789, $p = .617$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their desire to try new things. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. A desire to try new things in the co-taught classroom was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 85% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views on classroom arrangement.

Table 13

Survey Item 11: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your desire to try new things.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	2.90%	0.00%
Neutral	11.80%	7.40%
Similar	50.00%	44.40%
Very Similar	35.30%	48.10%

RQ12. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding each individual teacher’s confidence as an educator in a co-teaching partnership?

H12. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding each individual teacher’s confidence as an educator.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3$, $n = 61$) = 2.902, $p = .407$) association between special education and general education teachers’ perceptions regarding their confidence in their co-teaching partner. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Confidence in their teaching partner was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views regarding their confidence in their teaching partner.

Table 14

Survey Item 11: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your confidence of your partner as an educator.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	5.90%	0.00%
Neutral	2.90%	0.00%
Similar	41.20%	37.00%
Very Similar	50.00%	63.00%

RQ13. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals in a co-teaching partnership?

H13. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3$, $n = 61$) = 4.901, $p = .179$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The ways in which to deal with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had neutral, similar, or very similar, views regarding their interactions with these groups of stakeholders.

Table 15

Survey Item 13: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	5.90%	0.00%
Neutral	23.50%	7.40%
Similar	35.30%	48.10%
Very Similar	35.30%	44.40%

RQ14. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding approaches to education planning in a co-teaching partnership?

H14. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding education planning in a co-taught classroom.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($X^2(df=3, n=61)=2.775, p=.596$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding approach to education planning. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The practices teachers used to approach education planning were not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had neutral, similar, or very similar, views regarding their interactions with these groups of stakeholders.

Table 16

Survey Item 14: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your approaches to education planning.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Very Different	2.90%	0.00%
Different	5.90%	11.10%
Neutral	26.50%	14.80%
Similar	41.20%	40.70%
Very Similar	23.50%	33.30%

RQ15. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events in a co-teaching partnership?

H15. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant ($\chi^2(df = 3, n = 61) = 5.725, p = .12$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their ways of dealing with unforeseen events. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The methods in which to deal with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 80% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views regarding dealing with unforeseen events in the co-taught classroom.

Table 17

Survey Item 15: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your approaches to education planning.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	2.90%	11.10%
Neutral	14.70%	7.40%
Similar	44.10%	22.20%
Very Similar	38.20%	59.30%

RQ16. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding sense of humor in a co-teaching partnership?

H16. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding sense of humor.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (χ^2 (*df* = 3, *n* = 61) = 4.716, *p* = .194) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding sense of humor. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. Individual teacher sense of humor was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 85% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views sense of humor in the co-taught classroom.

Table 18

Survey Item16: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your sense of humor.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	5.90%	0.00%
Neutral	8.80%	0.00%
Similar	35.30%	33.30%
Very Similar	50.00%	66.70%

RQ17. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff in a co-teaching partnership?

H17. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 3$, $n = 61$) = 1.433, $p = .698$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their ability to be supportive of colleagues and other staff. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The ways in which they rated their individual ability to be supportive of colleagues and other staff was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views regarding their ability to be supportive of colleagues and other staff.

Table 19

Survey Item 17: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your ability to be supportive of colleagues and other staff.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Different	2.90%	0.00%
Neutral	2.90%	3.70%
Similar	38.20%	29.60%
Very Similar	55.90%	66.70%

RQ18. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding interest in learning new things in a co-teaching partnership?

H18. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding interest in learning new things.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (X^2 ($df = 4$, $n = 61$) = 1.061, $p = .900$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their interest in learning new things. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The teachers' individual interests in learning new things was not perceived differently between general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 80% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views regarding their interactions with these groups of stakeholders.

Table 20

Survey Item 18: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding interest in learning new things.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Very Different	2.9 %	0.0 %
Different	5.9 %	7.4 %
Neutral	2.9 %	3.7 %
Similar	35.3 %	40.7 %
Very Similar	52.9 %	48.1 %

RQ19. To what extent are there perception differences between special education and general education teachers regarding dedication to teaching in a co-teaching partnership?

H19. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and general education teachers regarding dedication to teaching.

