ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: INCLUSION AS A REFORM: HOW SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATORS MAKE SENSE OF AND ENACT THEIR ROLES AS TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Federal legislation and individual state requirements have prompted exponential growth in the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom, for which general education teachers report not feeling prepared. In addition to an accompanying increase in both preservice and in-service offerings, various organizations have established standards detailing the expectations for what general education teachers should know and be able to do; however, there is minimal research that examines these standards in terms of the teachers who are expected to meet them or to determine why certain inclusive practices are more often and easily enacted than others.

My goal in this study was to examine the ways that teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities and learn more about how and why certain inclusive practices are enacted more than others. Because teachers say they "weren't prepared" for this student population, an equally important goal was to connect that information to recommendations for teacher preparation. I designed the current study using sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) and Spillane's (1999) model of enactment zones as a framework to address the research questions.

The findings of this study suggest that teachers identified the same inclusive practices as had been detailed in the literature: instructional and professional practices, legal requirements, and dispositions. Through a combination of direct questioning and culling through teachers' responses with a sensemaking lens, I identified two facilitating factors and seven barriers that affect teachers' enactment of these roles and responsibilities. The various data (focus group, interview, and observations) yielded specific information about whether and how inclusive practices are being enacted in secondary inclusive settings, and a secondary analysis focusing primarily on how teachers made sense of these practices provided additional insight into their enactments. Additionally, the teachers in this study provided three specific ways that teacher preparation (preservice and in-service) can be adapted in such a way that a total redesign is not required: SHOW ME examples of inclusive practices, GIVE ME the tools to do them more effectively, and LET ME practice them.

INCLUSION AS A REFORM: HOW SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATORS MAKE

SENSE OF AND ENACT THEIR ROLES AS TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH

DISABILITIES

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2014

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For Tirzah, because everything I do is with the purpose of making you proud.

For Cindy and my sweet fur-baby Bailey, who started this journey with me but were unable to finish it.

"Everything is everything
But you're missing"

Bruce Springsteen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Linda Valli. Every day of the last four and a half years, I have thanked God for allowing me to end up at the University of Maryland with you as a mentor. Thank you for your encouragement, your guidance, your trust, and most importantly, your friendship. I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. Lisa Boté, Dr. David Imig, Dr. Melinda Martin-Beltrán, and Dr. Rebecca Silverman. Thank you for your willingness to share your expertise and be a part of this journey with me. I also want to thank you all (and Dr. Joan Lieber) for making my defense such a wonderful learning experience. In addition, I am very thankful to the administrators and teachers at the two schools in which I conducted this research. I am beyond grateful for your assistance and enthusiasm.

Marci, words cannot express how thankful I am for you. There is no way to know if I would have ended up in this – or any! – program if you hadn't convinced me to try. We have experienced the highest of highs and the lowest of lows during these past few years, and this achievement is just as much yours as it is mine. And probably Murphy's and Bailey's, too, since they sat on so many articles, papers, and laptops along the way. Thank you for your unconditional love and support! ILY :)

I am so lucky to have an incredible support system in my family. To all three of my parents, thank you for always believing in me. Dad and Kathy, thank you for opening your home to us and showing up in every possible way. Mom, thank you for always being so positive about my work and my progress. My family (and FRAMILY!) is too large to thank each of you, but please know that every expression of support has been very much appreciated.

There are countless positives to having attended the University of Maryland, but I am forever grateful that I was there during this specific time period, so that my life would overlap with the lives of some of the most amazingly brilliant people and best friends I have ever had. I'm especially thankful for my dissertation therapist, Beth Montanaro, Jessica Demink-Carthew for starting the KMAP Writing Group, my UMD husband Michael Neel, and my favorite LIASGB, Kim Palombo. Thank you all for changing my life.

I would be remiss not to thank the staff at the DC Public Charter School Board for providing a supportive and accommodating work environment during my time at UMD. Few people are lucky enough to work at a place with so many wonderful people, and I am so glad that I was able to. Bat Cave Forever! And Mikayla, this dissertation LITERALLY would not be what it is without your Word expertise – thank you so much for always being on call!

Finally, I offer heartfelt thanks to all of the teachers I have worked with and learned from along the way. Your tireless dedication to this job and our kids is what inspired me to go back to school and do research in this field.

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CHAPTER 1: SITUATING THE STUDY

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2007, 2009a), 96% of students with disabilities spend at least part of their day in general education classes, with almost 60% of them spending more than 80% of their day there. Unfortunately, a large number of general education teachers say they do not feel adequately prepared to work in classrooms that include students with disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009; Utley, 2009).

Over the past three decades, federal legislation and individual state requirements have prompted enormous growth in the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom. Prior to legislation requiring access to public education for children with cognitive, physical, and/or emotional disabilities, parents of these children had only two real options: educate them at home or institutionalize them (Winzer, 2007). By the 1950s and 1960s, the Federal Government had begun to develop and validate educational practices for children with disabilities and their families (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). In the early 1970s, two lawsuits paved the way for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), which Dean Corrigan described as "the most important piece of educational legislation in this country's history" (Corrigan, 1978, p. 10). In the cases of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 343 Fed. Supp. 279 and Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia, 348 F. Supp. 866, both occurring in 1972, judges struck down local laws that excluded children with disabilities from schools.

Building on the principles and policies established in these early cases, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), passed in 1975, proved to be

landmark legislation, articulating a "compelling national mission to improve access to education for children with disabilities" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., p. 3). The main purposes of PL 94-142 were: (a) to assure that all children with disabilities have available to them…a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs; (b) to assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents…are protected; (c) to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and (d) to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

PL 94-142 also included provisions for teacher education, specifically, "the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development" which should include a) detailed procedures to ensure that all personnel are "appropriately and adequately prepared and trained", and b) significant information from educational research, demonstration and the development of similar projects, in addition to the adoption of promising educational practices and materials from those projects (20 USC 1413 [a] 3). Recognizing the significant challenges that PL 94-142 posed to teacher education, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) released a document in 1980 to address these challenges and provide several competency clusters that would assist teacher education programs prepare school personnel to work more effectively not only with "handicapped" students, but with all students (Reynolds, 1980). The contributors to this report noted that attempts to implement the law revealed that the level of professional preparation was not adequate, going on to state that teachers had not had the "kind and level of preparation necessary for dealing with the full range of

student differences within regular school settings" (p. 4). More information about specific ways that teacher education programs responded to PL 94-142 (e.g., the Dean's Grant Projects) will be discussed in Chapter 2.

While PL 94-142 initially focused on how to ensure access to education for students with disabilities, the release of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983 "significantly broadened the debate on the federal role in education policy" (Hardman & Dawson, 2008, p. 6). The report suggested that U.S. public schools were failing and so, therefore, were educators. Following its release, the federal government offered incentives for states to improve results for students – with and without disabilities – through standards-driven reform. The 1990 reauthorization of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which was then renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the additional amendments identified in the 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of IDEA made even more explicit the requirements for including and accommodating students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

IDEA 1997 specified that all students with disabilities were required to have access to the general curriculum, as well as be included in state and district large-scale assessments. Similarly, the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA, termed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), reinforced the inclusion of students with disabilities in standards-based reform by identifying these students as a subgroup to be measured for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a part of the state accountability system (Wakeman, Browder, Meier, & McColl, 2007). Further, IDEA 2004 amended the principle of "least restrictive environment" (LRE) so that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with

disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are

educated with children who are nondisabled."

In addition, the 2004 reauthorization included funds to provide academic and

behavioral supports to those students who do not receive special education services by

way of the response to intervention (RTI) model. RTI involves the ongoing monitoring

of student progress to determine the effectiveness of an intervention and the need for a

change in intervention (or instruction) (Gresham, 2007). In addition, it made the referral

process, as general education teachers understood it, obsolete (Brown-Chidsey & Steege,

2005; Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). More specifically, RTI established general education

teachers' full responsibility not only for applying a variety of intervention strategies

recommended by the RTI pyramid of interventions, but also for documenting student

responsiveness to interventions within each of the three tier levels (McMaster & Wagner,

2007).

In most models of RTI, general education classroom instruction is considered Tier

1, so all students receive this level of instruction – provided by general education

teachers. Students who are identified as at risk receive Tier 2 instruction, which includes

additional intervention in small groups several times per week. Tier 2 interventions may

be delivered by the general educator or other school personnel. Those students who do

not respond to the Tier 2 instruction will either continue in Tier 2 instruction or move on

to Tier 3, where they will receive more intensive, individualized instruction, typically

delivered by a special educator or other specialist (Ritchey, Silverman, Montanaro,

Speece, & Schatschneider, 2012). Initiatives such as RTI increase the responsibility of

general educators to participate in both the evaluation of and delivering services to

students with disabilities (Bocala, Morgan, Mundry, & Mello, 2010; Cummings, Atkins, Allison, & Cole, 2008; National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDSE], 2006).

Both NCLB and IDEA make clear that every child, regardless of disability status, is expected to learn and demonstrate progress toward state standards in core academic subjects. The concept of "inclusion" was born out of this emphasis on accountability combined with the push to educate students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers. Inclusion is not a legal term; rather, it is a philosophy of service delivery for special education students. There are varied definitions of inclusion, but the ideas underpinning it include understanding that all students should be welcomed, valued, and included members of their school communities, participating to the maximum extent possible, with whatever aids may be necessary, supported by a team of professionals invested in making sure students succeed (Cooper & Sayeski, 2005; Friend & Pope, 2005; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992). Inclusion is not only a belief system, however. The term also refers to a range of service delivery models that exist along a continuum, ranging from less restrictive (indirect and/or direct support within a consultative model) to more restrictive (co-taught classrooms). This concept is not to be confused with the term "continuum of services" that refers to the entire range of placements for a student with disabilities and includes resource and/or self-contained classrooms, wherein all students have IEPs and the teacher of record is a special education teacher.

In the consultative model, general education teachers are solely responsible for providing instruction to all students in their class, with and without disabilities. General

educator teachers may receive either indirect and/or direct support for their students with disabilities. Indirect support occurs when the general educator collaborates as needed with the special education case manager, teacher(s), and/or service provider(s) to keep track of student progress, assess the need to adapt or supplement materials or instruction, and problem solve, as needed (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2006). Direct support, on the other hand, occurs when the general educator is the sole teacher in the classroom, but a special education teacher comes into the room at designated times to provide specialized instruction to students with disabilities (Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). At the more restrictive end of the inclusion spectrum, co-teaching is often considered the "premier format" (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010) of inclusion. Co-teaching occurs when the general educator and special educator are both teachers of record, and they jointly deliver instruction to a diverse group of students in a single classroom (Friend & Cook, 2007; Idol, 2006; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Scruggs et al., 2007).

Due to the move toward inclusive education, teacher education programs and national organizations have begun to specify the skills and knowledge that general education teachers must have to teach students with disabilities (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium [INTASC], 2001). Despite the increased expectations for what general education teachers should be able to know and do in regards to these students, many general education teachers say they do not feel adequately prepared to work in classrooms that include students with disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009; Utley, 2009).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

There has been a steady increase in the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom, in part due to the changes in legislation and practice described above. A majority of students with disabilities spend at least part of their day in general education classes. The chance that a general education teacher will encounter a student with a learning disability within the general education classroom is greater at the middle and secondary school levels than for an elementary school teacher, for two main reasons. In secondary school grades, classes are larger, increasing the probability that a student with a learning disability will be among the students in a general education class (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). In addition, the fact that teachers specialize in one or two content areas and see several groups of students per day increases the likelihood that at some point during the school day, they will be responsible for the instruction of students with learning disabilities.

Over the last decade, there has been growth in research activity about general education teachers providing instruction to students with disabilities, including research about teaching in inclusive settings. In addition to changes in legislation and practices, this growth is also related to the development of national standards regarding how teachers are prepared for and instruct these students. There is some research focused on standards specific to general education teachers, standards specific to special education teachers, and standards for both general education teachers and special education teachers in inclusive settings (e.g., Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010). Most of the information about professional standards describes their importance and proper implementation from the perspective of the various professional associations. While the

standards themselves were mostly developed out of groups of stakeholders, presumably selected in order to represent everyone with an interest in inclusive education, none of the organizations described in my literature review include observations of actual classroom practice as part of their process for creating the standards, nor have they conducted any research regarding what these standards should look like in the classroom. There is some research conducted by those outside the professional organizations that examines specific elements identified in the standards (e.g., instructional practices and assessment accommodations, as in Maccini & Gagnon, 2006), but it is not situated within the standards for general educators.

Researchers have also collected information from general educators about teaching students with disabilities, using such phrases as: a) suggestions and/or advice for new general education teachers (Berry, 2011); b) beliefs about inclusion and in-service needs (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999); c) skills related to inclusion and collaboration (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009); d) teacher competencies for inclusive settings (Dingle, Falvey, Givner, & Haager, 2004); e) essential standards for effectively teaching students with mild disabilities in included settings (Grskovic & Trzcinka, 2011); f) knowledge and skills to teach students with disabilities (Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009); g) necessary information for more effectively teaching students with special needs (Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003); and h) attitudes and attributes of effective inclusionists (Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997). A majority of these studies involved surveys as the primary source of data, although some used interviews or focus groups. Table A1, described in more detail in Chapter 2, provides an overview of each of these articles (Appendix A).

Despite a clear indication from the literature that there are important competencies for general education teachers, there is no research detailing whether and how professional standards are being implemented in classrooms. In one exception, Cramer, Liston, Nevin, and Thousand (2010) used the results of two previously conducted studies that focused on urban secondary co-teacher teams—one in Florida and one in California—to gather information for teacher education programs regarding how to prepare teachers to be effective collaborative professionals. In the paper, Cramer and her colleagues first conducted a review of national standards for content with respect to inclusive education and collaboration or co-teaching. The researchers then identified overlapping areas (knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions for differentiating instruction, working collaboratively with others, and supporting the education of diverse learners), which they used to analyze the results of the two previously conducted studies.

Some researchers point to the dearth of studies on the types of training that make general education teachers more effective with special education students (Feng & Sass, 2010). Others assert that reforms regarding students with disabilities who have been included in the general curriculum have taken place for the most part without the consultation or involvement of practicing teachers (Kamens et al., 2003; Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, & Lisowski, 1995), especially general educators (Bradley & West, 1994; Snyder, 1999). Despite a push toward inclusion and the development of standards for general education teachers regarding students with disabilities, teachers continue to express feelings of inadequacy and ill-preparedness for teaching these students. One major challenge to inclusion at the secondary level could be the scarcity of research on inclusive secondary classrooms (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001).

Inclusion at the secondary level presents myriad complexities related to teachers' content-specific training, the wide range of skills present in a single classroom, and curricular demands, among other challenges (Crockett, 2004; Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2004; Scruggs et al., 2007). Multiple scholars cite the need for more research on inclusive secondary classrooms (Bulgren et al., 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Scanlon & Baker, 2012; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005). There is markedly less literature related to secondary educators and students with disabilities than there is at the elementary level (although there is only minimal research related to general educators and this student population in elementary schools either). Of the research that has been published in regards to secondary settings, most focuses on co-taught classrooms (e.g., Murawski, 2006) and/or mathematics or science instruction (e.g., Maccini & Gagnon, 2006). In addition, there are very few studies (e.g., Marston, 1996; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002) in which researchers make comparisons across different types of inclusive models (e.g., co-taught classroom versus taught by general educator), and these are mostly focused on determining which placement is more effective, usually by examining student outcomes.

The current study was designed to address many of these gaps. In particular, it contributes to the literature on inclusion through the focus on secondary inclusive classrooms, including classrooms that are not co-taught. Additionally, this research contributes to the discussion about inclusive teacher education by connecting recommendations for teacher preparation to both teacher voice and practice.

Study Design

In order to address the gaps noted in the previous section, I examined how general educators in two southeastern, urban high schools make sense of and enact their roles and responsibilities regarding students with disabilities in relation to existing professional standards. I also explored factors that hinder or enable the enactment of these standards and gathered information about how current and future teachers could be better prepared for teaching this student population. I employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to gather this information.

Although researchers use varying terminology and often list different types of data collection as part of their definitions of qualitative research, there are several features included in most definitions (e.g., natural settings, interpretation). Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) definition encompasses the nature of qualitative research as it applies to this study:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) definition is most relevant to this study for several reasons. First, in order to answer the research questions, it is necessary to study teachers "in their natural settings" and attempt to make sense of the standards as a "situated activity…in terms of the meanings people bring to them." Second, professional standards tend to exist as words about actions and/or behaviors, rather than actions themselves, and the

review in Chapter 2 demonstrates that very little has been done to make them "visible." Third, to "turn the world into a series of representations," I plan to use multiple types of data collection, including individual and focus group interviews, observations, and document review in order to develop a robust understanding of the ways that teachers interpret and enact roles and responsibilities related to students' disabilities, including information about how teachers' experiences contribute to what actually happens in their classrooms.

Research Questions

More students than ever are being educated in general education classrooms, and gradual changes in both legislation and practice have led to increased general education teacher responsibilities regarding special education services. Despite this fact, general educators continue to say they "don't know how to teach these students" (Peters & Reid, 2009, p. 554). In order to identify potential solutions for this problem, I designed a study to answer the following questions:

1) How do secondary general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities?

   a. What factors facilitate the enactment of these roles and responsibilities?

   b. What are the barriers to enacting these roles and responsibilities?

   c. Do these barriers differ by setting (e.g., type of inclusion model – solo-taught versus co-taught classrooms; honors versus standard)?

   d. How might these barriers be overcome?

2) How do secondary general educators enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students with disabilities as identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations?

    a. Are there substantive variations in these enactments of the standards?

    b. Are there identifiable patterns to the variations (i.e., based on school, inclusion type, academic setting, or teacher characteristics)? If so, what do these look like?

3) How do secondary general educators think current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these roles and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms?

Definition of Terms

General Education [Teacher]: General Education is the program of education that typically developing children receive, based on state standards and evaluated by the annual state educational standards test. It is delivered in a 'regular' classroom, by a General Education Teacher, who has been certified in the grade and content area.

Inclusion: As described above, inclusion is both a philosophy and a setting. In this study, I investigate two settings on the inclusive continuum: consultative with indirect support (general education teacher meets with special education teacher as needed, hereafter referred to as solo-taught classes) and co-taught (general education and special education teacher jointly deliver instruction).

Setting: In this study, the term "setting" is used to refer to various types of instructional environments at each school. Specifically, I refer to *inclusive settings*, or solo-taught versus co-taught classes, and *academic settings*, or honors versus standard level courses.

Special Education [Teacher]: IDEA defines special education as "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability." Specially designed instruction means adapting the content or delivery of instruction, as appropriate to address a student's individual needs and ensure access to the general curriculum (IDEA, 2004). A Special Education Teacher is a teacher certified by the state to provide special education services in whatever environment is appropriate to students' needs and according to their Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

Students with Disabilities (SWD): This study uses IDEA's definition of children with disabilities:

> a child evaluated in accordance with Sec. Sec. 300.304 through 300.311 as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as "emotional disturbance"), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, any other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. (IDEA, 2004)

Organization of the Dissertation

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 described the background, purpose and significance of the study, and overview of the study design, including the research questions and definition of terms. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature, which covers the history of personnel preparation for general educators in regards to students with disabilities; professional standards and competencies from the

perspective of both professional associations and practicing teachers; and comparisons across inclusive models, including the role of the general educator in co-taught classrooms. In Chapter 3, I describe the study design, including the background and motivation of the researcher, methodological orientation, and design of the study. Chapter 4 begins with a presentation of the two cases, followed by a summary of the findings according to research question. Finally, Chapter 5 makes sense of the entire study by first discussing the findings in relation to the conceptual framework. Following this summary, I report on the contributions of this research to the literature and present the implications for practice. The chapter ends with the limitations and implications for further research and overall conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting research related to how general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities in regards to teaching students with disabilities. Building on the introduction to this study, I begin the literature review by summarizing the history of and progression toward inclusive teacher education and professional development. Following this, I identify the professional standards that have been developed for general education teachers of students with disabilities and synthesize the existing literature regarding general education teachers' assertions about what knowledge is necessary in order to teach these students. I conclude this section by describing the barriers that teachers identify related to this knowledge. Next I review the literature that compares and/or describes different types of inclusive settings, which includes a discussion related to the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers. Finally, drawing on all of the literature, I introduce the conceptual framework for this study.