Using Chi Square analysis methods with JASP software, no significant (χ^2 ($df = 2, n = 61$) = 1.557, $p = .459$) association between special education and general education teachers' perceptions regarding their dedication to teaching. The alternative hypothesis was not supported. The modes in which teachers report their dedication to teaching were not perceived differently by general education and special education teachers. According to survey results, over 90% of general education and special education had similar, or very similar, views regarding their interactions with these groups of stakeholders.

Table 21

Survey Item 19: Relationship of General Education to Special Education Teacher Perceived Similarity

“Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same regarding your dedication to teaching.”

Response	General Education (<i>n</i> = 32)	Special Education (<i>n</i> = 27)
Neutral	2.90%	0.00%
Similar	35.30%	25.90%
Very Similar	61.80%	74.10%

Summary

Chapter four included quantitative data results organized by specific questions regarding perceptions of general education vs. special education co-teaching partners. Survey results were analyzed using JASP software. The results of the chi-square tests of independence for each survey item provided evidence that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of special education versus general education teachers regarding the variables studied for eighteen of the nineteen survey items.

Chapter five presents interpretations of the findings and a list of recommendations for future research related to the study. Chapter five also discusses the study summary including the overview of the problem, purpose state and research questions, review of methodology, and the major findings. Chapter five also presents connections to the literature and implications for action.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

The previous chapter presented the results of the data analysis for this study.

This chapter contains a study summary, which includes the overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, the methodology, and the major findings of this research. Next, findings related to the literature are discussed and this chapter concludes with the implications for action, the recommendations for future research and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

The following section provides a summary of the current study. The summary contains an overview of the problem concerning general and special education teacher perceptions of co-teaching. The purpose statement and research questions follow. Finally, a review of the methodology and findings of the study are provided.

Overview of the problem. As public schools continue to change and develop, so too do the needs of the students. Students identified as students with disabilities, who once received their education separate from their peers, are now learning right alongside their peers in the general education classroom. This, of course, poses challenges to general education teachers who never received significant training on working with students with disabilities. Many school districts have begun training in the co-teaching model as a way to address the needs of special education students in the general education setting. A co-teaching partnership can only be successful when both partners seek to collaborate effectively and share similar views on the process, procedures and philosophies of education all students.

Purpose statement and research questions. Nineteen research questions were developed to address the purpose of this study. The first purpose of this study was to contribute to an existing body of research by collecting data on general education teachers and special education teachers perceptions of co-teaching at the secondary level from a large school district. This study expanded on previous studies that were completed at the elementary and early childhood level. An additional purpose of this study was to identify specific areas where general education and special education teacher had significant differences in their perceptions on topics of co-teaching and education of students with disabilities.

Review of the methodology. This quantitative study was designed to examine general education and special education teacher's perceptions regarding factors related to the co-teaching model of service delivery for students with identified special education needs. The research tool that was selected was utilized to determine the perceptions that teachers have on a variety of items and topics relating to the co-teaching model. The data was collected through the use of an online survey tool and were kept anonymous through Survey Monkey. One-sample t tests was conducted to analyze separate general education and special education teacher perceptions.

Major findings. The findings of this study did not support what the researcher hypothesized teachers would report of their perceptions of co-teaching. All hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant difference between how general education teachers and special education teachers viewed the 19 variables that were surveyed. After conducting the survey, it was found that eighteen of the nineteen alternative hypotheses were not supported. The single variable that showed statistical significance was regarding classroom scheduling. While teachers did report that they felt their co-teaching partner shared similar views with them,

a very small percentage reported sharing very similar views, showing room for improvement in this particular area of a partnership.

The overall results of the study showed that most teachers that participated in this study felt that they shared many similar views and opinions regarding the co-teaching partnership and classroom.

Findings Related to the Literature

In accordance with Individuals with Disabilities Act in 2004, and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, legislative mandates require that school districts educate all students in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent that is possible (United States Department of Education, 2004; United States Department of Education, 2015). Fishbaugh (1997) suggested that one way to meet these mandates and the needs of a variety of learners with disabilities, was through the practice of co-teaching in the regular education classroom.

For co-teaching to be successful, both teachers must be committed to providing quality instruction for all students (Austin, 2001). The foundation of a successful partnership is the relationship between the general education teacher and the special education teacher (Appl, D., et al, 2001). Friend and Cook were the first researchers to refer to co-teaching partnerships as a marriage between the general education and special education teacher (2007). Teachers are often paired together based on ease of scheduling instead of their similar thinking in regards to teaching philosophies and other important variables of the teaching profession (Solis et al., 2012). The model of co-teaching showed strength when teachers with complementary skills and abilities are paired together and allowed to pool their individual strengths to meet the needs of all learners within the general education classroom (Noonan, McCormick & Heck, 2003).

In 2001, McCormick, Noonan, Ogata & Heck conducted a study that found a significant relationship between the co-teacher relationship and the quality of instruction occurring within a program or classroom. Teacher relationships and teacher behavior can be elusive to study (Noonan et al., 2003), however there is a growing body of data that suggests how well co-teachers relate to each other directly impacts whether a co-teaching partnership survives (McCormick et al. 2001; Noonan et al. 2003).

Conclusions

This section provides conclusions drawn from the current study of general education teachers and special education teachers perceptions of their co-teaching partnerships. Implications for action and recommendations for further research are included. Concluding remarks complete this section.

Implications for action. The current study can be used by district leaders to develop effective professional development in regards to co-teaching. In addition, building leaders may utilize the study when creating co-teaching partnerships within their buildings. By utilizing the many variables researched in this study, administrators can better pair teachers based on common thoughts, opinions and practices in regards to their instructional practices in a co-taught classroom. It is imperative that districts and buildings take into account the multiple variables that need to be considered when creating a successful co-teaching partnership.

Recommendations for future research. This study permitted the researcher to look deeper into the perceptions of general education and special education teachers in School District A in regards to their co-teaching partner. The recommendations below are made for others wishing to expand upon the research of co-teaching relationships.

The first recommendation would be to expand to additional school districts of varying sizes. This study was limited to one school district that is one of the largest in the state. Results may be different based on a smaller district or a district with different resources due to size and funding.

The second recommendation would be to evaluate the perception of teachers at the middle school and elementary level. This study was restricted to teachers at the secondary (high school) level. Data could also be collected regarding perceptions of co-teaching at different levels to compare how collaboration changes between grade levels and the considerations that are taken into effect by administrators when completing scheduling of co-teaching partnerships at varying grade levels.

For comparison purposes, students could be surveyed and data could be compared to that collected by co-teaching partners to see if the teacher's perceptions of their classroom instruction is identified by the students directly impacted by the instruction. Sampling students would provide a good indication if the perception of teachers can be identified by the students. This would most likely have higher success rates at the secondary level due to understanding of components being surveyed. If completed at the elementary level, it is recommended that students be interviewed instead of completing a survey so language could better be adapted to meet the cognitive abilities of elementary students.

Concluding remarks. As many school districts adopt co-teaching as a way of meeting the needs of a variety of learners, it is critical that the model is implemented with fidelity and with successful partnerships in mind. Continued means of collaboration between special education and general education teachers continues to be paramount as educators continue to see a growing number of diverse learners enter the general education classroom. Teachers, both

general education and special education, need to maintain a positive outlook on collaboration, in addition to positive means of meeting the needs of all learners. It is the responsibility of school and district leaders to set teachers up for success by providing them all the right tools, training, and opportunities to educate students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Adapted Co-Teaching Relationship Scale

1. Indicate the extent to which you believe you and your co-teacher are the same or different in your beliefs and approaches to teaching, and personal/professional characteristics and style. Rate your answers 1-5 below, using the following scale:

"1" = Very different views

"2" = Different Views

"3" = Neutral

"4" = Similar Views

"5" = Very Similar Views

	1	2	3	4	5
Views regarding the physical arrangement of the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
Views regarding classroom scheduling	<input type="radio"/>				
Views regarding how to structure student activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Beliefs about what the curriculum for students should be	<input type="radio"/>				
Beliefs about how students learn	<input type="radio"/>				
Beliefs about inclusion	<input type="radio"/>				
Views about how to adapt and individualize activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Views about how to manage inappropriate behavior	<input type="radio"/>				
Beliefs about teacher roles and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>				
Views regarding parent involvement	<input type="radio"/>				
Desire to try new things	<input type="radio"/>				
Confidence as an educator	<input type="radio"/>				
Ways of dealing with colleagues, supervisors, parents, and other professionals	<input type="radio"/>				

	1	2	3	4	5
Approaches to education planning	<input type="radio"/>				
Flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events	<input type="radio"/>				
Sense of Humor	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to be supportive to colleagues and other staff	<input type="radio"/>				
Interest in learning new things	<input type="radio"/>				
Dedication to teaching	<input type="radio"/>				

2. Please indicate your role in the partnership.

- General Education
- Special Education

3. Please indicate years of service

- 0-1 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21+ years

Appendix B: Research Proposal to School District

**REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES FOR
RESEARCH PROJECTS**



FORM A: Please complete this form and attach the pertinent details regarding your proposal.