Inclusive Personnel Preparation for General Educators

Effectively including students in general education requires that general education teachers have more than just the skills to teach those students; they also need to have basic knowledge about special education laws and how to collaborate with others when assessing and planning for students with disabilities (Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009). In spite of the fact that general education teachers continue to express feelings of inadequacy and ill-preparedness for teaching these students, the progression toward inclusion <u>has</u> been accompanied by constant questioning about how to prepare general educators as well as by changes in both in-service and preservice teacher preparation. The following section describes the history of this movement.

Literature Review Procedures

To begin my review of the research, I conducted an electronic search of ERIC and EBSCO databases using various combinations of the descriptors of *general education teachers, professional development, in-service, teacher education, special education, co-teaching* and *students with disabilities* in peer-reviewed journals. I only included articles that were situated within the United States. Despite the fact that multiple articles have been written about special education and/or inclusion in other countries, I excluded this body of literature because legal mandates for special education are not consistent from one country to another. The exclusion of international literature in research on special education is not uncommon: Cramer and her colleagues, for example, direct readers interested in international literature to "UNICEF which has funded several international projects on inclusive schools and the Teaching and Learning Research Programme in the United Kingdom with its inclusive education component" (2010, p. 61).

Additionally, I excluded articles that consisted primarily of individual program descriptions and/or the steps taken by faculty in the development and implementation of redesigned programs (Pugach & Blanton, 2012). My focus in this section is not to describe what individual programs are doing, which comprises a majority of the literature on this topic (Pugach & Blanton, 2012), but to provide an overview of the progression toward preparing both preservice and in-service general educators to teach students with disabilities.

History of Inclusive Personnel Preparation for General Educators

The transition to including students with disabilities in the general education classroom has been accompanied by a gradual change in personnel preparation as well.

Although the federal government responded only intermittently to concerns about how regular education teachers were prepared to serve students with disabilities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, amendments to Public Law 93-380, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 (Public Law 94-142) sparked a renewed interest in responding to these concerns (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003).

As part of PL 93-380 (FERPA), states were asked to extend services to all children with disabilities, to provide procedural safeguards, nondiscriminatory testing, and a child find system, in addition to a mandate for children with disabilities to be served in the Least Restrictive Environment. This public law provided for a new set of funds to be administered, with a focus on in-service preparation – the Regular Education In-service grants (REGI). The REGI program aimed to stimulate general educators' awareness of the needs of students with disabilities, improve their knowledge and attitudes about students with disabilities, assist them in gaining necessary skills for teaching students with disabilities, improve local implementation of mainstreaming, and train them to meet the requirements of PL 94–142 (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). There were 27 in-service projects funded in 1974 and 35 in 1975, but by 1976 a portion of the funds allotted for in-service to regular educators had been redirected to in-service for special educators in response to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements in PL 94-142.

In response to some concerns about the quality of in-service being provided to general educators, the Division of Personnel Preparation created the National In-service Network in 1978 to assist in disseminating products and findings from the REGI projects

and pilot statewide planning processes in three states (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). It is

estimated that 475,000 general education teachers participated in REGI-sponsored in-

service from 1977 to 1982, when the program was discontinued. Reviews of the

effectiveness of the REGI program indicate that while participants believe it was more

useful than other in-service training experiences, the "magnitude of the challenge of

providing in-service training for regular educators was greater than limited support for

REGI grants could address" (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003, p. 234).

In addition to the Regular Education In-service Grants, the federal government

also established the Regular Education Preservice Grants (REGP) to make sure that

regular education teacher candidates were graduating from schools and colleges of

education with the requisite skills and knowledge to serve students with disabilities in

mainstream classrooms (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). In preparation for PL 94-142, the

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP, then called the Bureau of Education for the

Handicapped) proposed funding for the Dean's Grants Projects – small grants of

approximately $40,000 – to "address the reconceptualization of teacher preparation" with

the intention that general education teachers would be better prepared to instruct students

with disabilities (Pugach, Blanton, Mickelson, & Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2013, p. 9).

There were three requirements for the DGPs: 1) the dean of the school or department of

education had to direct the grant; 2) recipients had to plan and implement a program that

responded to the needs of local, state, and national agencies; and 3) professionals from

multiple departments of the university (not focused solely on special education) had to be

involved (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). In total, 316 preservice programs participated in

the Dean's Grant Projects (DGP). This number included not only those schools that had

been awarded Grants, but also institutions that benefited from resources (i.e., technical

assistance) provided by the National Support Systems Project (NSSP) and AACTE

(Pugach et al., 2013).

Kleinhammer-Tramill (2003) listed five categories of activities carried out

through the Deans' Grants:

> 1) faculty development designed to stimulate teacher education faculty members'
> awareness and commitment to the need to prepare educators to serve students
> with disabilities;
>
> 2) revisions in teacher preparation curriculum and instruction;
>
> 3) development of field experiences and partnerships with K-12 schools to ensure
> that preservice teachers had opportunities to work with students with disabilities
> before they entered professional practice;
>
> 4) administrative restructuring to accomplish more shared responsibility for
> teacher preparation, particularly between regular and special education; and
>
> 5) development of products including preservice training modules, courses, and
> other materials. (p. 234-235)

Despite some disillusionment with the degree of "reconceptualization", the DGPs

contributed to this specific area of research in that many of the junior faculty and

graduate assistants who had been assigned to work on the projects went on to focus their

research on teacher education and the relationship between general and special education

teacher preparation. In addition, almost all states created requirements that general

education preservice teachers complete at least one course on students with disabilities

and legal requirements. This led to colleges and universities developing one or more

special education-focused courses as well as general education programs with a minor in

special education or dual certification programs in general education and special

education (Pugach et al., 2013).

Pugach, Blanton, and Correa (2011) identified two dominant alternatives for inclusive teacher education in the period of time during and immediately following the Deans' Grants (1975-1982): a single-course requirement for general education majors or curricular infusion – the integration of special education competencies into the existing general education curriculum. Pugach et al. (2011) reported that the single-course requirement had "remarkable longevity," citing research from 2003 that called it the most common approach for preparing general education teachers to work with students with disabilities (p. 185).

In 1986, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Madeline Will, issued a call for redesigning special education services to emphasize shared responsibility between general and special education for students with mild disabilities (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). The premise of the "Regular Education Initiative" (REI) was that students with disabilities could be served more effectively through the general education classroom than through the special education system (Reynolds, Wang & Walberg, 1987). Although the REI "implied the need for wide-scale preparation of regular educators to serve students with disabilities," the only absolute priorities related to this preparation were for grants to State Education Agencies (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003, p. 236).

With the 1990 reauthorization of IDEA (PL 101-476), preparation of general education teachers remained a priority under *Special Projects* in that grants were available to "institutions of higher education, State agencies, and other appropriate nonprofit agencies and organizations to develop and demonstrate effective ways for preservice training programs to prepare regular educators to work with children and youth

with disabilities and their families" (PL 101–476, Subchapter IV, Part D, Sec. 1431 (b)).

Between 1990 and 1997, a number of absolute priorities related to "training regular

educators" were included in subsequent reauthorizations (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003).

Additionally, in 1997 (prior to the 1997 reauthorization), there was an invitational

priority for *preservice preparation programs to prepare general educators to work with*

children and youth with disabilities and their families, which was similar to the DGP's in

terms of supporting approaches that would better enable faculty at schools and colleges

of education to prepare teachers for serving students with disabilities in general education

classrooms.

Pugach and her colleagues (2011) described how it was also around this time that

professional organizations began reconsidering the relationship between standards for

general and special educators. This was partially motivated by the 1983 and 1987

redesigns of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

standards to include the word "diversity" and reference all learners. In addition, teacher

education programs began experimenting with different collaborative models, trying out

strategies for collaborative planning, team teaching courses, and/or redesigning the

single-course requirement (Pugach et al., 2011).

The 1997 reauthorization (PL 105–17) marked a major shift in the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act. For the first time, it attributed "primary responsibility

and accountability" for all students with disabilities to general education (Kleinhammer-

Tramill, 2003, p. 238). The role of special education, on the other hand, was to provide

support to the general education system. Many of the invitational priorities were focused

on grantees fostering collaboration between special education and general education as

well as preparing personnel to promote high expectations while fostering access to the

general education curriculum (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). Only four years later, the

No Child Left Behind Act was passed, which reiterated what had been made clear by

IDEA '97: "the general education classroom was not only an appropriate placement for

many students with disabilities but…those in the general education classroom are

expected to be taught and learn the general education curriculum" (Pugach et al., 2011, p.

191). Also during this time, the Council for Exceptional Children worked closely with

the Council of Chief State School Officers' Interstate New Teacher Assessment and

Support Consortium (INTASC, now InTASC) project to develop standards (2001) for

what every teacher should know and be able to do to work with students with disabilities.

In response to the NCLB high stakes accountability context, OSEP introduced the

325T Program to improve the quality of teacher education and graduate Highly Qualified

special education teachers. At the time of the 325T grants, teacher preparation for special

education ranged from programs that operated separate from general education to those

that were redesigning elements of the general education curriculum to those that were

fully merged with general education (Blanton & Pugach, 2011; Pugach et al., 2013). One

of the absolute priorities of the 325T grants was that the improved or restructured

program should be designed to "offer integrated training and practice opportunities

targeted to enhance the abilities of beginning special educators to share responsibility

with general educators…" (Pugach et al., 2013, p. 26). More recent iterations of the

grants (2010 and 2011) also placed emphasis on collaboration and/or dual certification in

special and general education. Because this initiative is so new, there is yet to be

documented any research on the impact of the 325T grants, although some participants have begun to publish descriptions of their work.

During the period of time following IDEA '97 and NCLB, many teacher education programs, which had historically been organized around the differences between specializations (Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012; Hardman, 2009), began working to become more collaborative. Collaborative teacher education is based on the understanding that all educators have more in common than not (Brown, Welsh, Hill, & Cipko, 2008; Hardman, 2009; Pugach & Blanton, 2009, 2012). While only a few programs experimented with various forms of collaborative teacher education prior to 1997, since then there has been a huge growth in the number of programs implementing specific collaborative components. This includes, for example, co-taught preservice classes (Dieker & Ousley, 2006; Kluth & Straut, 2003; McHatton & Daniel, 2008), collaboratively taught seminars or courses (Arthaud, Aram, Breck, Doelling, & Bushrow, 2007; Brown et al., 2008), cooperative teaching placements (Hoppey, Yendol-Silva, & Pullen, 2004), a combination of seminars and field experiences (van Laarhoven et al., 2006), and special blocks of courses to foster collaboration skills (Ford, Pugach, & Otis-Wilborn, 2001; Frey, Andres, McKeeman, & Lane, 2012).

Despite the fact that programs across the country are making strides toward preparing their general education teacher candidates for students with disabilities, very little research has been conducted on these programs. What has been published consists primarily of individual program descriptions that provide information about the steps taken by faculty in the development and implementation of redesigned programs (Pugach & Blanton, 2012). More recent articles have included results of formative and

summative program evaluations in order to improve existing programs (e.g., Fullerton, McBride, Bert, & Ruben, 2011a, 2011b; Sobel, Iceman-Sands, & Basile, 2007). Other literature examines the effectiveness of specific program components, such as collaborative student teaching experiences (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Utley, 2009).

Summary of Inclusive Personnel Preparation for General Educators

As described above, changes in legislation, federal funding, and professional standards have led not only to growth in the number of students with disabilities receiving services in the general education classroom, but also to increased general education teacher responsibilities regarding special education services. Specific mandates have made clear that every child, regardless of disability status, is expected to learn and demonstrate progress toward state standards in core academic subjects. Teachers, then, must be able to teach core academic subjects to all students. Inclusive reforms were born out of the dual emphases on accountability and inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Consequently, the once separate and distinct roles of special and general education teachers have become increasingly intertwined.

These role expectations require that both the general education and special education teachers be prepared to work with all students. The previous review demonstrates how the push toward inclusion has been accompanied by a similar trend in terms of personnel preparation, albeit more so at the preservice level than in-service. As evidenced above, despite there being a variety of efforts toward better preparing general education teachers for the realities of students with disabilities in their classrooms, these

efforts are wide-ranging and inconsistent, which may be attributed to the lack of unification regarding what exactly these teachers need to know. The next section delves more into this question.

What General Educators Need to Know

Research on what teachers need to know in order to work with students with disabilities is generally divided into two types of literature. The first, standards, contains information about and research related to the professional standards created by various organizations. In general, there is limited research available about standards. This section is drawn mainly from the standards set forth by professional groups, in addition to an analysis of various organizations' standards (Cramer et al., 2010). The second section includes literature related to what practicing teachers assert is important to know in order to teach students with disabilities. After excluding articles dedicated to what teachers think about inclusion in general, including opinions about how it is not effective, I synthesized information that had been published with varying purposes (e.g., what teachers need to know, what characteristics are demonstrated by effective inclusionists, what advice practicing general educators would give to new teachers) to compile a list of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions specific to general education teachers of students with disabilities.

Literature Review Procedures

To begin my review of the research, I conducted an electronic search of ERIC and EBSCO databases using the broad descriptors of *general education teachers* AND *students with disabilities* in peer-reviewed journals. I then used the following criteria to narrow the results: articles had to (a) relate to the standards teachers are required to meet

in order to teach students with disabilities or (b) address the perceptions or practices of general educators regarding the skills needed to teach students with disabilities. I also used the same exclusion criteria described previously to eliminate articles not written about teachers in the United States.

I performed additional searches using various combinations of the descriptors *general education teachers*, *special education teachers*, *knowledge*, *skills*, *special education*, *professional standards*, *mainstreaming*, *co-teaching*, and *students with disabilities*. I then separated articles into categories based on whether they were related to standards, grounded in the words of practicing teachers, or both. After these initial electronic searches were completed and inclusion criteria established, I conducted an ancestral search using several of the original articles. When particular journals consistently appeared in my search, I scanned through several issues manually searching for relevant keywords. In addition, I accessed the websites of various nationally recognized organizations responsible for creating standards detailing what teachers of students with disabilities should know and do. Finally, I emailed other researchers in this field to identify additional and/or unpublished articles. As I read the articles, the number of categories changed to reflect additional criteria (i.e., I decided to exclude those articles that were aimed at specific disabilities, because the larger body of literature reflected teachers' opinions about students with disabilities in general). Table 1 details the total number of articles identified in each category.

Table 1

Article Categories under What General Educators Need to Know

Category	Number of Articles
Professional Standards	**7**
• Standards Published by Organizations	[5]
• Literature about Professional Standards	[2]
Practicing Teacher Judgments	**9**
TOTAL	**15**

Note: Total number of articles does not add up to 16 because one of the articles, Cramer et al. (2010), fits into both categories.

Professional Standards

According to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), standards can serve three different functions: "as a 'banner,' announcing a big picture vision of where we want to go; a specific 'bar' or level of performance that must be met; and the 'opportunity to learn' supports that must be in place to ensure a teacher has opportunity to meet the standards" (InTASC, 2013, p. 7). Generally speaking, there are standards for general educators (which are also divided into subject area standards) and standards for special educators. Due to the move toward inclusive education, teacher education programs and national organizations have begun to specify the skills and knowledge that general education teachers must have to teach students with disabilities (INTASC, 2001).

Professional standards for practicing teachers. InTASC is a "consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers" (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2013). InTASC's standards for all teachers

emphasize two themes specific to the topic of this study: personalized learning for diverse learners and a collaborative professional culture (Hill, Stumbo, Paliokas, Hansen, & McWalters, 2010). In the 2013 Model Core Teaching Standards released by InTASC, these themes are addressed both explicitly (#2: Learning Differences; #10: Leadership and Collaboration) and implicitly. Under Standard #2, teachers are expected to "use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards" (InTASC, 2013, p. 8). Standard #10 encourages teachers to collaborate with "learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth" (p. 9). Additional language is used throughout the standards that references individual student differences: individual learners' strengths, interests, and needs; diverse learning differences or needs; learner diversity; multiple representations; flexible learning environments; multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge / assessing needs; differentiated learning experiences; committed to making accommodations; differentiate instruction for individuals and groups of learners; collaborate to support student learning (with special educators, related service providers, etc.); variety of instructional strategies; understand laws related to learners with disabilities.

In addition to the language used in the standards for all teachers, InTASC's special education standards detail the similarities and differences between what special *and* general educators should know and be able to do across 10 principles of teacher development. The initiative behind this document began around the time of the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, when a group of professional education associations (e.g., CEC and NASDSE) asked InTASC to join a forum, hosted by the National Education

Association, to develop a common dialog around special education issues. These associations then agreed to work with InTASC to develop licensing standards in the area of special education.

In these standards, InTASC uses the framework of its core principles to elaborate on the aspects that are essential for the successful education of students with disabilities. By underscoring each principle with the implications for students with disabilities, the knowledge and skills both general and special education teachers should have, and the additional knowledge and skills required by the special educator, InTASC makes clear that the general educator is just as responsible for his or her students with disabilities as the special educator. See Table 2 for an overview of these similarities and differences, organized under four main areas (in original): (1) content, (2) pedagogy, (3) students with disabilities, and (4) contexts.

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), an independent, nonprofit organization formed in 1987, is another organization that includes language specific to students with disabilities in standards for general educators. The original board of directors, comprised of 63 members, two-thirds of whom were teachers, set out to create a licensing structure that would elevate teaching professionalism to that of the professions of law, medicine, etc. Their aim was to advance the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching by way of a voluntary system that certifies teachers who meet the standards.

Table 2

InTASC Principles: General Education and Special Education

Area	What General and Special Educators Should Be Able to Know and Do	What Special Educators Should Be Able to Know and Do, Additionally
Content	• Command of subject matter	• Knowledge of expanded curriculum (e.g., communicative, social / behavior skills)
Pedagogy	• Repertoire of instructional strategies, assessment techniques, and accommodations • Create positive learning environment • Motivate students • Communicate with students • Plan instruction • Self-reflect • Collaborate with families / professionals	• Design and implement specialized accommodations • Access resources and assistive technologies • Provide transition support
Students with Disabilities	• Know their students, including specific information about abilities and disabilities, learning strengths and needs, prior experiences, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds	• Specialized knowledge of specific disabilities and their implications for teaching and learning
Contexts	• Knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements	• Understanding of larger contexts within which teaching of students with disabilities occur, advocate for education within these contexts, and work across contexts

The National Board standards are based on five core propositions, which represent what all accomplished teachers should know and be able to do (NBPTS, 2010). In addition to referencing "all students" throughout the document, the more detailed description of each proposition includes language that, although not explicitly directed at students with disabilities, is applicable to the instruction of these students. Table 3 provides a list of these references by proposition.

Table 3

NBPTS Five Core Propositions in Relation to Students with Disabilities

Proposition	Reference to Students with Disabilities
Teachers are committed to students and their learning.	• Teachers recognize individual differences in their students and adjust their practice accordingly (discusses modifying for students with disabilities) • Teachers have an understanding of how students develop and learn (mentions different types of intelligence and learning styles) • Teachers treat students equitably (describes how biases based on real or perceived ability differences, handicaps or disabilities, among other types of biases, can distort relationships)
Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.	• Teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey a subject to students (references taking into account the mix of students and school contexts that confront the teacher)
Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.	• Teachers call on multiple methods to meet their goals (based on the explanation that students vary in learning styles) • Teachers regularly assess student progress (explains that students learn differently and at different paces)
Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.	• Nothing specific to students with disabilities
Teachers are members of learning communities.	• Teachers contribute to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals (coordination of services description includes references to mainstreaming and least restrictive environment)

These core propositions serve as the foundation for the subject-specific standards published by NBPTS. Similar to the standards identified by InTASC, the subject-specific NBPTS standards include language that relates to teaching students with disabilities. The descriptions that accompany the standards for each subject area include multiple references to students with "exceptional needs." There are standards that naturally align themselves with this student population (diversity, learning environment, and collaboration) and standards that do not necessarily seem connected but which include clear statements related to these students (e.g., Knowledge of Students and Instructional

Resources). As with InTASC, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards highlights several key areas in which general educators should be prepared for teaching students with disabilities.

In addition to those standards created by professional organizations such as InTASC and NBPTS, individual states often create their own set of professional standards. There is not a lot of literature that addresses this topic, however. In one example, Bocala, Morgan, Mundry, and Mello (2010) investigated certification requirements for general education teachers in the Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and Islands Region (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands). To answer their research questions, Bocala et al. (2010) examined three data sources: publicly available state education agency documents related to certification requirements for general education teachers, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification's web-based database of state certification requirements, and interviews with a state certification official in each of the nine jurisdictions. Their investigation uncovered a range of requirements across the nine jurisdictions:

- Four of the nine jurisdictions require preservice teachers to take a prescribed number of credit hours focused on special education

- Four others require approved programs that develop knowledge and skills in special education without specifying required coursework

- Two require that general education preservice teachers spend at least part of their student teaching experience working with students with disabilities

- Five use professional teaching standards

In addition, eight special education content areas for teacher preparation were identified across each of the jurisdictions, though none required all eight. Those content areas were: 1) understand the growth and development of exceptional children; 2) understand instructional design; 3) adapt, differentiate, accommodate, or modify instruction; 4) participate in field experiences with students with disabilities; 5) prepare, implement, or evaluate Individualized Education Programs; 6) seek support or collaboration to assist students with disabilities; 7) understand the legal and historical foundations of special education; and 8) identify student learning differences.

In another paper, Geiger (2006) summarized research on models and requirements for state agencies' licensure of special education teachers in addition to studies of special education preparation required for certification of general education teachers. His review included information that ranged chronologically from prior to the 1980s through the early 2000s. The summary shows a clear increase in requirements over this period of time. In 1979, as few as 10 jurisdictions had requirements for special education courses or experiences for the initial licensure or re-licensure of regular classroom teachers. By 1980, just one year later, slightly more than half (26) of the jurisdictions either had certification requirements (15) or were considering or anticipated implementing such a requirement in the near future (11). This number continued to rise incrementally throughout the 1980s, and by the 1990s, a majority of jurisdictions had some type of requirement, with 37 requiring special education coursework for initial licensure and nine requiring coursework for recertification.

The state in which my study is conducted does require competency in meeting special learning needs / exceptionality / diversity for certification, which can be met

through completion of an "Approved Teacher Education Program" (citation removed for confidentiality). In addition, the state has developed its own list of teaching standards. Similar to the two organizations' standards described above, these standards use language specific to teaching students with disabilities. There is language focused on the environment (i.e., making it respectful and inclusive) and on adapting teaching, including individual student learning and development, learning styles, differentiation, and collaboration. On the state's teacher evaluation tool, all of the aforementioned language is addressed under one standard related to establishing a respectful environment for diverse student populations. Under this standard, there are five "elements" teachers must address: positive, nurturing relationships; embracing diversity; students as individuals; adapting teaching; and collaboration.

Despite the fact that professional standards for practicing teachers are divided into standards for general educators and standards for special educators, the literature summarized in this section demonstrates that there are certain expectations for general education teachers regarding students with disabilities. Specifically, they all reference differentiating instruction and assessment for students of varying abilities and learning styles, as well as collaborating with other professionals.

Professional standards for teacher education programs. In this section, I examine the standards that accrediting bodies and other professional organizations have developed to guide teacher education programs toward preparing preservice general education teachers for the instruction of students with disabilities. There is only minimal research available that attempts to connect coursework with the knowledge and skills that general education teachers must have in order to teach students with disabilities (e.g.,

Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012), and many teachers indicate that they did not receive

enough preservice preparation for this population (Berry, 2011; Pugach, 2005), so the

standards in this section should not be interpreted as evidence of the knowledge and skills

that are necessarily being developed in preservice teachers. As with the previous section,

there are minimal examples of standards that are specific to general education teachers of

students with disabilities. In the following paragraphs, I describe how four accrediting

bodies and/or other professional organizations address this particular need.

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE),

established in 1948, is a "national alliance of educator preparation programs dedicated to

high-quality, evidence-based preparation that assures educators are ready to teach all

learners on Day 1" (AACTE, n.d.). After the passage of PL 94-142, AACTE was one of

the first organizations to recognize the particular challenges the law posed for teacher

preparation and, in an attempt to respond to those challenges, AACTE worked with the

National Support Systems Project to develop and release "A Common Body of Practice

for Teachers: The Challenge of Public Law 94-142 to Teacher Education" (Reynolds,

1980). The document included a list of ten "clusters of capabilities" drawn from "broad

discussions and experiences relating to the implementation of training programs for

teachers who are engaged in meeting the new requirements of Public Law 94-142"

(Reynolds, 1980, p. 8). For each of the ten clusters, AACTE provided a recommendation

for teacher preparation (Table 4). This list, published in 1980, represents the earliest

response to the question of what general educators should know and be able to do in

regards to students with disabilities.

Table 4

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation based on Clusters of Capability (Reynolds, 1980).

Cluster	Recommendation
Curriculum	The preparation of all teachers should include the study of and firsthand experience with curricular principles, guides, and structures from preschool through secondary school levels. All major subjects that are systematically taught in schools by professionals should be included. The means and procedures by which curriculum is developed, adopted, and changed should be understood and there should be practice in designing and modifying curriculum and materials, especially to suit the individual needs of students.
Teaching Basic Skills	The preparation of all teachers should include necessary elements to assure competency in teaching the basic skills (defined to include literacy, life maintenance, and personal development skills) and in collaborative practice with specialists in basic skills instruction. Instruction should be provided in teaching the skill areas as such. In addition, supervised practical experience should be provided in teaching of literacy, life maintenance, and personal development skills.
Class Management	All teachers should be proficient in class management procedures, including applied behavioral analysis, group alerting, guiding transitions, materials arrangement, crisis intervention techniques, and group approaches to creating a positive affective climate.
Professional Consultation and Communications	It is essential now that all teachers have opportunities to master the knowledge and practices involved in effective consultation and other forms of professional communication. As part of preservice preparation, every teacher should have instruction and practicum experience leading to assured capability in these areas.
Teacher-Parent-Student Relationships	All teachers should have skills and sensitivity for dealing with parents and siblings of handicapped students; they should have had opportunities to practice skills in this area as part of their practicums in teacher preparation.
Student-Student Relationships	All teachers should be able to convey to students the attitude that they bear some of the responsibility for their social environment and must be willing to help one another. Also, teachers need to be prepared to manage the social structure of their classes by generating cooperative, mutually helpful behavior among the students. Teachers need specific insights into and skills for developing heterogeneously cooperative grouping procedures and peer and cross-age tutoring. They also should be able to teach students to use some of the basic counseling/guidance skills in relationships with other students.

Exceptional Conditions	All prospective teachers should have preparation in understanding exceptional children, in school procedures for accommodating children's special needs, and in the functions of specialists who serve exceptional children. Moreover, opportunities for direct experience with the children and with specialists should be provided.
Referral	Teachers need to learn the procedures for referrals, the responsibilities involved, and the ways to capitalize on referral resources in behalf of better education for individual pupils. They must be skilled in making systematic observations to provide data and undergird judgments for the referral process. There should be opportunities to obtain firsthand experience in how both in-school and community agencies operate.
Individualized Teaching	All teachers should be competent in the assessment of the individual student's educational needs and in adapting instruction to the individual. Starting from the first week of teacher preparation, and continuing until its completion, trainees should be in the company of experienced teachers who individualize education expertly and specialists who can help in diagnostic and instructional processes.
Professional Values	Selection and training processes in teacher education should include attention to values which give primary place to individual students, their needs and rights. Such values are required on a moral basis for anyone involved in teaching; but they are undergirded by codes of ethical behavior established by the teaching profession and in law. Teachers in training should be oriented to ethical codes regarding their responsibilities to individual pupils. School law, and the regulations that relate to it, also should become part of the foundation of preparation for all teachers. The knowledge is necessary for the safeguarding of pupils' rights, self-protection, and intelligent professional behavior.

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), a committee made up of representatives of organizations "committed to the education and welfare of individuals with learning disabilities" was founded in 1975 and is currently supported by more than 350,000 individuals in 11 member organizations (e.g., Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD); Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD); for full list, see National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], n.d.). As in the InTASC document described above, NJCLD developed a list of core competencies for both general and special educators who work with students with learning disabilities. They published these competencies in a 1997 report titled, *Learning Disabilities: Preservice Preparation of General and Special Education Teachers,* emphasizing that despite the fact that the competencies represent "the ideal," the organization considers them "worthy goals toward which every teacher preparation program should strive as they undergo program review" (NJCLD, 1998, p. 1).

In addition to content area knowledge, literacy skills (i.e., ability to teach word analysis, spelling, reading comprehension, and the writing process), and collaboration, NJCLD identified seven specific areas in which general education teachers should be prepared: 1) definitions and characteristics, 2) rights and procedures, 3) student evaluation, 4) instruction, 5) social / emotional development, 6) classroom management, and 7) relationships with families and colleagues. Most of these are self-explanatory and contain only a few specifics in regards to the knowledge and skills that fall under each competency (e.g., demonstrate various classroom management techniques that assist students with learning disabilities in their social interaction and self-regulation), but others (student evaluation and instruction, specifically) contain much longer lists.

For example, under student evaluation, NJCLD asserts that teachers should be familiar with commonly used instruments for assessment of students with learning disabilities, informally identify each child's strengths and weaknesses across developmental areas, use various formal and informal assessment techniques (i.e., observation, interviews, samples of student work, student self-assessments, teacher-made tests), evaluate student performance on an ongoing basis so as to make instructional modifications and referrals when appropriate, modify/adapt assessment tools, and use grading procedures appropriate to the needs of students with learning disabilities. Under instruction, graduates of teacher preparation programs should be able to develop and implement lesson plans that meet students' unique needs as identified in their IEPs, demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services and placements, plan and implement instruction in collaboration with the special education teacher, modify instruction based on students' unique learning characteristics and external factors (e.g., size of groupings, seating, pace of instruction, and noise level), adapt technology, and integrate students with learning disabilities into the academic and social classroom community (NJCLD, 1998).

Another organization that has attempted to address this issue is the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ), which outlined several "critical competencies" that could be used to design and evaluate teacher preparation programs, as well as to implement inclusive education programs in schools. The NCCTQ competencies are similar to those identified by both AACTE and NJCLD, including the legal foundations of inclusion, models of effective inclusive service integration, collaboration with other educators, access for all students to the general education

curriculum, pedagogical strategies, family involvement, and student self-determination and advocacy (Holdheide & Reschly, 2008).

Unlike organizations such as NJCLD, which develop competencies that serve as *recommendations* for teacher preparation programs, accrediting bodies create standards that these programs *must* meet. Prior to 2013, there were two separate accrediting bodies: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The two organizations were combined in July of 2013 to form the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), a "model unified accreditation system" with the goal of elevating educator preparation to a new level of excellence (CAEP, n.d.). In August of 2013, the CAEP Board of Directors approved new accreditation standards, in which diversity is recognized as a cross-cutting theme. The official document provides extensive information about why diversity is cross-cutting and important to emphasize in its standards before highlighting where specifically this language can be found. Like many other standards documents, diversity here includes not only students with disabilities, but also students of varying cultural and religious backgrounds, socio-economic status, etc. In regards to students with disabilities, the authors point out how Standards 1 and 2 (Content and Pedagogical Knowledge; Clinical Partnerships and Practice) include multiple references to "**all students**" being the focus of educator preparation (CAEP, 2013).

Until 2016, programs can request "legacy" NCATE or TEAC visits under the old standards (S. Sawchuck, personal communication, November 5, 2014). As such, I include those standards here as well. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting body

for institutions that prepare teachers for work in preschool, elementary, and secondary

schools (NCATE, 2008). NCATE comprised a coalition of more than 30 national

associations that represent the education profession. Representatives from those

associations were appointed to NCATE's policy boards, which developed NCATE

standards, policies, and procedures.

Although NCATE separated standards for general and special education teachers,

all of the standards were "based on the belief that all children can and should learn"

(NCATE, 2008, p. 3). As such, accredited institutions are expected to graduate teachers

who can demonstrate knowledge and skills specific to a diverse population of students,

including exceptional learners. This "belief" can be found throughout the NCATE

standards through the mention of candidates working with (studying, teaching, assessing,

etc.) diverse populations, including "students with exceptionalities." Table 5 highlights

the knowledge and skills described in the NCATE standards in general (as described in

their mission and scope).

Table 5

NCATE Principles and Students with Disabilities

From Chapter 1: Mission and Scope	• Ensure that new teachers attain the necessary content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills **to teach both independently and collaboratively** • Administer multiple assessments **in a variety of forms** • Commit to preparing teachers **for a diverse community of students** • New professional teachers should be able to **help all…students learn, apply effective methods of teaching students who are at different developmental stages, have different learning styles, and come from diverse backgrounds**

There is also an entire unit standard dedicated to "Diversity" under which

candidates are required to engage in both curriculum and field experiences related to

students with exceptionalities, be aware of different learning styles, adapt instruction, value diversity, and demonstrate classroom behaviors consistent with the idea of fairness and the belief that all students can learn. The standard also addresses the diversity of both faculty and candidates.

While the NCATE standards include detailed descriptions of what new teachers should be able to know and do, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) standards focus more on how the teacher preparation program itself is preparing "competent, caring, and qualified educators" (TEAC, n.d.). Preparation for teaching students with disabilities is in TEAC's standards only as it is inferred in sections detailing that candidates "be able to convert their knowledge of subject matter into compelling lessons that meet the needs of a **wide range of pupils and students**" and "understand the implications of…**individual differences**…for educational practice" (TEAC, n.d.).

The standards for accrediting teacher education programs are more generic in their requirements for general education teachers of students with disabilities than the standards published by professional organizations, either as recommendations for teacher preparation programs or for practicing teachers. In the standards published by accrediting agencies, the topic is primarily addressed only in relation to preparing teachers for diverse populations of students. In some instances, students with disabilities are mentioned specifically, while in other cases, the language simply references "all students." On the other hand, professional organizations such as AACTE and NJCLD, for example, provide more detailed information about what general education teachers are expected to know and do, listing competencies such as modifying instruction specific to students' individual needs.

Professional standards in the literature. Most information about standards is published from the perspective of the various professional associations. In this section, I describe the literature not published by these associations.

Thompson, Lazarus, Clapper, and Thurlow (2006) designed a study intended to identify and validate a set of competencies that educators need to teach students with disabilities "in an era of standards-based reform and accountability" (p. 140). Two groups participated in the 2002 Educational Policy Reform Research Institute (EPRRI) symposium. One group consisted of 23 representatives of state and local education agencies, professional associations, university researchers, and representatives from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The other group comprised individuals attending sessions in a related strand at a Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) conference in April of 2003.

Prior to the symposium, all participants were given a copy of the researchers' earlier paper, with initial competencies identified. The participants heard several presentations during the symposium with background information on teacher preparation and federal requirements. Participants were then divided into small groups to discuss what skills educators need to have in order to teach students with disabilities in a standards based environment, where these skills appear in the professional standards and state certification policies, and what the characteristics and features of teacher preparation programs are that provide these skills. Despite early iterations of the competencies being assigned to general education, special education teachers, or all teachers, participants in both groups stressed that all of the proposed competencies (listed in Figure 1) were needed by both general education and special education teachers.

Academic Content and Achievement Standards
1. Understand state and federal legislation related to academic content and achievement standards and recognize that these laws apply to every student.
2. Understand state and district academic content and achievement standards and recognize that these standards apply to every student.
3. Design instruction that supports the achievement of grade-level academic content standards by students with disabilities.
4. Develop IEPs that support the achievement of grade-level academic content standards.
5. Design learning environments that support the achievement of grade-level academic content standards by students with disabilities.
Assessment
6. Understand state and federal legislation on state and district assessments and accountability, and recognize that these laws apply to every student.
7. Understand state and district assessment and accountability systems and recognize that every student is expected to participate in general assessments with or without accommodations, or in alternate assessments.
8. Make appropriate participation and accommodation decisions for students with disabilities and document on each student's IEP.
9. Assist students with disabilities in selecting and using accommodations, including assistive technology.
10. Understand the design and use of alternate assessments for students with significant disabilities.

Figure 1: Competencies Needed by Educators to Support the Achievement of Students with Disabilities (Thompson, Lazarus, Clapper, & Thurlow, 2006).

In addition to these competencies, the authors recognized that other skills (pedagogy, knowledge about how children learn, content knowledge, and collaboration), all of which they situated within relevant research, were also essential for being a highly qualified teacher. Thompson et al. (2006) then compared the competencies to the InTASC standards and identified similarities in four areas: a) for all teachers to understand disability legislation; b) for all teachers to know the content that they teach; c) for all teachers to be able to design instruction; and d) for all teachers to ensure that students with disabilities participate in state and district assessments.

Rather than creating their own set of competencies, Cramer et al. (2010) analyzed standards from multiple professional organizations (NBPTS, CEC, InTASC, and NCATE)

for content related to inclusive education, collaboration, or co-teaching in order to

determine the necessary skills, knowledge, and professional dispositions that secondary

teachers in urban settings must demonstrate to teach the increasingly diverse student

populations in their classrooms. Their analysis suggested that there is agreement among

these diverse organizations in terms of supporting diverse learners, differentiating

instruction, and working collaboratively with others (Figure 2).

INTASC	CEC	NBPTS	NCATE
Standard 3 requires teachers to understand *how learners differ*.	Knowledge and skills in *understanding characteristics of learners with different cognitive, physical, cultural, social and emotional needs*.	Teachers *adjust their practice according to individual differences* in their students.	Standard 1c requires candidates *consider school, family, and community contexts*.
Standard 4 requires teachers to *use a variety of instructional strategies*.	Competencies related to *knowledge, and skills for instructional content and practice*	Teachers show *multiple methods to engage student learning and to enable students to reach goals*.	Standard 1b requires candidates to *select and use a broad range of strategies*
Standard 10 asks teachers to *collaborate and communicate* with parents, families, colleagues, to support student learning.	Competencies related to *communication and collaborative* partnerships	Teachers *collaboratively work with others* and coordinate services.	Standard 1c requires candidates *collaborate* with the professional community/

Figure 2: Analysis of Standards from Professional Teacher Organizations in USA (Cramer et al., 2010)

Summary. As Cramer et al. (2010) indicated, there are three overlapping areas

that appear throughout this review of the standards: collaboration, differentiation, and

support of diverse learners. Of these three, collaboration seems to be the most

straightforward in terms of what comprises this category. Differentiation is slightly more complex, with various behaviors from instruction, evaluation, and assessment falling under this competency. The third area is more abstract, as many of the additional topics discussed above (e.g., knowledge about specific disabilities / IEPs, social and emotional support, and classroom management) could be classified under the category of supporting diverse learners.