Date 2/2/2016

<u>Courtney Weber</u> (Name)	<u>courtneyweber@</u> (email)
<u>15694 W 163rd Court</u> (Mailing Address)	<u>913-530-1052 (work) 31782</u> (Telephone)
<u>Olathe</u> (City)	<u>KS</u> <u>66062</u> (State) (Zip)

The research is for: Master's Ed.D. Other
 Specialist Ph.D.

Project Title or Descriptor:
General Education vs. Special Education Teachers Perspectives on Co-Teaching

Has the project been submitted to a committee on human experimentation?
 Yes No

If no, please explain:
Not required by university

Do you have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for your research?
 Yes No

If no, please explain:
Anticipated upon final approval of Chapters 1-3 by advisor

Participant Description: Number of Schools 5 Number of Students 0
 Number of Teachers 40-50

Type of Research Design: Quantitative Research



Anticipated Dates: Beginning 8/2016 Ending 9/2016
 Final Report Available 12/2016



Appendix C: Institutional Review Board Proposal



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Date: _____
IRB PROTOCOL NUMBERGRADUATE DEPARTMENT
ONLY)

(IRB USE

IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)**Department(s)** **School of Education Graduate Department**

Name	Signature	
1. Dr. Harold Frye	_____	Major Advisor
2. Dr. Phil Messner	_____	Research Analyst
Dr. Jim Robins		University Committee Member
Dr. Kenny Southwick		External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Courtney Weber
 Phone: 913-530-1052
 Email: courtneyweber@[REDACTED]
 Mailing address: 15694 W 163rd Court, Olathe, KS 66062

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Harold Frye
 Phone: 913-344-1220
 Email: hfrye@bakeru.edu
 Expected Category of Review: ___Exempt ___X___Expedited ___Full

II: Protocol Title**Perspectives on Co-Teaching: General Education Versus Special Education****Summary**

The following summary must accompany the proposal. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience, and about the protections that have been included to safeguard participants from harm. Careful attention to the following may help facilitate the review process:

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of this study is to compare the differences of perception between special education and general education teachers regarding the co-teaching method. It is the goal of the researcher to find differences and/or similarities in perception to better develop the co-teaching relationship.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

Both sets of teachers will be given similar surveys (with language only being changed to identify their specific role and the role of their co-teaching partner as special educator or general educator.)

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

Teachers will be provided a survey through Survey Monkey (attached) to collect data regarding their perceptions and opinions of their co-teaching partnership and co-teaching as an instructional method.

Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical, or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

There is no known risk to the participants of this study.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

There is no known stress to be placed upon subjects involved.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

Subjects will not be deceived or misled in any way for this study.

Will there be a request for information that subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

Subjects will not be asked any questions that would be considered sensitive in nature. The only personal questions that will be asked will be regarding years of experience in education and as a co-teacher. These will be non-identifiable questions.

Will the subjects be presented with materials that might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

There are no offensive, threatening, or degrading materials to be presented to the subjects.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

Subjects will be asked to complete a survey that should be able to be completed in less than a 45 minute time frame.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their

volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

Subjects of this study will be secondary teachers in an isolated school district who have had a minimum of 1 year of co-teaching experience. Teachers will be contacted via email (Please see attached for suggested email communication) with the assistance of the director of Assessment for the school district.

What steps will be taken to ensure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

Subjects will be contacted via email with the survey link. Subjects will be explained the purpose of the survey and asked to voluntarily give their time to complete the survey. It will be stressed to participants that the survey is anonymous and it will not be tied to any performance reviews or evaluation, and their participation is completely voluntary. Participants will also be advised that there is no penalty for partial completion of any of the survey.