What Practicing Teachers Say They Need to Know

Teachers' opinions on what general educators need to know fall into one of three broad categories: instructional and/or professional practices, legal requirements, and dispositions or belief systems. For the most part, the instructional and professional practices teachers identified overlapped with the competencies described by all of the professional standards (i.e., differentiation and collaboration). However, practicing teachers place much more emphasis on dispositions and/or belief systems, some of which do relate to various standards described above, especially in regards to the InTASC document. Despite seeming very different from skills related to definitions and legal requirements, dispositions and belief systems could also be categorized under supporting diverse learners.

Table A1 provides a general overview of each of the articles found in this section, with the last column detailing one of two things: either the skills that the researchers suggested, or the teacher-generated responses (Appendix A). This structure was used in order to highlight the skills that this research has indicated are necessary, as opposed to only those skills that participants feel confident in, which is the focus of many of these studies. In the case of studies where the final column lists researcher-generated skills, the

subsequent descriptions provide more information about general education teachers'

responses (ratings, analysis, etc.). In terms of participant-generated responses, two out of

the nine articles gathered data by way of interviews and/or focus groups (Berry, 2011;

Olson et al., 1997), one analyzed data collected by both interview and survey (Cramer et

al., 2010), and two included open-ended questions as part of a survey (Conderman &

Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Kamens et al., 2003). The studies in which the lists of

knowledge and skills were researcher-generated utilized forced response (i.e., yes / no or

Likert scale) survey collection only.

Instructional and/or professional practices. Evident in all of the standards

published by professional organizations reviewed here is that general education teachers

of students with disabilities should possess knowledge of and skill in certain instructional

and professional practices. In terms of instructional practices, differentiation was most

commonly addressed, while collaboration and co-teaching were most prevalent under

professional practices. This is reiterated in the literature that asks practicing teachers

their opinions about what general educators need to know in order to teach these students.

Instructional practices. In general, the participants and authors of the articles I

reviewed for this section spoke broadly about individualizing instruction and/or adapting

content for students with disabilities, at times referring to this as differentiating

instruction. Others used the term "differentiation" to mean an example of something you

could do – a strategy – to individualize instruction. The two concepts are clearly related

and, in addition, are the two most commonly referenced topics, appearing in all of the

researcher- or participant-generated lists of knowledge and skills necessary for general

education teachers of students with disabilities.

Tomlinson (2000) describes differentiation as teachers tailoring instruction to meet individual needs based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile. Tomlinson explains that teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements: a) content – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information; b) process – activities the student engages in to make sense of or master the content; c) products – end projects that have students rehearse, apply, and extend what s/he has learned; and d) learning environment – the way a classroom works and feels. For example, differentiating by process could be as simplistic as allowing students to work either on their own or with a partner. Differentiating by content, on the other hand, might be more complex: giving students the option to either read a text, watch a historical documentary, or listen to a radio broadcast about the creation and use of the radio, for instance.

Of the two studies where the participant-generated responses come entirely from interviews or focus groups, Berry (2011) is the only one in which differentiation is mentioned explicitly. Berry conducted focus groups in order to explore experienced teachers' insights and advice for new teachers regarding teaching in inclusive contexts, and the only prompt given to participants was related to coming up with suggestions for new general education teachers in regards to working with students with disabilities. The teachers generated lists of their own before sharing with the group and developing categories in which to group their items. One of the categories developed was Instruction. Specifically, the list of written items included advice to differentiate, modify, use multiple teaching strategies, and plan for flexible grouping. The teachers in Berry's study also suggested that knowledge of disability characteristics is key for determining which strategies are most appropriate and effective for students with disabilities.

Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover (1997) asked a slightly different question, attempting to determine the characteristics of teachers who have been identified as skilled at including students with disabilities in their classrooms. Using semi-structured interviews to collect data, the researchers described participants' use of differentiation less explicitly than the participants in Berry's study. Under the heading of Adjusting Expectations, responses referenced shortening assignments or "folding the paper four different times so they only have to see a few of the problems at a time" (p. 31). Another participant, when discussing how she tries to plan for the level of each of her students, explained how sometimes she thinks something is going to work and then later she has to "increase that level many times or even lower it" (p. 31).

This attention to *all* of the students in a classroom and knowing how to adjust either up or down was reiterated by the teachers in Kamens, Loprete, and Slostad's (2003) study. Kamens et al. created a survey for supervising teachers that combined forced and open-ended responses related to their needs when it comes to teaching students with disabilities. One of the themes the authors identified across both types of survey questions was Meeting the Needs of All Students in the Inclusive Classroom. The teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they wanted information about planning for that many levels of learning and how to "teach effectively children with special needs with students without special needs so that both groups progress in the classroom" (p. 23).

In another study that used a combination forced / open-ended response survey, Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) asked beginning general and special education teachers about their preparation and about the importance of certain skills

related to their collaborative roles. In the forced-response questions, the general educator participants consistently identified three items (i.e., adapting course content, individualizing instruction, and providing accommodations) as skills they felt least prepared to implement. This was reiterated in the open-response analysis, with making adaptations and differentiating instruction listed as things participants found challenging in their current situations. All groups (general and special education, elementary and secondary) indicated they needed more training in strategies to provide differentiated curriculum and instructional interventions. Teachers in Cramer and colleagues' (2010) study similarly pointed to evidence of differentiated instructional processes and assessment products as positive and necessary aspects of a co-teaching model.

Differentiation is not mentioned explicitly in any of the four forced-response only survey studies; rather, it is discussed in the broader terms of adapting content and individualizing instruction, as described above. For example, in Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, and Scheer's (1999) survey, disseminated to both general and special educators in a single state, general educators reported significantly less confidence than special educators in the inclusive tasks of adapting materials and curriculum and giving individualized assistance, and indicated training needs in both program modification and adaptation of the curriculum. The general education teachers surveyed by Jenkins and Ornelles (2009) indicated high confidence in understanding that students with disabilities may need accommodations and adaptations, but less confidence in knowing how to actually implement those accommodations.

Surveys administered by Dingle, Falvey, Givner, and Haager (2004) and Grskovic and Trzcinka (2011) had a slightly different focus. Dingle et al. surveyed a variety of

stakeholders (general education, special education, and administration) about essential

competencies for special and general educators to effectively educate students with

disabilities within inclusive settings, while Grskovic and Trzcinka surveyed only special

educators in order to identify which CEC standards were essential for general education

teachers. In both studies, adapting and modifying curriculum, practices, and styles were

identified as essential for general education teachers.

   Professional practices. In the same way that differentiation and/or the

adaptation of content dominated the category of instructional practices, knowledge and

skills specific to collaboration lead the conversation under professional practices. In

some cases this took the form of discussions around co-teaching, specifically, but in most

of the studies, participants described the skills necessary for effective collaboration (e.g.,

interpersonal skills).

   The participants in Berry's (2011) focus groups created a heading titled

Communication with Colleagues, under which skills related to collaboration were listed.

Teachers indicated that new teachers should be taught to "collaborate well and open up

their space and share it with another teacher," in addition to communicating with co-

teachers to "get on the same page" and develop "joint ownership over every student in

the room" (p. 640). The teachers interviewed by Olson and colleagues (1997) responded

similarly. The idea that both the special and general education teachers should have joint

ownership was described as "responsibility for all students" (p. 30). Teachers in that

study also discussed how their positive relationships and open communication with

special educators contributed to their perceived effectiveness instructing students with

disabilities. Berry's teachers also mentioned collaborating with support staff (such as

paraprofessionals), as did the teachers in Jenkins and Ornelles' (2009) study, who listed understanding the roles and responsibilities of and collaborating with paraeducators and other paraprofessionals as an area of low confidence.

The teachers in the Buell et al. (1999) and Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez's (2009) studies, comprised of both general and special educators, identified collaboration / effective communication skills as both important and something for which they felt best prepared. In the open-ended response section of Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez's survey, however, teachers pointed to "interpersonal issues and challenges of working with others because of differences in philosophy and style" more than any other as something they found professionally challenging (p. 239). The idea of interpersonal skills being an important professional strategy was reiterated by the three stakeholder groups who responded to Dingle et al.'s (2004) survey. The participants identified knowledge of interpersonal skills that work effectively with adults who have different styles as an essential competency for both special and general educators.

Grskovic and Trzcinka (2011) asked about more specific items under collaboration, yielding four standards (out of seven) that the participants identified as essential, related to communicating with families and other school personnel, models and strategies of consultation and collaboration, and co-planning and co-teaching methods. Similarly, the teachers who responded to Kamens and colleagues' (2003) survey suggested that they needed more time to collaborate with other professionals, especially in terms of planning and working out issues with special educators.

Cramer et al. (2010) differs from the other studies described here in that the participants from both their Florida and California studies had been selected partially on

the basis of their involvement in co-teaching partnerships; therefore, there was much more emphasis on collaboration in all of their responses. The types of responses that participants gave were more related to what happens within their collaborative relationships: processes for overcoming disagreements, understanding each other, verbal and non-verbal communication, and differing instructional styles.

Legal requirements. Unlike the competencies described in the review of professional standards, the articles in this section do not place as much emphasis on knowledge and skills related to specific disabilities, IEPs, and other legal requirements. Generally speaking, the authors who reference this type of knowledge relate it to choosing appropriate instructional strategies and accommodations (Berry, 2011; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009; Kamens, et al., 2003), or developing IEPs and attending IEP meetings (Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009). Otherwise, the topic appears on surveys or questionnaires created by the researcher(s) and is rated by teachers as something about which they have low confidence or understanding (Buell et al., 1999; Grskovic & Trzcinka, 2011; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009).

Dispositions or belief systems. Somewhat similar to the skills necessary for effective collaboration, many of the teachers in these studies identified certain dispositions or belief systems as necessary for general education teachers of students with disabilities. For example, several studies highlighted the importance of being flexible (Berry, 2011; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Cramer et al., 2010; Dingle et al., 2004; Olson et al., 1997). To build on that, the teachers whose responses Cramer et al. (2010) analyzed identified three types of flexibility: a) in adjusting lessons and teaching strategies; b) in accommodating the other teacher's schedule in deciding what to

teach; and c) in terms of the other teacher's preferences and strengths regarding certain

content.

In addition to flexibility, the educators that Olson et al. (1997) interviewed also

listed tolerance and reflectivity as integral. Descriptions of the elementary teachers

identified as effective educators of students with disabilities included the phrases easy-

going, calm, patient, and friendly, while descriptions of secondary teachers were laid

back, friendly, and open. Elementary teachers provided additional responses suggesting

positive attitudes and warm interpersonal relationships were central to effective inclusion,

while secondary teachers emphasized the importance of being approachable. The

teachers in Berry's (2011) focus groups described similar skills: promoting social

interactions, helping students with disabilities fit in, allowing kids to feel as though they

are always part of the class, being patient, and having a good sense of humor.

This emphasis on how teachers' dispositions are related to students' affective

needs was reiterated by the teachers who responded to Kamens et al.'s (2003) and

Jenkins and Ornelles' (2009) surveys, who described concerns about helping each child

feel good about themselves, or helping children who were withdrawn or displayed

helplessness. Grskovic and Trczinka (2011) similarly placed an emphasis on skills

related to student affect: teachers rated procedures to increase a student's self-awareness,

self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem; strategies for creating a

safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment; and the importance of the

teacher serving as a model for students with disabilities as essential for general education

teachers. Finally, Dingle et al.'s (2004) study also included competencies related to this

topic, such as fostering a fair and respectful environment, having positive regard for

students, families and professionals, and being considerate, sensitive, nonjudgmental, supportive, and adaptive.

Differences by teacher characteristics. While all of the articles I reviewed in this section collected demographic information such as years of experience and gender, only two (Berry, 2011; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009) made any comparisons using these demographics. Berry (2011) examined differences between early career and veteran teachers, as well as among rural, suburban, and urban teachers. Although there were no statistically significant differences between early career and veteran teachers, Berry found that early career teachers had higher interest in instruction and lower interest in knowing the child. In terms of school setting, more teachers from suburban schools had experience in inclusive classrooms, fewer teachers from urban schools said their skills for teaching students with disabilities were "adequate"; in fact, more said their skills were "limited" than teachers from either rural or suburban groups. Berry also noted two teacher-generated topics that seemed to be associated with school type: 1) instruction and 2) policies / procedures were emphasized more often with rural and suburban teachers than urban. In addition to the comparison between general education and special education teachers described above, Jenkins and Ornelles (2009) examined differences among teachers with zero to three, four to eight, nine to 15, and more than 16 years of teaching experience. Using multivariate analysis of variance, the researchers found no significant differences across the four groups, with general education teachers responding similarly on items of either high or low confidence for all 10 principles.

Outside of these articles, there is relatively little research available regarding teacher characteristics and students with disabilities. Only one (Feng & Sass, 2010)

analyzed teacher characteristics in relation to student achievement, and it focused on special education teachers. The other three examined teacher characteristics in relation to a) teachers of students with autism (Hendricks, 2011), b) teacher ratings for evidence-based behavioral interventions (Stormont, Reinke, & Herman, 2011), and in a more dated example, c) the referral of students with mental retardation into special classes (Smart, Wilton, & Keeling, 1980). There is no research I could locate that focused solely on the characteristics of general education teachers and students with disabilities.

Barriers. As described in the first chapter, there are several challenges specific to secondary inclusive classrooms, such as content-specific training, the wide range of skills present in one classroom, and curricular demands (Crockett, 2004; Keefe et al., 2004; Scruggs et al., 2007). Other researchers include infrequent or inadequate communication between general and special education teachers (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986), special education teachers' unfamiliarity with general education curriculum (Pugach & Johnson, 1989), and general education teachers' lack of inclusion strategies (Baker & Zigmond, 1990) as barriers to inclusion.

The teachers who participated in the previously described studies identified several additional barriers, or challenges, related to the successful implementation of inclusion. The most commonly cited issue was lack of time (Berry, 2011; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009; Kamens et al., 2003; Olson et al., 1997), followed by class size (Buell et al., 1999; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Kamens et al., 2003; Olson et al., 1997), and lack of resources, including sufficient training (Berry, 2011; Buell et al., 1999; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Cramer et al., 2010). Other barriers included interpersonal issues (Conderman &

Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009) and problems with behavior management (Conderman &

Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009).

Summary. Teachers' opinions on what general educators need to know fall into

one of two broad categories: instructional and/or professional practices, and dispositions

or belief systems. For the most part, the instructional practices most referenced as

necessary for these teachers have to do with differentiation – as a strategy (Tomlinson,

2000) or in terms of adapting content and individualizing instruction. In terms of

professional practices, skills related to communicating and collaborating occupy most of

the literature. As was the case with differentiation, practicing teachers acknowledge that

this is an essential skill for general educators, but feel less confident about how to do it

effectively. Researchers assert that legal responsibilities are important for teachers to

know, but teachers are most concerned with how these responsibilities relate to their

choice of instructional strategies and accommodations. In general, teachers report low

confidence or knowledge of the legal aspects of special education, including information

about specific disability characteristics. Under dispositions or belief systems, the

literature indicates that the characteristics of flexibility, tolerance, and other dispositions

specific to students' social and affective needs are necessary for this population of

teachers.

Several of the articles summarized in this section included comparisons based on

characteristics such as whether or not teachers are general or special education and/or

elementary or secondary education; however, none of them made comparisons based on

content area. Although there is research detailing subject-specific instructional strategies

(e.g., Gagnon & Maccini, 2007; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001), the language in the

standards is rather generic. For example, under InTASC Standard #8 (Instructional Strategies), teachers are expected "to know when and how to use appropriate strategies to differentiate instruction and engage all learners in complex thinking and meaningful tasks" and use "appropriate strategies and resources to adapt instruction to the needs of individuals and groups of learners" (InTASC, 2013, p. 38). It is likely, therefore, that there may be differences in the types of instructional strategies used per content area, but the language in the standards already addresses this. Finally, teachers identify a number of barriers to the successful implementation of inclusion, including a lack of time, resources, and training, class sizes that are too big, interpersonal issues, and behavior management.

Summary of What General Educators Need to Know

Research indicates that preparing general and special education teachers separately reinforces the idea that different teachers are needed for different types of learners (Blanton, Pugach, & Florian, 2011). Consistent with this notion, general education teachers state that they do not feel they have been prepared to teach students with disabilities (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006) and express much less confidence in knowledge and skills that have been identified as necessary than their special education colleagues (Buell et al., 1999; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009).

A review of the literature on professional standards reveals that the most commonly addressed knowledge and/or skills, or inclusive practices, for which general education teachers must display competence have to do with instructional practices (i.e., adapting instruction for individual learners, using a variety of instructional strategies, and

incorporating multimodal instruction and alternative assignments / assessments),

collaboration (with special education teachers and case managers, specialists,

paraprofessionals, and/or families), and supporting diverse learners (among other things,

knowledge about laws relating to students with disabilities and general education

teachers' roles and responsibilities in regards to IEPs). In addition, there was some

emphasis on teachers' dispositions; specifically, assuring that teachers treat all students

equitably and understand that students have diverse learning needs. These standards

were reiterated in the literature gathered from practicing teachers, almost identically in

regards to instructional strategies and collaboration. However, teachers placed much

more importance on dispositions than professional organizations did by emphasizing

traits such as being flexible, tolerant, reflective, considerate, sensitive, nonjudgmental,

and supportive.

Table 6 outlines scholars' recommendations about the knowledge, skills, and

dispositions that general education teachers need in order to educate students with

disabilities. When I later refer to "inclusive practices," I am referring to the items in this

table. Additionally, this table serves as part of the conceptual framework I use to analyze

the how general education teachers make sense of and enact their roles and

responsibilities within the context of inclusion as a reform initiative.

Table 6

What General Educators Need to Know to Teach Students with Disabilities

Category	Supported By
Instructional Practices • Designing and adapting instruction for individual learners' strengths, needs, learning styles • Strategies (differentiation - of activities, assessments, etc.; grouping; chunking; pacing) • Multi-modal instruction (visual, kinesthetic, etc.) and assessment that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of products and performances	AACTE InTASC NBPTS NJCLD NCCTQ NCATE TEAC State Evaluation + PT Lit
Professional Practices • Collaborating with various specialists (special education department / coordinator / teacher; related service specialists; paraprofessionals; families) • Accessing and utilizing resources that address students strengths and weaknesses • Attending professional development and/or seeking out learning opportunities related to students with disabilities	AACTE InTASC NBPTS NJCLD NCCTQ NCATE State Evaluation + PT Lit
Legislative and Associated Responsibilities • Providing accommodations as mandated by IEP • Disability characteristics • Knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements	AACTE InTASC NJCLD NCCTQ + PT Lit
Dispositions (recognized by researcher as inherently subjective) • Flexibility (e.g., allowing student to complete only 5 out of 10 problems) • Approachability (e.g., students ask questions related to their IEP accommodations) • Respect for all students (e.g., never used sarcasm; never rolled eyes; used polite tone; showed equal attention to students with and without IEPs, regardless of whether a co-teacher was present)	PT Lit

Note. PT Lit refers to the literature on what Practicing Teachers say they need to know

Inclusive Models and General Educators' Roles and Responsibilities

There is a multitude of literature that examines the effectiveness of students' educational placements, although the research shows more than anything else that results are mixed. Several researchers argue that students achieve more academically in inclusive rather than non-inclusive settings (e.g., Rea et al., 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998), while others claim that inclusive versus non-inclusive placements produce no differences in the academic achievement of students with disabilities (e.g., Manset & Semmel, 1997). Still others posit that students in special education settings outperform those in inclusive classrooms (e.g., Packard, Hazelkorn, Harris, & McLeod, 2011). In addition, much of this literature focuses on the effectiveness of one setting (e.g., co-taught classrooms). There is very little research that makes comparisons across multiple types of inclusive settings (without including non-inclusive classrooms). The first part of my review focuses on this subset of the literature. In the second half, rather than summarize the literature related to the effectiveness of co-teaching (e.g. Murawski & Swanson, 2001), I highlight instead general education teachers' responsibilities within a co-taught classroom.

Literature Review Procedures

This part of the literature review is divided into two sections: comparisons across inclusive settings, and general education teachers' responsibilities within co-taught classrooms. I review this literature to provide a backdrop for examining variation across settings in the current study. I first reviewed literature that makes comparisons across inclusive settings in order to determine what types of variables have already been studied and what the research recommends examining. The second section, which details general

education teachers' responsibilities within co-taught classrooms, contributes to my framing in terms of my own experiences, assumptions, and interactions with general education teachers. Despite the fact that there is literature to suggest that co-teachers should share responsibility for all students (e.g., Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010), this is not always the case – based on my own co-teaching experiences, the experiences of general education teachers I interviewed previously (Stefanski, 2011), and research that describes general educators acting as the lead teacher while special educators assist individual students as needed (e.g., Magiera, Smith, Zigmond, & Gebauer, 2005). Both sections, therefore, contribute to understandings of and tentative hypotheses regarding whether and how variation might exist.

Comparison across inclusive settings. In terms of articles that discussed or made comparisons across various types of inclusive settings, I conducted an electronic search of ERIC and EBSCO databases using the broad descriptors of *service placement* AND *students with disabilities*. I narrowed the results by limiting the search to peer-reviewed journals and articles published in 1997 or later, so as to reflect the current understandings of inclusion and the least restrictive environment. To be consistent with the other literature I reviewed, I only included articles that were situated within the United States. Once I had a list of articles, I skimmed the abstracts and eliminated those that concentrated on either a) a single setting, b) comparison with a non-inclusive setting (i.e., self-contained and/or resource classrooms), or c) non-inclusive, special education settings only.

Similar to my earlier searches, I excluded those articles that were aimed at specific disabilities other than learning disabilities (e.g., autism). Unlike the previous

sections, I decided not to exclude studies that focused on students with specific learning

disabilities (SLD) for two reasons: 1) students diagnosed with SLD make up 42% of the

5.9 million school-age children with all kinds of disabilities who receive special

education services, with the next largest category only making up 19% (Cortiella, 2009),

and 2) in the state where the current study is situated, students with SLD make up just

under half (44%) of all high school (9-12) students with disabilities being served (citation

removed for confidentiality). Only one additional article (Rea et al., 2002) was included

as a result of this decision. I performed additional searches using various combinations

of the descriptors *inclusive settings, inclusive models, inclusion, least restrictive*

environment, educational placement, inclusive education, continuum of services,

inclusion, placement, students with disabilities, and *special education*. After these initial

electronic searches were conducted and inclusion criteria established, I conducted an

ancestral search using several of the original articles.

General educator responsibilities in co-taught classrooms. To identify

literature that focused on the general education teacher's responsibilities in a co-taught

classroom, I conducted an electronic search of peer-reviewed journals in ERIC and

EBSCO using various combinations of the following descriptors: *co-teaching, general*

education teacher, roles, responsibilities, general education, general educator, teacher

roles, co-teaching relationships, co-teaching roles, and *co-teacher roles*. In general,

authors have not published literature that is focused solely on the role of the general

educator within a co-taught classroom. Many researchers, however, include information

specific to teacher roles within a larger discussion of co-teaching. In order to find these, I

started by reading through abstracts, or skimming whole articles looking for keywords

matching or similar to those used as my descriptors. In addition to this, I read through several meta-analyses of co-teaching effectiveness also using the same keywords as a lens through which to identify additional articles.

Comparison across Inclusive Settings

The question of where students with disabilities should be instructed has received more attention and generated more controversy than any other issue concerning the education of these students, including how or what these students should be taught (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Despite the fact that this is clearly a hot topic, there is little research that evaluates the effectiveness of more than one setting; in other words, most of the research focuses on one setting only (i.e., the effectiveness of co-teaching). Zigmond (2003) suggested that there is no straightforward answer to the question of where students with disabilities are best educated for two main reasons: 1) the research base is insufficient, leading to methodologically flawed and inconclusive research, and 2) efficacy studies should be asking which placement is best *for whom* and *for what* rather than simply which is best. Citing research that makes comparisons between inclusive and non-inclusive settings, Fore, Hagan-Burke, Burke, Boon, and Smith (2008) made a similar point, stating, "the only certainty regarding the effects of class placement is that there is no consensus" (p. 56). I identified only four studies that met all of the inclusion criteria (peer-reviewed, situated within the United States, published after 1997, comparisons across multiple inclusive settings as opposed to inclusive versus non-inclusive, and addressed either students with disabilities in general or students with specific learning disabilities). Of those, two used outcome data to compare inclusive settings (Rea et al., 2002; Wilson, Kim, & Michaels, 2013), one examined differences between co-taught and

solo-taught settings (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005), and one detailed the range of settings being utilized in science classes in Texas (Vannest et al., 2009).

Wilson, Kim, and Michaels (2013) gathered information on 559 secondary students with disabilities served in four inclusive settings: co-taught classes, resource rooms, alternate day support programs, and no direct supports. Their data collection included electronic and paper-based file and document review including IEPs, report cards, and formal assessment reports. They used the data to examine four different things: 1) the relation between disability classification and special education service delivery option; 2) differences in the intellectual ability of secondary students with disabilities (i.e., IQ) by service delivery option; 3) differences or relations in related services and testing accommodations or modifications provided to students by service delivery option; and 4) differences in content area performance of students with disabilities (i.e., grades in English, mathematics, science, social studies) by service delivery option. The researchers found significant differences for their first three research questions.

In regards to classification by placement, students with learning disabilities made up the largest group in each setting; the largest percentages of students with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, and other health impairments were served in resource classrooms while the largest percentages of students with speech and language impairments as well as other disabilities (autism, orthopedic impairments, mental retardation) were served in co-taught classrooms. Wilson et al. (2013) also established that there were differences in full-scale IQ by placement option, going from no direct support to alternate day support to resource room to co-taught in terms of

highest to lowest. The researchers identified differences in terms of related services (speech and counseling were the most frequently provided, and students in alternate day support received the least related services, while students with no direct supports received the most). There were differences in testing accommodations as well, with students in resource rooms provided with the most testing accommodations and students in the no direct support group receiving the least. Wilson et al. (2013) noted no differences in grades by placement option for English, mathematics, or social studies; however, a statistically significant difference in academic performance was found for science, for students being served in co-taught and alternate day support classes.

Rea, McLaughlin, and Walther-Thomas (2002) investigated the relationship between placement in inclusive versus pullout special education programs and academic and behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities. Unlike other studies that were excluded for comparing inclusive versus non-inclusive settings (e.g., Fore, Hagan-Burke, Burke, Boon, & Smith, 2008), the students in this study all received core instruction in the general education setting. At one of the schools, students received their instruction by way of a co-taught model. At the other, students received core instruction in a general education class taught by a general education teacher, then used time during electives for pullout services, wherein a special education teacher worked with "a small group of identified students to remediate academic weakness or to assist with completion of assignments for general education core classes" (Rea et al., 2002, p. 209). Students in each program were comparable on measures of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, IQ, education level of the mother, years of special education service, and years in the school district, while programs differed primarily in type and intensity of special

education service delivery, skills addressed, implementation of classroom accommodations, and teacher consultation / instructional models.

The researchers measured student performance using three indicators: academic achievement, behavior, and school attendance. Measures of academic achievement included final course grades in core subjects, standard scores on reading, mathematics, science, and social studies subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and information from the state proficiency tests. To gather behavioral data, the researchers collected information from student and district records related to actions (e.g., disruption, fighting) that resulted in in-school or out-of-school suspensions. In regards to attendance, student and district records provided the necessary information.

Rea et al. (2002) found that students with learning disabilities who were served in co-taught classrooms earned significantly higher grades in all four areas of academic instruction. On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, however, those same students performed significantly higher only on the subtests of language and mathematics; the two groups performed similarly in the areas of reading comprehension, science, and social studies. There were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the subtests of reading, mathematics, and writing on the state proficiency test. The researchers did not find any significant differences between the two groups related to behavior, but the attendance data showed that students in the co-taught program attended significantly more days of school than students in the pullout program.

Instead of using outcome data to compare types of inclusive settings, Magiera and Zigmond (2005) compared the instructional experiences of special education students in co-taught and solo-taught middle school classes "under ordinary practices", meaning that

teachers had limited training and limited or no co-planning time (p. 80). They observed

four times under these conditions in order to gather information with the constraints often

faced by middle school co-teachers and to allow for the variation in instructional

experiences for students based on teachers' lack of "structure to implement the model

effectively" (p. 81). They found that the general education teachers spent significantly

less time with students with disabilities when the special education teacher was in the

classroom and that these students received significantly more individual instruction when

the special education teacher was present. In contrast, although there was great

variability among the classes on some variables (e.g., time spent working in smaller

groups), there were no significant differences for the remaining variables: students

working alone, grouping of students (two or more students), on-task behavior, students

interacting with other students in the classroom, whole class content instruction,

directions provided to the whole class, directions provided to the individual student, or

student participation.

Rather than make comparisons across inclusive settings, Vannest et al. (2009)

conducted a phone survey with the special education coordinators in 137 school districts

in Texas in order to determine the variety of instructional settings in which students with

disabilities were receiving science instruction. The researchers focused on fifth-grade

science, which is the first time a state-mandated science test occurs. Additionally, the

researchers stated that Texas had not defined a single instructional model for teaching

science in special education, which gave districts the freedom to make individual

decisions about educational settings for students with disabilities. The researchers

identified ten instructional settings:

- general education only – a science certified teacher teaches the general school population science content, with special education students blended in with general classes

- general education and resource – see definition of resource below

- content mastery only – a special education teacher is accessible for students with disabilities to leave their general education setting and work with the special education teacher on academic content such as assignment completion, study skills, test prep, or test taking with extended time or modifications; takes place in a separate classroom setting designated for special education students

- content mastery and resource – see definition of resource setting below

- co-teaching only – a general education science teacher and a special educator without a science certification share instructional responsibility; special educator uses specific techniques for students with disabilities including small group instruction, preteaching, and reteaching content

- co-teaching with content mastery

- co-teaching with resource – see definition of resource setting below

- resource only – a setting in which science instruction is provided specifically to students with IEPs, instruction is by a special education certified teacher

- separate campus – a special education teacher providing science instruction to students in discipline or alternative placements, often of limited duration; may include hospital settings or juvenile justice placements

- all services offered

Vannest et al. (2009) suggest that documenting types of instructional settings in the literature has implications not only for teacher education but also for improving accountability and school practice.

Summary. A majority of the literature that makes comparisons across types of service delivery models examines differences between inclusive and non-inclusive settings. There is very little that examines different types of inclusive settings only. The three studies in this section described a variety of instructional settings, ranging from non-inclusive, totally separate to general education only, with no direct support. In general, there are clear differences among settings in terms of types of disabilities served, services and accommodations provided, IEPs, and type of instruction. In terms of student performance, however, the results are not identical. Using only course grades as a comparison measure, Wilson et al. (2013) found no significant differences by placement for English, mathematics, or social studies, but showed through post-hoc analysis that students in alternate day support performed better than students in co-taught classes for science. Rea et al. (2002), on the other hand, noted that students in co-taught classrooms performed significantly higher than students in the pullout model.

Zigmond (2003) posits that research on the efficacy of special education placements "is hard to conduct at all, let alone to conduct well" (p. 196). This has to do with definitions of service delivery models or settings varying from researcher to researcher, inadequate descriptions of treatment in those settings, lack of random assignment to treatments, and the rarity of appropriately matched experimental and control students and/or teachers (Zigmond, 2003). Both Rea et al. (2002) and Wilson et al. (2013) contained limitations common to research about special education placement.

For example, each group of authors lists samples drawn from a small number of schools in addition to difficulty with the external validity of their research to other districts with varying contexts.

General Educator Responsibilities in Co-Taught Classrooms

Co-teaching has been defined as "the partnering of a general education teacher and a special education teacher or another specialist for the purpose of jointly delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, including those with disabilities or other special needs, in a general education setting and in a way that flexibly and deliberately meets their learning needs" (Friend et al., 2010, p. 11). Due to the emphasis on the two teachers *partnering* and *jointly* delivering instruction, there is no literature that details what roles and responsibilities are specific to the general educator versus the special educator.

The literature is replete with articles that stress the importance of co-teachers defining their roles and responsibilities in order to make their relationship work (e.g., Dieker, 2001; Friend et al., 2010; Harbort et al., 2007; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Murawski & Dieker, 2004; Vaughn, Schumm, & Arguelles, 1997). However, the specifics of which teacher does what are left up to the co-teachers to decide upon and implement. This problem has also been noted in the literature related to collaboration between general educators and teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs), although some researchers have attempted to resolve the issue by creating lists of responsibilities specific to each teacher (e.g., Davison, 2006). For example, in Davison's (2006) list, some of the tasks involve the ELL teacher being the expert (e.g., identify language demands of content area / grade level, develop additional materials for language support / participate in text selection versus the general education teacher assisting by identifying language

demands… and *contributing* to development of additional language support materials), while others place the general education teacher in the lead (e.g., report on students' outcomes / feedback to parents and students versus the ELL teacher *contributing* to reporting on language development / feedback to parents on ESL Ss' progress). On other tasks the two have the same role (e.g., participate in planning and preparation as equals or team members).   Davison (2006) goes on to explain that partnerships of this type "are associated with the subordination of ESL to the content area and an imbalance between teachers in terms of curriculum authority, responsibility and opportunities for input" (p. 456).

Researchers have identified several models of co-teaching (Friend et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 1997; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). The following six models (visually represented in Figure 3) are the most frequently described:

1. *One teach, one observe*, in which one teacher leads large-group instruction while the other gathers academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students or the class group;

2. *Station teaching*, in which instruction is divided into three nonsequential parts and students, likewise divided into three groups, rotate from station to station, being taught by the teachers at two stations and working independently at the third;

3. *Parallel teaching*, in which the two teachers, each with half the class group, present the same material for the primary purpose of fostering instructional differentiation and increasing student participation;

4. *Alternative teaching*, in which one teacher works with most students while the other works with a small group for remediation, enrichment, assessment, preteaching, or another purpose;

5. *Teaming*, in which both teachers lead large-group instruction by both lecturing, representing opposing views in a debate, illustrating two ways to solve a problem, and so on; and

6. *One teach, one assist*, in which one teacher leads instruction while the other circulates among the students offering individual assistance. (Friend et al., 2010, p. 12)
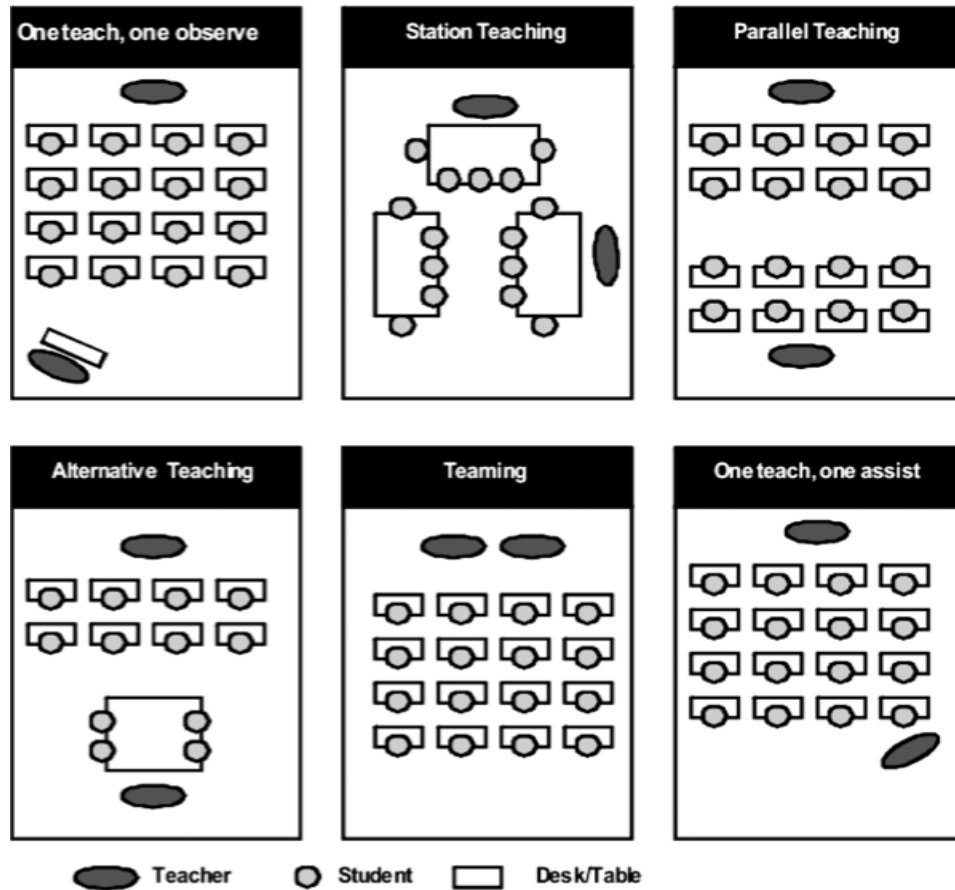
Figure 3: Co-Teaching Approaches (Friend & Bursuck, 2009)

Although this literature includes information about what each "teacher" is responsible for in each approach, it does not indicate which role the general education teacher or the special education teacher should take when using these models; rather, it suggests that both teachers may take on one or another of the roles, depending on the situation. Building on this idea, Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, and Williams (2000) proposed an additional model of co-teaching: the *interactive model*, wherein instruction is presented to the whole group with the educators alternating the role of

instructional leader for periods of 5 to 10 minutes, thereby giving both teachers the opportunity to serve as the primary educator.

Despite the fact that there are several models of co-teaching described in the literature, one teach, one assist is the primary model being used in practice (Cook, McDuffie-Landrum, Oshita, & Cotheren-Cook, 2011; Scruggs et al., 2007) and most commonly, general education teachers are delivering instructional content while the special education teacher modifies instruction, addresses behavior, and monitors the progress of students with disabilities (Austin, 2001; Harbort et al., 2007; Magiera et al., 2005; Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2005; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). This is especially common in secondary classrooms due to the emphasis on subject-specific content knowledge versus the type of preparation special educators typically receive – focused on differentiated teaching strategies and adaptations rather than content knowledge in a specific subject (Dieker, 2001; Friend & Cook, 2007; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Magiera et al., 2005; Scruggs et al., 2007).

For example, Harbort et al. (2007) observed two different co-teaching teams using momentary time sampling procedures in order to identify roles and actions specific to the general and special education teachers. They found that general education teachers presented material to students in 29.93% of observed intervals while special educators presented material in less than 1% of observed intervals. Additionally, they observed general educators conducting non-interaction instructional tasks, such as preparing for instruction in 28.33% of the intervals as opposed to special educators conducting these tasks in only 3.96% of intervals. Finally, the researchers noted that special education

teachers observed or drifted in slightly less than half of the intervals and responded to students more often than regular educators.