How will you ensure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

The survey that will be conducted will be anonymous. Working with the Director of Assessments for the district, it has been decided by the district that a consent form would not be necessary as staff will not be able to be identified upon completion of the survey.

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No data from this study will be part of a permanent record that can be identified with the subject.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

No data will be part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer that would state whether or not a subject did or did not just to participate in the study.

What steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data?

Direct data will only be reported to the researcher and their research team (Dissertation advisors and analysts) as well as pertinent district staff. All data will remain unidentifiable.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no known risks involved in this study.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

No archival data will be used.

Appendix D: School District Approval



Guiding Students to Success



**FORM B
Project Screening Action – District Level**

To: Courtney Weber

From: Dr. Dan Gruman
Director of Assessment & Research

Date: 6/24/2016

Project Title: General Education vs. Special Education Teachers Perspectives on Co-Teaching

Your research project has been reviewed and the project has been:

- approved
- not approved
- conditional approved based in changes to be made

Clarification/Comments:

Request to proceed with this project is approved in [redacted] pending university IRB approval.

This project has been assigned the following number for identification purposes:

Project Number: 2016-7-CW

Please submit a copy of the completed project to our office.

If further clarification is needed concerning this action, please contact:

Dr. Dan Gruman ([dangruman@\[redacted\]](mailto:dangruman@[redacted]))
Director of Assessment & Research



Appendix E: Instructional Review Board Approval Letter



Baker University Institutional Review Board

July 13, 2016

Dear Courtney Weber and Dr. Frye,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at CTodden@BakerU.edu or 785.594.8440.

Sincerely,

Chris Todden EdD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Verneda Edwards EdD
Sara Crump PhD
Erin Morris PhD
Scott Crenshaw

Appendix F: Email to Sample Population for Survey Participation

To:
From: Courtney Weber
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 1:55pm

Good Afternoon –

I am reaching out to you because of your role as a co-teaching partner as part of your daily instruction.

You are invited to participate in a study that is being conducted under the supervision of Baker University for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of general education teachers and special education teachers regarding the co-teaching model of instruction. For this project, I am only asking you to complete a short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FGY6KFY>

By completing this survey, you are willingly consenting to being a part of this study. No data collected will be identifiable and you will be able to complete the survey with anonymity. Data from this survey will be used for the sole purpose of this study. No data from this survey will become part of any individual's permanent record that could be made available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer. Individual names will not be recorded or reported in the survey or results of this study. All information is confidential and no individual respondent will be identified when results are published. Only summary information will be given.

Participation in full, or in part, is completely voluntary and you have the option of not answering any question or discontinuing participation at any time without penalty or loss.

If you choose to participate, please complete the attached survey by Friday, September 2, 2016. The survey should take ***less than 10 minutes*** to complete. The link again is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FGY6KFY>

Please feel free to contact me, at this email, or by phone, (913-993-1782) with any questions or concerns.

Your participation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Courtney Weber

Appendix G: Email Correspondence for Survey Use Permission

Mary Jo Noonan, Ph.D. <noonan@hawaii.edu>

Sun 6/30/2013, 8:19 PM

McCormick-Noonan Co-Teaching Scale.doc34 KB

Download

Hi Courtney,

Thanks for your interest in our Co-Teaching Scale. It is attached for your use. Please be sure to cite it appropriately. Thank you, and good luck in your research.

With warmest aloha,
mjn

Courtney T Weber

Reply all

Sat 6/29/2013, 8:51 PM

noonan@hawaii.edu

Deleted Items

Dr. Noonan -

My name is Courtney Weber and I am a Special Education teacher in Kansas, as well as a Doctoral Student at Baker University in Kansas. I am in the starting stages of my dissertation, which has a focus on perceptions of co-teaching between special education and general education teachers.

Through my starting research, I have read that you helped to develop the Co-Teacher Relationship Scale and was hoping that you would be willing to provide me a copy and allow me to use this to collect data for my dissertation. In addition, I will be conducting this survey with secondary teachers, so would like to adapt the questions/language to apply to the secondary level.

Thank you so much for your time and help.

Courtney Weber

Courtneyweber@stu.bakeru.edu
[ctweber@\[REDACTED\]](mailto:ctweber@[REDACTED])