In another example, Keefe and Moore (2004) interviewed high school teachers to study their perceptions of co-teaching. The teachers in their study identified three themes that described their practices – collaboration, roles and responsibilities, and positive outcomes for students. In terms of roles and responsibilities, the teachers indicated that special educators tended to take on the role of helper rather than co-teacher, partly due to their lack of content knowledge. Similarly, Austin (2001) surveyed and interviewed elementary, middle, and high school teachers to gather information about a variety of questions specific to co-teaching, one of which had to do with who does more in the collaborative relationship. He found that more special education teachers said they were responsible for modification of lessons and remediation of learning difficulties, while more general education teachers said they were responsible for lesson planning and instruction. Nevertheless, these instances are indicative of the roles that teachers tend to take in co-taught classrooms, not of the prescribed roles for general or special education teachers.

Summary. There is no research that prescribes exactly what the general education teacher should be doing in a co-taught classroom. Instead, the literature details what responsibilities exist in a co-taught classroom *for both teachers* and makes recommendations for teachers to plan and discuss their individual roles and responsibilities ahead of time. As noted by Zigmond (2003) in the section on inclusive settings, however, for most collaborative teams – and collaboration is used interchangeably with co-teaching in these articles (e.g., Austin, 2001; Keefe & Moore,

2004) – teachers' "ordinary practices" translate into limited or no co-planning time. Although there are a variety of co-teaching models from which teachers can choose, research shows that a majority of co-teachers rely on the one teach, one assist model, with the general education teacher providing most of the content instruction and the special education teacher modifying that instruction and providing accommodations as needed. This finding is consistent with research on other collaborative classrooms, as well.

Summary of Inclusive Settings and General Educators' Roles and Responsibilities

Although there is literature that examines the effectiveness of inclusive settings by focusing on a single setting or by comparing inclusive settings to non-inclusive settings, there is markedly less that makes comparisons across different types of inclusive settings. After applying several inclusionary criteria, I identified only two articles that made comparisons across inclusive settings. The two groups of researchers used different outcome measures to answer their research questions, but a comparison of the one overlapping measure (course grades) indicated contradictory results.

As Kilanowski-Press, Foote, and Rinaldo (2010) suggest, the literature on inclusive settings is noticeably missing research that explores the "current state of inclusive practice in terms of service models most often employed and other relevant classroom characteristics including number of students with disabilities, training experiences of educators, and other available educational support persons" (p. 44). Vannest and colleagues (2009) address this gap in their detailing of types of inclusive instructional settings for high school science and providing information about what inclusive settings other than co-taught classrooms might look like. As established in this

chapter, there is little to no literature detailing general education teachers' specific roles and responsibilities in co-taught classrooms. The inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is underscored by an assumption that general education teachers have a certain amount of knowledge about special education, students with disabilities, teaching techniques, and curriculum strategies (Hadadian & Chiang, 2007). However, general education teachers rarely express confidence in these areas, and the literature is replete with recommendations about better preparing these teachers for students with disabilities.

Gaps Identified in the Review of the Literature

As described in the previous sections, changes in both legislation and practice have led to more students with disabilities being educated in the general education classroom than ever before. The responsibility for these students now falls on general education, with special education acting as a support system (Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2003). The emphasis on providing access to the general curriculum, underscored by the assumption that general education teachers should be able to teach all students, has led to various organizations developing standards for general educators specific to students with disabilities. Despite a clear indication from the literature that there are important competencies for general education teachers, there is almost no research detailing whether and how these standards are being implemented in classrooms. Additionally, none of the organizations described in this literature review include observations of actual classroom practice as part of their process for creating the standards, although it could be argued that the National Board standards are developed and modified based on

observations, since the portfolios that teachers submit include both videos and written descriptions of how they are practicing the standards in their classrooms.

In addition, there are only limited examples of research conducted on secondary inclusive classrooms, and many of these focus only on co-taught classrooms. This is in part due to the complexities described in earlier sections (Bulgren et al., 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Scanlon & Baker, 2012; Villa et al., 2005). Moreover, these studies are often concerned with teachers' perspectives of co-teaching or effectiveness and rarely include comparisons across different types of inclusive models. Those that do examine different settings are generally focused on determining the 'best' placement, usually by examining student outcomes. Although general educators continuously and consistently express feelings of inadequacy and ill-preparedness, there is little to no research available about what kinds of training make general education teachers more effective with special education students (Feng & Sass, 2010).

Finally, while there is literature detailing what practicing teachers believe general education teachers of students with disabilities should know, the authors of these articles compiled this information primarily through the use of surveys or focus groups. As such, this strand of literature is not only void of information related to actual observation of this knowledge (skills, competencies, etc.), but it is also not grounded in theory, revealing a significant gap in terms of the theoretical bases for general education teacher knowledge related to students with disabilities. Of the nine studies reviewed for the section on what teachers need to know, only one grounded the research in any kind of framework (a conceptual framework of knowledge developed by the researchers in Kamens et al., 2003). The remaining articles were written with the objective of identifying

competencies (standards, etc.) and making recommendations for teacher preparation (predominantly preservice), but do not base their findings within a theoretical or conceptual framework.

As noted in the previous chapter, I designed this study to address a number of these gaps in the literature and contribute to research on both secondary inclusive classrooms and inclusive teacher preparation.

Developing a Conceptual Framework

Earlier in this chapter, I provided a history of inclusion as a reform movement and addressed the fact that despite various attempts to incorporate inclusive practices into teacher education and training, general educators continue to say they have not been adequately prepared. Building on the notion that this could be attributed to issues identifying exactly what it is that teachers need to know, the next part of the review synthesized literature on existing professional standards and assertions by practicing teachers to develop a comprehensive list of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for general education teachers of students with disabilities (Table 6). This list of scholars' recommendations acts as part of my conceptual framework.

While other researchers have similarly detailed the specific knowledge that general educators should have, my goal in this study is to build on that research with information about *how* and *why* teachers enact certain inclusive practices more than others. In order to do this, I approach the enactment of inclusive practices as occurring within zones of enactment, a concept borne out of sensemaking theory. Weick (1995) describes sensemaking, a form of human cognition, as the way people make sense of their

environment, by the "placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding, and patterning" (p. 6). Building on Weick's model of sensemaking and the work of several other cognitive theorists, Spillane (2004) explains:

> Sensemaking is not a simple decoding process of a given stimuli. It is an active process of interpretation that draws on the sense-maker's experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Knowledge and experiences are integrated into a web of interdependent relationships called scripts or schemas. Implementers filter incoming information through these scripts. The sense they make thus depends on the sense that they already have ... existing knowledge is a primary resource in the development of new, sometimes better, understandings. The new is always noticed, framed and understood in light of what is already known. (p. 76)

Other educational researchers have drawn on sociological theories of sensemaking to argue that "how teachers come to understand and enact instructional policy is influenced by prior knowledge, the social context within which they work, and the nature of their connections to the policy or reform message" (Coburn, 2005, p. 478). More specifically, Spillane (1999) proposed that teachers' zones of enactment (ZoE) play a critical role in their decision to implement policies. Zones of enactment, Spillane says, are the space "where reform initiatives are encountered by the world of practitioners and 'practice', delineating that zone in which teachers notice, construe, construct and operationalize the instructional ideas advocated by reformers" (p. 144).

Spillane (1999) surveyed, observed, and interviewed 25 teachers from an earlier study who reported teaching in ways that were consistent with core elements of mathematics reforms, "including, among other things, `students engaging in problem solving', `teaching problem solving', `real- life problems', `connecting mathematics to students' real life', `conceptual understanding', `mathematical connections', `thinking through problems', `students need some sort of math connection to their world', and

getting students `to give reasons for their ideas' (p. 153). However, subsequent

observations indicated substantial variations among classrooms in the extent to which

reformers' proposals had influenced the core of teachers' practice, and, combined with

interview data, Spillane determined that only four teachers had significantly changed the

core of their practices.

Given that survey and interview responses indicated teachers' attention to both

the policy and professional sectors, Spillane (1999) hypothesized that changes in the

teachers' enactments were related to differences in their enactment zones. After

comparing the four teachers whose practices had changed with the 11 teachers who

showed no change (ten classrooms showed modest, as opposed to substantial, change),

Spillane proposed the model depicted in Figure 4 to illustrate the notion that ideas about

instruction are communicated to teachers by the *policy*, *professional*, *private* and *public*

sectors, as well as by *pupils*' responses to instruction.
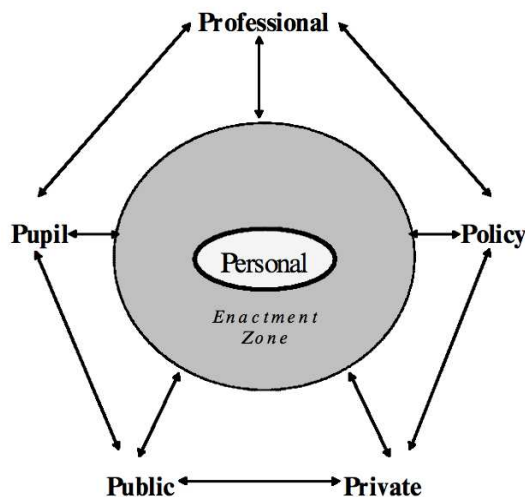
Figure 4: Zones of Enactment (Spillane, 1999)

Spillane (1999) defines the "outer sections of the pentagon" as representing the

"organizations, associations and individuals, and the opportunities and incentives they

mobilize, from which teachers *might* learn about reforming instruction" (p. 169).

Specifically, each "P" represents the following:

> The *policy sector*, involving federal, state and local government policies, including both formal policies and informal policy talk

> The *professional sector*, meaning both formal associations and informal contacts among educators, including the school itself, as a learning community

> The *pupils*, and the influence that their response to schooling has on teachers

> The *public*, which has to do with parent and community concerns

> The *private sector*, especially textbook and curriculum publishers, but also business and industry.

Additionally, Spillane (1999) included a sixth P at the center of the model to

represent the *personal resources* that teachers have for learning about practice. As

Spillane suggests, some teachers notice many opportunities for learning while others

notice few, and the opportunities teachers notice depend not only on their environment,

(specifically, he posits, the *policy*, *professional*, *public* and *private* sectors), but also on

their *personal* resources; namely, knowledge, beliefs, dispositions, and experiences. The

two-way arrows in Figure 4 are meant to capture this "dynamic, two-way relationship"

wherein the outer sections, and their interactions, are mediated through teachers'

personal resources (p.169).

Spillane (1999) concluded that the more teachers' enactment zones extend beyond

their individual classrooms, the more likely they are to change the core of their practice.

More specifically, he asserted that whether and how teachers revise the core of their

practice in response to reform initiatives depends on the extent to which their enactment

zones are:

- social rather than individualistic;
- involve rich deliberations about the substance of the reforms and the practising of these reform ideas with other teachers and reform experts;
- include material resources or artifacts that support deliberations about instruction and its improvement. (p. 171)

As indicated earlier in this chapter, researchers have spent considerable time establishing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for general education teachers of students with disabilities (Table 6). While this list has evolved alongside changes in legislation, and practice has evolved alongside the inclusive education reform, so too has the attempt to prepare general education teachers for inclusive classrooms. In light of the fact that teachers continue to say they are not prepared or don't know how to teach these students, little to no research has been conducted on figuring out how these practices are enacted and what factors might be contributing to their enactment, or lack thereof.

There are several differences between Spillane's (1999) work and this study, such as the fact that he focused on mathematics reform while I am interested in reforms related to inclusive practices. Additionally, he documented <u>changes in</u> teachers' mathematics practice while I examined <u>implementation of</u> teachers' inclusive practices. Similar to Spillane, however, I believe that whether and how teachers enact inclusive practices is dependent on a variety of external factors. In particular, I've seen from my own experiences in inclusive settings that the support system teachers have access to, or the types of teacher preparation activities in which they participated often affects how they work with students who have disabilities.

And although Spillane (1999) developed the model in response to his findings, other researchers have found it useful to explain environmental factors. For example, in

her (2011) dissertation, Benjamin investigated how three general educators in a rural public elementary school understood and implemented Response to Intervention policy. She grounded her study in social cognitive theory to examine the influence of personal factors, individual behavior, and the environment on teacher implementation of RTI, and she used Spillane's ZoE model to define "environment." Her findings indicated that the contextual environment and individual teacher characteristics influenced RTI implementation.

Additionally, Spillane (1999) asserted that viewing "the policy challenge in terms of teachers' zones of enactment suggests some cause for optimism, at least more optimism than if we conclude that a prerequisite for the successful implementation of recent instructional reforms is a population of teachers who have deep subject matter and pedagogical knowledge" (p. 171). In terms of my study, this assertion allows me to go beyond making recommendations solely for teacher education programs and provides a useful lens for assisting practicing teachers.

In order to identify whether and how others had applied Spillane's (1999) model as a framework, I performed an electronic search of ERIC and EBSCO databases using the descriptors of *sensemaking* (and *sensemaking theory*) AND *special education* (or *students with disabilities*) yielded no results. Using *inclusion* instead of special education or students with disabilities resulted in the identification of one article about principals making sense of free appropriate public education within the context of the least restrictive environment (Sumbera, Pazey, & Lashley, 2014). Additional searches using the broader terms of *education* and *teachers* did yield significantly more references; however, a reading of titles and abstracts indicated that none of them had any connection

to special education. I also substituted *zones of enactment* for *sensemaking* in all the same combinations, which only brought up Spillane's (1999) article described above.

Finally, I searched through the dissertation database using these same terms. Although this search yielded more results than the searches on EBSCO and ERIC, I was only able to identify three with a special education-related topic. Those topics, however, were not directly related to this study: two focused on principal sensemaking about inclusion (DeMatthews, 2012; Sherman, 2007) and one examined special education teachers' sensemaking of policy requirements (Nance, 2007). I found no examples of the zones of enactment being used as a framework, although several researchers used the term when describing teacher practices. Of these, only Benjamin's (2011) study had to do with special education.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed literature related to various aspects of general education teachers' instruction of students with disabilities. The literature review covered the history of and progression toward inclusive teacher education and professional development, information about what general education teachers of students should know and be able to do, and teachers' roles in different types of inclusive settings. I then identified a number of gaps in the literature that informed my overall study design, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter. Finally, in order to address the lack of theoretical grounding in research on this topic, I explained why Spillane's (1999) model of enactment zones is a potentially generative conceptual framework for this study. More specific information about the study design is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGNING THE STUDY

As described in the two previous chapters, federal legislation and individual state requirements have prompted exponential growth in the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom, for which general education teachers report not feeling prepared. In addition to an accompanying increase in both preservice and in-service offerings, various organizations have established standards (also called competencies, knowledge and skills, etc.) detailing the expectations for what general education teachers should know and be able to do; however, minimal research has been conducted that examines these standards in terms of the teachers who are expected to meet them. More specifically, the following gaps were identified in the literature review:

- Despite a clear indication from the literature that there are important competencies for general education teachers, there is almost no research detailing whether and how these standards are being implemented in classrooms.

- None of the organizations described in this literature review included observations of actual classroom practice as part of their process for creating the standards. Similarly, all of the studies that detailed what teachers should know from the perspective of practicing teachers were conducted using surveys or focus groups, and were not grounded in either observation or theory.

- Multiple researchers cite the need for more research on inclusive secondary classrooms (Bulgren et al., 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Scanlon & Baker, 2012; Villa et al., 2005).

- Of the research that has been published in regards to secondary settings, a majority focuses on co-taught classrooms (e.g., Murawski, 2006) and/or mathematics or science instruction (e.g., Maccini & Gagnon, 2006). There are few studies (e.g., Rea et al., 2002; Wilson et al., 2013) in which researchers make comparisons across different types of inclusive models.

- Researchers assert that it is essential that we determine what kinds of training make general education teachers more effective with special education students (Feng & Sass, 2010), but all too often, reforms regarding students with disabilities who have been included in the general curriculum have taken place without the consultation or involvement of practicing teachers (Kamens et al., 2003; Wolery et al., 1995), especially general educators (Bradley & West, 1994; Snyder, 1999).

To address these gaps, I designed this study to investigate how secondary general education teachers make sense of and enact their roles and responsibilities in regards to students with disabilities and to make recommendations, based on teachers' experiences, interpretations, and constructions, about the preparation of current and future teachers to instruct in inclusive classrooms. In this chapter, I first explain my own background as a researcher, which includes my motivation for conducting this research. Second, I describe my methodological orientation and epistemological grounding for the study. Following this description, I present the design of the study, including information about the selection of participants, data collection, trustworthiness, and data analysis.

Researcher Background and Motivation

I consider myself both an experienced and effective special education teacher, despite the fact that I have not taken what many would call a "traditional" route to get here. Before deciding on special education as a career, I had several life experiences early on that pointed me in this direction. My younger brother was diagnosed with a speech and language impairment before either of us started school. It pained me to watch him struggle to communicate, so I would sit with him for hours and work on reading and pronouncing words. I thought I was being a good big sister, but this was actually the start of something much bigger.

When I was 13 years old, my neighbors asked me to babysit their two daughters – the catch was that their older daughter was actually a year older than I was. She had cerebral palsy, and they had been unable to find someone who could handle her needs while also managing the younger daughter. Based on the way we all interacted with each other when our families got together, they wanted to see how it would work out. This experience provided me with my first opportunity to differentiate, even though I was too young to understand that's what I was doing. I babysat for their family until the younger daughter was old enough to stay home on her own, and even after that I often "hung out" with the older daughter. During my senior year of high school, I signed up for an elective course opportunity in which students from my high school volunteered as classroom assistants at a nearby school for handicapped students. It was here that I really felt my calling to work in special education. Unfortunately, the college I had chosen to attend did not offer special education as a major, so I chose an entirely different route.

When I graduated from college, I still felt driven to work in special education, partially due to the fact that my brother had *finally* been diagnosed with a learning disability in his senior year of high school, too late for it to mean anything. I investigated opportunities at several colleges of education and found a program that would pay for my tuition since I was a non-education major. I was hired at a private school in the area that had separate campuses for their middle and high school students with disabilities and taught while I was earning my master's degree. I often felt as though I was floundering in these first two years, which I believe was related to the fact that not only was I a new teacher, but I also had received no prior instruction about how to be a teacher. Ironically, I was often considered the "expert" because I was taking coursework in special education, while many of my colleagues had degrees in general education subject areas.

After completing the Master's program, I decided to move back home and work in the local public school district. Within the first few weeks, I realized that my master's degree had not done that much to prepare me for the realities of a classroom full of students with varying abilities and disabilities. Over the next few years, I gathered as much information as I could from other teachers and professional development opportunities. Sometime during this period, I stopped feeling as though I didn't know what I was doing and started to feel that I was truly making a difference in my students' lives. I had begun teaching in inclusive settings – mostly co-taught classrooms – and was constantly being approached by my general education colleagues about how to effectively teach students with disabilities. I had been under the assumption that I was the only one ill-prepared for these students because I had earned my certification through a master's degree program rather than a traditional undergraduate program, but I was

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finding that teachers who had been certified through a variety of methods (undergraduate, master's, alternative route), especially those certified in general education content areas, did not feel prepared.

Upon reflecting on my own experiences and the experiences of my colleagues, and after reading countless articles in which general educators indicate they did not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities, I felt a strong desire to do my research in this area. I was surprised when I learned that there were special education standards that had been created for general education teachers, since neither I, nor, I assumed, any of the teachers I had worked with, knew anything about them. The impetus for my research arose out of this surprise – I wanted to learn more about teachers' experiences with instructing students with disabilities, as well as whether and how these standards aligned with their ideas about teaching these students and their actual classroom practices. Then I wanted to use that information to inform teacher education and professional development programs about better preparing general educators to teach students with disabilities.

In relation to this study, my background positioned me as both an insider and an outsider: an insider in that I have been a secondary education teacher, I have experience in co-taught classrooms, and I taught in this school district, but an outsider in that I taught special education rather than general education, and I am not currently teaching. Due to my personal experiences and my outsider status, it was apparent that I had to be aware of any assumptions or potential biases. In order to hold myself accountable and be cognizant of these, I kept a field journal, which is described in detail later in this chapter.

Methodological Orientation

In Chapter Two I reviewed the literature and described what was known about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for general education teachers of students with disabilities. From that review, one methodological limitation became apparent; specifically, many of the studies relied on forced and researcher assertions rather than explanation from within the data as to why the findings existed. In particular, researchers compiled lists of knowledge (also called skills, competencies, etc.) required of general education teachers of students with disabilities (e.g., CEC standards) and asked teachers to identify the most essential ones (or the ones in which they felt most confident). While their intention and mine are similar – to use this information to better inform general education teacher preparation and in-service training for inclusive settings – this study builds on the work these researchers have done by questioning not only what general educators need to know, but also how and why some of these practices are being enacted more than others.

In any research study, the design is largely determined by the questions being asked. The purpose of this study was to determine not only how general education teachers make sense of and describe their roles and responsibilities, but also to investigate how these roles and responsibilities are enacted in classrooms, with special consideration given to understanding factors that facilitate or hinder these enactments. A qualitative research methodology, wherein researchers study things in their natural settings, "attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4), is most appropriate for research questions designed to

provide insights into how and why general educators enact certain roles and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms over others.

Qualitative research, however, is a broad field of inquiry that "privileges no single methodological practice over another…[and] has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 8). Creswell (2007) posits that an early aspect of research design is to "[begin] with a research problem and [proceed] to the questions, the data, the data analysis, and the research report" (p. 76). The emphasis in my research questions on both individual and collective "meaning-making" is a distinctly constructivist perspective (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). There are many forms of constructivism, which Au (1998) describes as differing "along several dimensions including the relative importance of human communities versus the individual learner in the construction of knowledge" (p. 299).

I designed this qualitative study using the lens of *social* constructivism. Social constructivists view learning "as neither solely intrinsic nor purely extrinsic, but, rather, as a contiguous process that exists each time people willfully interact with each other in the world around them" (Bronack, Riedl, & Tashner, 2006, p. 221). Rather than base my findings on my own interpretations, or participants' individual interpretations, this research uses a social constructivist lens in two respects. First, the findings rely on knowledge created through interactions with teachers and the researcher. Second, there is also a focus on knowledge created by the interactions of teachers in a specific context. In this study, there are overlapping contexts – the school itself, the group of teachers as a case, and the smaller focus groups. As Newman (1990) asserted, "our understanding is shaped by contact with other people's perceptions of what's gone on" (p. 8).

As noted in the introduction to my conceptual framework, I also drew on sensemaking theory to inform the design, data collection, and analysis of this research. Weick (1995) identifies seven distinguishing characteristics of the sensemaking process: it is 1) grounded in identity construction, 2) retrospective, 3) enactive of sensible environments, 4) social, 5) ongoing, 6) focused on and by extracted cues, and 7) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995, p. 17). As detailed in Table 7, these seven characteristics drove several of the design decisions for this study. Additionally, however, I also used these seven properties as a tool by which I could further analyze the relationship between how teachers made sense of and enacted their roles and responsibilities. This additional analysis is presented as a synthesis of the three research questions in the final chapter.

For example, the teachers in this study referred to a variety of experiences as factors that facilitated their enactment of inclusive practices. Using Weick's (1995) list as a lens, I noticed that teachers' descriptions of these experiences were often connected to different characteristics, such as grounded in teachers' identity construction, retrospective, and/or enactive of sensible environments. This led me to place experiences in three different categories: teacher preparation (preservice and in-service, although predominantly preservice), personal, and on-the-job.

Table 7

Weick's Seven Properties of Sensemaking in Relation to the Current Study

Property	Definition	Relation to Study
Grounded in identity construction	Concepts of self both as an individual and as part of a group	Case descriptions created using information about teachers compiled through individual interviews, observations, and focus group interactions and responses
Retrospective	How individuals examine their own actions in order to learn what they have done and the significance of their actions	Each observation is accompanied by a post-observation interview in which teachers describe contextual information, share documents, and discuss the observed class; Following all completed sets of observations, teachers reviewed and added to or modified observation data
Enactive of sensible environments	Action for learning; experience is gained by doing things with and in the environment	Observations in classrooms to document how teachers enact their roles and responsibilities
Social	Shared meanings, common languages, and social interactions within surrounding environments	Focus groups made up of only general education teachers
Ongoing	Infinite streams of events and inputs surround individuals	Observations consisted of recording a steady stream of data to which a checklist was later applied; Multiple observations to the point of saturation
Focused on and by extracted cues	Prompt the sensemaker to bracket and extract experiences that stand out; coupled with previous experiences to help make sense of an event or experience	Post-observation interviews allowed teacher to describe specific experiences; Checklist used post-observation in order to focus on specific aspects of instruction
Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy	The ability to develop a reasonable explanation for what the individual has experienced	Various interactions aided with teachers' plausibility: post-observation interviews, checklist review, focus groups, individual interviews

Design of the Study

According to Yin (2003), case studies are a preferred approach when attempting to answer "how" or "why" questions regarding a particular phenomenon, as are the research questions in this study:

1) How do secondary general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities?

   a. What factors facilitate the enactment of these roles and responsibilities?

   b. What are the barriers to enacting these roles and responsibilities?

   c. Do these barriers differ by setting (e.g., type of inclusion model – solo-taught versus co-taught classrooms; honors versus standard)?

   d. How might these barriers be overcome?

2) How do secondary general educators enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students with disabilities as identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations?

   a. Are there substantive variations in these enactments of the standards?

   b. Are there identifiable patterns to the variations (i.e., based on school, inclusion type, academic setting, or teacher characteristics)? If so, what do these look like?

3) How do secondary general educators think that current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these roles and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms?

The use of qualitative case study to explore a contemporary phenomenon yields an in-depth analysis of a limited number of subjects, who together comprise the case in question, in natural settings or real life contexts (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case study can

involve single or multiple cases, with the case(s) representing an individual, several individuals, a setting, a program, an event, or an activity (Creswell, 2007). Although the study was initially designed with the two schools as the cases, and teachers as embedded cases, it became clear during the iterative data collection and analysis that the schools served more as bounded contexts than cases, or units of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As shown in Figure 5, the case is the "heart" – or focus – of the study, while the bounded context serves to define the case but is not necessarily what is being studied.
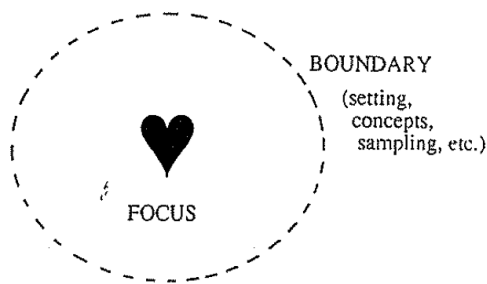
Figure 5: The Case as the Unit of Analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Although generalizability is not necessarily a goal for qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), qualitative studies – and case studies, especially – continue to be criticized for the lack thereof (Myers, 2000). Generally speaking, qualitative researchers believe that "if they carefully document a given setting or group of subjects, it is then someone else's job to see how it fits into the general scheme of things" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 36). Some researchers have positioned groups, consisting of multiple individuals, as the focal cases of a study (e.g., study groups, work teams, departments, families, divisions, project teams, etc.) (Dolma, 2010). Multiple case design affords the researcher an opportunity to more "carefully document" how findings hold across cases.

There are no set guidelines as to how many cases should be included, as most experts in this type of methodology assert that the number of cases depends on the research questions being asked. Some researchers argue that "the more cases that can be marshalled…, the more robust are the research outcomes" (Rowley, 2002, p. 21), while others suggest that the "desire for depth and a pluralist perspective and tracking the cases over time implies that the number of cases must be fairly few" (Meyer, 2001, p. 333). A review of recent dissertations using multiple-case study methodology to investigate various special education-specific topics in regards to general education teachers revealed a range of 2-5 cases being used per study (e.g., Berbaum, 2009; Kiely, 2011; Mackey, 2008; Mathis, 2007).

In order to develop a rich, robust description of the phenomenon in this case study (general education teachers' sensemaking and enactment of their roles and responsibilities regarding students with disabilities), I gathered data for two cases, each comprised of a group of general education teachers. Although both groups had a common bounded context of being "general education teachers of students with disabilities," an additional boundary related to school setting served to separate the two cases. I made this design decision for several reasons. First, I wanted to keep the number of cases small so that it would be possible to do a more in-depth investigation (Coburn, 2005). Second, I made the decision to use groups as the unit of analysis based on the overarching goal for this research to contribute to the theoretical and practical knowledge base around general education teacher preparation, making the attributes of the group as a whole of more interest than the individual attributes of group members (Dolma, 2010).

The selection criteria and purposive sampling techniques are described in the following section.

Selection of Participants

According to Stake (1995), the primary consideration in case selection should be how to "maximize what we can learn" (p. 4). Similarly, Creswell (2007) asserts that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select participants on the basis of their being able to "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). With these scholars' recommendations in mind, I selected the cases for this study purposively, in an effort to provide the best representation of the phenomenon within and across two cases of general education teachers.

Participant selection began with the identification of a school district. According to the 2012 Child Count data, almost 10% of the students in this large, urban school district in the Southeast United States receive special education services (citation removed for confidentiality). This is comparable to the number of students served in the entire state and nationally (citation removed for confidentiality; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The district itself is one of the largest in its state, as well as in the United States, serving around 145,000 students in 160 schools (citation removed for confidentiality; U.S. Department of Education, 2013a).

Once I decided on a school district, I narrowed my search to identify potential school sites, using the following selection criteria: a) student demographics are relatively representative of the district; b) percentage of students receiving special education

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services is relatively representative of district, state, and national percentages; c) public high school; and d) students with disabilities are educated in a variety of inclusive settings. Using School Progress Reports and information provided by the district's Central Office, I selected two high schools that met the first three criteria (representative student and special education demographics, public high schools).

In order to gain access, I emailed the principal of each school introducing myself and providing a brief description of my research process (Appendix B). This step was necessary in order to complete the application to conduct research within the district, which requires written documentation from willing schools as part of the process. The principals at each school facilitated a series of conversations between the Exceptional Children (EC) department chair and myself. Data collected during these conversations contributed first to ensuring the school met the final purposive sampling criterion (students with disabilities educated in a variety of inclusive settings). These initial meetings also yielded valuable information related to each school's inclusive context.

In order to introduce myself to teachers and generate interest, I spoke about my research at staff meetings, placed informal flyers on bulletin boards and in teacher newsletters, and contacted teachers specifically recommended by school principals and/or special education coordinators (Appendix C). I met with all interested participants on an individual basis to go over the study in more detail, provide consent forms, and answer questions. In order to be included, teachers had to a) be general education teachers, and b) have taught or be teaching classes that included students with disabilities.

One limitation to this study is that the selection procedures began with a volunteer sample, which takes away from the potential representativeness of the sample (e.g., far fewer male teachers participated). As Patton (1990) pointed out, however, "all qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposefully" (p. 169). With this in mind, I narrowed down the volunteer group so that the final participants were still selected according to the previously described criteria. Three teachers were excluded for two different reasons: two were special education teachers and one was a media specialist with no classroom teaching experience. The purposive sampling resulted in a total of 16 participants: seven teachers at Market High School (pseudonyms for schools and teachers used from this point forward), and nine at Key High School.

In order to answer the research question about enacting roles and responsibilities within the classroom, I used typical case sampling (Patton, 1990) to select teachers for observation. Patton (1990) asserts that the purpose of using typical cases is "to describe and illustrate what is typical to those unfamiliar with the program—not to make generalized statements about the experiences of all participants" (p. 174). Because my initial selection criteria established only that teachers had at some point in time taught in inclusive classrooms, I first eliminated, for observation purposes, those teachers who were not currently teaching classes with students with disabilities.

Consistent with Patton's (1990) suggestion to select typical cases "with the cooperation of key informants, such as program staff or knowledgeable participants" (p. 174), I met with administrators and the Exceptional Children's department chairs at each school to establish which of the participating teachers' classes were typical of secondary

inclusive classrooms (i.e., total number of students, number of students with IEPs, types of disabilities being included). As a result of these conversations and using Yin's (2003) concept of replication logic, I identified three typical teacher/setting combinations at each site: 1) general education teacher who solo-teaches inclusive classes; 2) general education teacher who both solo- and co-teaches inclusive classes; 3) general education teacher who has either larger than usual, or substantially different, population of students with specific needs. I then selected representatives of the three teacher/setting combinations at each school, for a total of six teachers.

First, I selected two chemistry teachers (one from each school) who, although they were both solo-teaching chemistry, taught in two different settings: honors at Market and standard at Key. This distinction ensured that "setting" (as referenced in the research questions) would not be limited to co-taught and solo-taught classes, but would include potential variations by academic setting, as well (i.e., honors versus standard chemistry class).

For the second set of teachers, I selected one teacher from each school who was both co- and solo-teaching Math II. Magiera and Zigmond (2003) have pointed out that using the same general education teacher in two conditions could be a potential threat to validity due to the "carry-over" of routine practices across conditions. For this study, however, the potential "carry-over" effect is actually a strength, helping the teacher act as a control against him/herself. More specifically, observing the same teacher in these two settings should highlight what, if any, differences can be attributed solely to the setting (co- vs. solo teaching) as opposed to the teacher.

Finally, the third set of teachers had been named by their respective special education department chair as someone who "worked well with [their] kids." One was teaching world history to a classroom of students with a high proportion of "low students" – students with disabilities, students who were English language learners, and students who had failed the class previously. The other was teaching physical education to a class that included a small group of students with disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Autism, and Cerebral Palsy.

Demographic and participatory information is presented in Table 8, and more information about each of these teachers and their classes is in Chapter 4.

Table 8

Teacher Demographics

School	Teacher Pseudonym	Age	Years Teaching	Subject Area	Gender	Race / Ethnicity	Focus Group / Interview	Observation
	AN	44	19	Social Studies	Female	African-American	X	X
	EK	29	6	Mathematics	Male	Caucasian	X	
	ES	24	2	Science	Male	Multi-Racial	X	X
School One	LL	58	15	Mathematics	Female	Caucasian	X	X
	MN	28	7	Science	Female	Caucasian	X	
	NS	54	0.5	Mathematics	Female	Caucasian	X	
	NY	37	10	Science	Female	Caucasian	X	
	AR	53	16 / 16[a]	Media Specialist	Female	Caucasian	X	
	ER	26	2	Science	Female	Caucasian	X	X
	HT	46	10	Mathematics	Female	Caucasian	X	X
	JR	43	22	Physical Education	Female	Caucasian	X	
School Two	KN	44	22	Instructional Facilitator	Female	Caucasian	X	
	MY	42	12	Physical Education	Female	Caucasian	X	X
	NR	26	4	Social Studies	Male	Caucasian	X	
	RR	46	23	Science	Female	Caucasian	X	
	RS	41	15	Science	Female	Caucasian	X	

[a] Classroom Teacher for 16 years and Media Specialist for 16 years

Data Collection

Maxwell (1998) posits that the use of a variety of methods and sources of information "reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method, and allows you to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations that you develop" (p. 236). Although there are recommendations about what types of data to collect in case study research, decisions regarding data collection procedures should be guided by research questions. As such, several authors recommend detailing the logic linking data collection to research questions as an important step in ensuring the researcher is using a strong case study design (Meyer, 2001; Yin, 2003). Table 9 details the logic I applied by mapping out my research questions and thinking about what type of data I hoped each would yield. Consistent with Creswell's (2007) assertion that case study research involves "multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports)" (p. 73), I used focus groups, observations, one-on-one interviews, and documents to develop robust answers to my research questions.

Focus groups. Although most researchers suggest between 6 – 12 participants in a focus group (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009), some researchers endorse the use of very small focus groups, or "mini-focus groups" (Krueger, 1994, p. 17), which include three or four participants, when participants have specialized knowledge and/or experiences to discuss in the group (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997). For this reason, I decided to use two mini-focus groups at each site. At Market HS, the groups were made up of three and four teachers, respectively, while at Key HS, the groups were four and five.

Table 9

Linking Research Questions to Data

Research Question	Additional Questions	Data Collection Method
How do secondary general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities?	What factors facilitate the enactment of these roles and responsibilities? What are the barriers to enacting these roles and responsibilities? Do these barriers differ by setting (e.g., type of inclusion model – solo-taught versus co-taught classrooms; honors versus standard)? How might these barriers be overcome?	Primary: Focus Group Secondary: Observations / Field Notes Checklist Post-Observation Conversations Individual Interviews
How do secondary general educators enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students with disabilities as identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations?	Are there substantive variations in these enactments of the standards? Are there identifiable patterns to the variations (i.e., based on school, inclusion type, academic setting, or teacher characteristics)? If so, what do these look like?	Primary: Observations / Field Notes Checklist Documents Post-Observation Conversations Secondary: Focus Group Individual Interviews
How do secondary general educators think current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these standards in inclusive classrooms?		Primary: Focus Groups Individual Interviews Secondary: Post-Observation Conversations

Focus groups are often seen as non-threatening to research participants

(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009) and useful when there are power differences between the

participants and researchers. Given that my outsider status as a special educator could

have limited the authenticity of responses provided by general education teachers, I chose

to use focus groups as a way to generate discussion among participants who share that

role designation. In addition, focus group methodology is built on the principle that the

process of group interactions will generate a wealth of information that would not be

accessible by other research methodologies (Greenbaum, 1993). For example, the focus

group format was extremely beneficial for gathering data related to the third research

question, since participants' descriptions of their own experiences often sparked other

participants' recollections. In addition, each session involved participants recording

responses on chart paper, which was also collected for analysis. See Appendix D for

more detailed information about the content of each focus group session.

Observations. Prior to conducting any observations, I sat down with each of the

six teachers to discuss what I was looking for, what to expect from me as an observer,

and how we would member-check following observations (Brenner, 2006). Rather than

set a specific number of observations, I visited each teacher's classroom until the data

reached the point of saturation. Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran (2009)

define data saturation as the point at which information is repeated enough that the

researcher can anticipate it and there is no additional interpretive worth. I continued

observing in every teacher's classroom until I had reached data saturation with the final

teacher so that every teacher would be observed the same number of times.

In Chapter 2, I presented a table summarizing specific standards for general

education teachers of students with disabilities as described in the literature (Table 6).

The first focus group session yielded additional support for many of the items on the list,

so I included Focus Groups within the list of Supporting Professional Standards before

turning it into a checklist for use during observations (Appendix E). Originally, I planned to use the checklist during observations and mark things off as I saw them, leaving a column for adding notes and/or other relevant information. However, once I began the work of actually conducting observations, I realized that if I was too focused on filling in a checklist, I might miss potentially important events and/or interactions. I made the decision to take detailed field notes, instead, and to use the checklist as a lens through which I observed teachers' actions. Specifically, upon completion of each observation, I did two things: 1) during post-observation interviews, I asked teachers to use the checklist to describe their actions, and 2) I filled in a checklist by matching information from the field notes and post-observation interviews to the relevant categories. Once all observations had been completed for each teacher, I filled in a master checklist, using data from all of the observation field notes, interviews, and checklists. I then met with the teachers individually to go over the events I had bracketed as extracted cues (Weick, 1995). Figure 6 shows an example of the progression from single observation checklist to master checklist to member-checked checklist.

Figure 6: Checklist Progression

As noted above, I took detailed field notes in order to create a rich, thick description of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). My

approach to recording field notes was to write spontaneously and capture details that I felt most accurately and vividly represented what I was observing. Consistent with Weick's (1977) assertion that "[t]he process of sensemaking… is better understood by examining what is in people's heads and imposed by them on a stream of events than by trying to describe what is out there" (p. 271), my field notes took the form of an ongoing documentation of the "stream of events" occurring during each observation. This enabled me to better understand what was "in people's heads" during post-observation interviews (described below).

Interviews. Interviews are a valuable data collection tool in qualitative studies, especially in intensive case studies of a few selected individuals, such as in my study. I incorporated three types of interviews as part of my data collection: focus group (previously described); unstructured / informal; and semi-structured. Except for the unstructured / informal post-observation interviews, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

For unstructured interviews, I met with teachers after each observation to go over my notes and allow them to correct errors, recall new facts, offer different perceptions of their situations, and reconcile discrepancies (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). Rather than having a list of questions, I began each post-observation interview with only an outline of what I wanted to cover to guide me through these more informal conversations (Appendix F). In addition to having teachers construct their own responses about whether and how they enacted the standards in their classrooms as listed on the checklist, I discussed my observations and categorizations of events to determine what, if any,

differences existed in mine versus the teachers' interpretations. During these sessions, we also reviewed the documents that I asked teachers to submit (described below).

I used semi-structured interviews, which integrate a mix of more- and less-structured interview questions, for my final interview with participants (Appendix G). I conducted the individual interviews after I had completed all of my observations for various reasons. First of all, I wanted to set aside any possible biases I may have had as a researcher, and part of that included not observing teachers with a preconceived idea about what I might see based on their preparation, years of experience, etc. For example, entering an observation with the assumption that teachers who were certified after 1997 (IDEA, NCLB, etc.) or who received dual certification through an alternative route certification would enact the standards more in their classes. In addition, by waiting until after observations and the second focus group session, I had already developed a relationship with the participants, allowing me to gain trust and establish rapport, two essential characteristics of successful interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

Documents. In addition to the focus group sessions, observations, and individual interviews, I asked teachers to submit documents that pertained to the observations and interviews. Specifically, I asked teachers for copies of lesson plans and course materials for all observed classes, in addition to evidence of planning related to students with disabilities (e.g., redacted IEPs and accompanying paperwork or accommodations trackers, communications with special education teachers and/or related service providers).

Data Analysis

Researchers assert that qualitative data analysis should be conducted simultaneously with data collection (Coffee & Atkinson, 1996; Maxwell, 1998; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This became apparent early on in my own data process. Immediately following my first observation, I began the work of examining my field notes and the accompanying checklist to see if anything stood out to me after day one of data collection. I was disappointed to see that I had neither robust field notes nor a very detailed checklist. Although the notes were good in some sections, in other places I had only partial descriptions of one activity or another with no notes describing the transition between them. Similarly, on the checklist, only one item had been marked that included a complete description: S's working on warmup, T stops to help and reminds of mnemonic. As I looked back and forth between the two, I realized that there were instances recorded on the field notes that could go into the checklist. This realization made clear that attempting to use two separate tools simultaneously for data collection was going to result in gaps and/or missing potentially important information as I went back and forth between them. It was at this point that I made the design decision to apply the checklist to my fieldnotes *after* the observation was complete, so that I could take more detailed, descriptive notes *during* the observation in order to capture the richest data possible (Maxwell, 1998). Having such an early experience with this cycling "back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data" (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 70) enabled me to be more cognizant throughout data collection and the multiple phases of analysis.

Phases of analysis. Marshall and Rossman (2011) identified seven analytic phases of data analysis: (a) organizing the data; (b) immersion in the data; (c) generating categories and themes; (d) coding the data; (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos; (f) searching for alternative understandings; and (g) writing the report. The following sub-headings detail these phases in the context of this study.

Organizing the data. To organize the data, I created folders for each case that included researcher notes, audio files, and transcripts from focus groups and individual interviews, along with pictures of focus group documents (e.g., Figure 7). In each folder, I also created sub-folders for the teachers I observed (in which I placed observation checklists and field notes), for my post-observation interview notes, and for teacher-provided documents. Finally, I went through each document to remove names and incorporate pseudonyms.
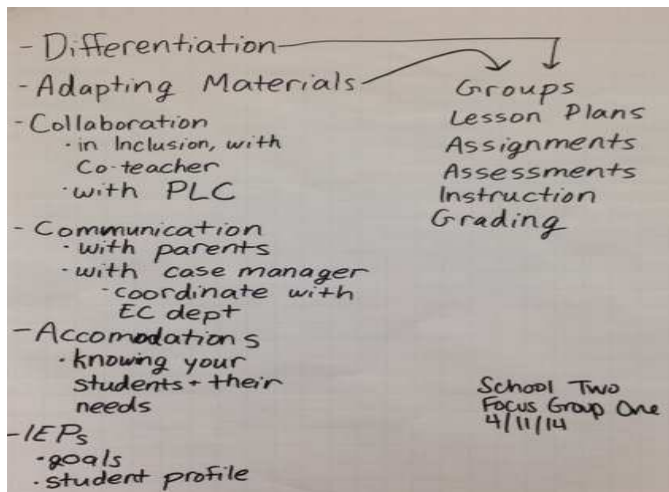
Figure 7: Sample Focus Group Document

Immersion in the data. Next, I used a systematic approach to immerse myself in the data. I read through each transcript multiple times while listening to the audio file so that I could not only become intimately acquainted with the data, but also so that I could

make corrections to the transcripts (e.g., word errors, mistakes in spelling, incorrectly labeled speakers) and begin preliminary analysis. During this stage, I noted themes, key ideas, or concepts and highlighted key quotes that appeared interesting and warranted further review. For instance, several of the teachers made comments along the lines of "sensitive high school social issues." It wasn't immediately apparent where this should go in the findings, so I made a note of it and looked for other statements related to this perceived stigma.

Generating categories, coding the data, and creating analytic memos. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) posit that initial coding should help to identify themes, patterns, events, and actions that are of interest to the researcher and that provide a means of organizing data sets. To that end, the first round of coding included labels such as "strategies" and "barrier". After this initial coding, I grouped these concepts into related categories using the research questions as a guide, such as "Roles/Responsibilities." I then re-coded the data multiple times to "manage, filter, highlight, and focus" the codes (Saldaña, 2009, p. 8). For example, I noted several items (e.g., "teacher prep"; "personal"; "PD") that could be coded more generally as "experience". Although I organized the codes and categories in separate documents, I performed my actual coding on the same document, so that I had immediate access to how new codes and patterns related to, modified, or replaced older codes and patterns (Figure 8). In each subsequent round of coding, I used a different color font to make notes. Scholars suggest that this type of data retention helps your thinking about the topic develop alongside the codes (Richards, 2005).

LL: Everybody gets the graphic organizer – because they need it. I mean, it really just helps the average kid. But since everybody gets it, that child is singled out, getting special attention. Because high school kids really notice that, but they're very into 'why are they getting this and I'm not'? STRATEGIES; ACCOMS FOR ALL; STIGMA; P=PUPIL

ES: And I think from our initial conversation here in the media during our faculty meeting when you were like 'all teachers do it' and I was like 'I don't feel like I do that'. I don't feel like there's not any special thing that I say – this is what I do for my students who need accommodations but then we were talking about it later on and actually all of these things that we do that we think are just norms are actually things that were initially accommodations. ACCOMS FOR ALL; IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

MN: I will say that some of my students who I know have reading and comprehension issues or language comprehension issues. I tend to check in with them more which I don't think is alerting them but I know that this is an issue for them so I'm checking with them more often to make sure that I'm getting them back on track. STRATEGIES; DISPOSITION?; STIGMA; INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION; P=PUPIL

When you talk about roles and responsibilities of the general education teacher versus the special education teacher. As general education teachers here we have much less access to special education teachers. I am a lot more used to – I taught in [State] before – having somebody to work with me to help with my assessment, to help me make modifications and since there isn't someone here, I think that's where we moved to 'everybody gets everything'. Since you don't have access to one person who's really knowledgeable about these kids' disabilities it becomes, okay, I need to do this for everybody because I don't really understand this. Does that make sense? LACK OF ACCESS; ACCOMS FOR ALL; BARRIERS; ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES (ROLE OF CO-TEACHER?); LACK OF KNOWLEDGE; P=PROFESSIONAL

UMD: Absolutely. You raised a really interesting point which actually connects right to the next thing I wanted to talk about. When you do have that immediate access – like a co-teacher in the classroom, do you think that the general education teacher's responsibilities change? And if so, how? What are the differences?

MN: Well, co-teaching is different because with a co-teaching situation you have a high population of kids who need differentiated instruction, not just accommodations for testing or accommodations for notes. They need small group settings or something like that. And then co-teaching implies that you are sharing responsibility for the instruction. If you don't have a co-teacher, then you are responsible for the instruction. So you can ask advice but it's up to you to differentiate. "SHARING RESPONSIBILITY"; "DIFFERENTIATE"; ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES; P=PROFESSIONAL

If you're co-teaching you guys should be in on it together. We might be the specialists in the content area but anybody who's worked in the biology classroom for more than one semester can also master the material. And I've co-taught in the past and it works better if those people are seen as instructors of content also otherwise one person is just floating. CO-TEACHING RELATIONSHIP; TEACHING EXPERIENCE; ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES; EXPERIENCE; COLLABORATION

UMD: Anybody else have any thoughts on that?

Figure 8: Sample Transcript Coding

After these early stages of coding, I realized there were several codes (e.g., "stigma") that did not seem to fit into one of the research question-driven categories, which led me to return to my conceptual framework for further analysis. Patton (1990) describes deductive analysis as analytic categories that are tied to an existing framework. I began the next stage of the coding process by looking at the codes and categories I had already generated, as well as the data itself, through the lens of my conceptual framework and placing items in categories of *professional*, *policy*, *public*, *private*, *pupil*, or *personal*. Re-coding the data with a focus on zones of enactment enabled me to learn more about how and why teachers enacted certain inclusive practices over others. For example, I did not observe Lisa (one of the Market teachers) provide a single accommodation during any of her observations. If the analysis was based solely on observation data, that would be the only information I had.

However, in my re-coding of Lisa's statements in focus groups and transcripts, I noted a number of comments about "not singling students out" or "making sure they blended in" that I had placed in the category, "sensitive high school social issues," which I then categorized as *pupil* according to Spillane's (1999) framework. Teachers at both schools had made comments to this effect, although these comments were much more pervasive at Market. These types of statements led me to determine that there were certain barriers related to students, although the extent might vary by school setting. This finding is consistent with other research, which suggests that teachers' perceptions of students have an important influence on their practice and their response to instructional reforms (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Spillane, 1999).

As described earlier, this study – and the ZoE model – is grounded in sensemaking. As such, I also used Weick's seven characteristics of sensemaking to provide deeper explanation where possible. For instance, during the first focus group, Alicia stated:

> I've taught in an inclusion class [before] and it makes you a much stronger teacher.... Without the value of a co-teacher in your class it does make it a little more difficult. But what I think you do is really pinpoint and focus on the need of each individual student and you approach it that way each and every time. And so I'm always constantly looking for new and innovative ways to bring every kid up to the same level. And it becomes easier because you have that knowledge of how to do it.

I coded this segment as identity construction. In terms of sensemaking, "who we think we are (identity) as organizational actors shapes what we enact and how we interpret, which affects what [others] think we are (image) and how they treat us, which stabilizes or destabilizes our identity" (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 416). Alicia described herself as a "stronger teacher" for having co-taught, and later provided specific examples of her enactment of inclusive practices. She had been identified by both the principal and the department chair as a teacher who "worked well with our kids," demonstrating this stabilization of Alicia's identity construction. This final round of coding and analysis resulted in additional explanation and modification of parts of the enactment data, which is detailed more extensively in the final chapter.

Additionally, Spillane's (1999) framework aided in providing explanation specific to teachers' enactment of inclusive practices. I grouped all statements that I had categorized as facilitators or barriers to enactment under the "P" to which they most closely aligned (i.e., *professional, policy, public, private, pupil, personal*). I then went

back through the data to determine if other items belonged in those categories. As I

noted previously, I was initially unsure where to place certain codes (e.g., stigma). Using

Spillane's model to code, I grouped this and other terms used in relation to students in the

pupil category. For example, teachers in both cases referenced "lower" or "struggling"

students rather than using the terms "students with disabilities (or IEPs)" or "EC"

(abbreviation of Exceptional Children, the state's official term; also the most commonly

used moniker in this state for students who receive special education services).

In addition to this inductive and deductive analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990),

there was a fair amount of coding I conducted using the observation checklist. As I

described in the introduction of my conceptual framework, this checklist served as the

primary method of establishing which inclusive practices were occurring in teachers'

zones of enactment. I used a form of document analysis in combination with the

checklist to examine the documents teachers submitted during post-observation

interviews.

Document analysis is appropriate for use with documents containing text (words)

and images that were recorded without a researcher's intervention and requires that data

be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning and gain understanding (Bowen,

2009). Based on my own experience collaborating with general education teachers, I

developed an initial list of materials for teachers to submit: Lesson Plans / Class

Materials, Redacted IEPs and Accompanying Paperwork / Accommodations Trackers,

and Copies of Email Communications. In the first focus group, however, teachers often

referenced the more informal verbal communications they had with "the EC [Exceptional

Children's] department" and/or their co-teachers, so I modified the third submission to include descriptions of verbal interactions.

1) Lesson Plans: Submitted with each observation, including classroom materials (e.g., handouts). There did not appear to be a template (or teachers did not use one), as these were structured differently from teacher to teacher.

2) Accommodations Tracker / IEP Paperwork: Submitted once, during the first post-observation interview. Teachers who had one provided me with whatever they used to keep track of students' accommodations. Neither of the two schools had a template for this document, so teachers submitted this document in various formats.

3) Additional Communications: Submitted at any point during data collection, most often during post-observation interviews. Teachers submitted evidence of any type of communication and/or collaboration regarding their students (copies of emails, accounts of verbal interactions).

Bowen (2009) described document analysis as the process of skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation. For the purposes of this study, I first skimmed the documents to look for any specific references related to students with disabilities, making notes as I went along. I then read through each document more thoroughly, using the elements identified for the checklist as a way to code for specific examples. My interpretations then became part of teachers' master checklists, which, as described below, were member-checked by each teacher.

During the previously described coding and analysis, I looked for patterns within each case first, beginning with individual teachers, then at teachers within that specific school (described in more detail below). I did this for both cases before comparing across teachers and contexts, writing analytic memos as I proceeded (Merriam, 1998; Miles et al., 2014). These memos assisted not only with category creation, but also with determining how categories related to research questions. For example, during both the collection and analysis of data related to the third research question – how to prepare teachers for instructing this student population – I noted that teachers struggled initially to make suggestions. The responses they did give were often reminiscent of the roles and responsibilities they had described in earlier sessions – lists of <u>what</u> they should know rather than <u>how</u> it should be taught to them. As I began analyzing the data, however, I noticed that teachers often provided examples of specific preservice or in-service activities they had found helpful. Recalling Spillane's (2004) assertion that interpretation takes into account the sense-maker's experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, I went back through all of the transcripts and created an analytic memo (Figure 9) detailing the four ways in which teachers "made recommendations" without necessarily realizing they were.
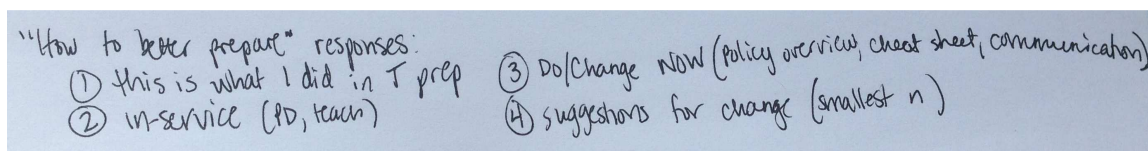
Figure 9: Sample Analytic Memo

Searching for alternative understandings. Instead of discussing validity, reliability, and generalization – concepts extrapolated from quantitative research

(Borman, Clarke, Cotner, & Lee, 2006), Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that the rigor

of qualitative studies can be evaluated based on their trustworthiness. In particular, they

suggest the categories of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in

contrast to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively, for

judging constructivist research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As noted earlier, I selected a

multiple case design and used typical case sampling to address potential criticisms of

transferability. In addition, I incorporated four strategies identified by researchers for

minimizing risks related to credibility, dependability, and confirmability (e.g., Guba &

Lincoln, 1994; Krefting, 1991; Rowley, 2002): researcher self-reflection, member

checking, inter-rater reliability, and triangulation of data.

Researcher self-reflection. According to Merriam (1998), credibility deals with

the question of whether one's findings are congruent with reality, or ensuring that the

study measures what is actually intended (Shenton, 2004). Scholars recommend a variety

of ways to increase credibility (e.g., well-established research methods, frequent

debriefing sessions), including self-reflection, or reflexivity, through the use of a field

journal (Krefting, 1991). The use of a field journal can also enhance confirmability,

which has to do with ensuring that "the findings are the result of the experiences and

ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher"

(Shenton, 2004). For example, in one entry, I noted that teachers "made a lot of excuses"

as to why they didn't do certain things. In the analysis of both interviews and transcripts,

I initially marked these as "Yeah, buts" signifying teachers acknowledging something

they *could* do but didn't: "I know that I *could* go through and try to make [the notes] fill

in the blank but…I don't have time to do all that." For this specific response, the self-

reflection helped me to recognize the bias in my analysis and focus instead on the fact

that the teacher was describing time as a barrier, thereby increasing both the

confirmability and credibility of the data.

Member checking. Member checking, which involves sharing data, preliminary

analyses, tentative interpretations, and general conclusions with study participants so they

can evaluate them for accuracy and credibility (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998),

minimizes risks related to credibility (Krefting, 1991; Rowley, 2002). For this study,

member checking was done at various points throughout the data collection and analysis:

during and following focus group sessions, in post-observation interviews and follow-up

conversations, during the final interviews, and at other points in time as necessary (e.g.,

upon completion of the master checklist). Member checking allowed participants to

clarify errors, recall new facts, offer different perceptions of their situations, and

reconcile discrepancies (Gall et al., 2005). One example of this was presented in Figure 6

(p. 108), where the teacher added "classwork and homework and tests" in the description

of her modifying study guides for students with disabilities.

Inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability is "the extent to which two or more

individuals (coders or raters) agree" (Marques & McCall, 2005, p. 442). Although its

appropriateness in qualitative research is contested, scholars suggest that the use of inter-

rater reliability as a verification tool increases credibility and dependability, in that it

ensures that findings are not skewed by researcher bias. Dependability differs from

credibility in that, rather than asking if the study is measuring what it intends to measure,

it has to do with ensuring that if another researcher undertook the same study, in the same

settings, with the same participants, they would get the same results. The two are related,

however, as taking steps to demonstrate credibility often helps to ensure dependability (Shenton, 2004).

I incorporated inter-rater reliability by enlisting a second researcher to assist in the compilation of teachers' master checklists. She is a first-year doctoral student in special education at a local university and has taught special education for a total of 13 years in two different settings, in a variety of subject areas and grade levels. At her current school, she is in charge of developing and providing professional development to the rest of the teaching staff, most of whom are content, rather than special education, certified. To begin, we sat down with the standards checklist and went over each item, discussing what it might look like in the classroom. I explained to her how I used my field notes from observations and post-observation interviews along with teacher-provided documents to fill in a checklist for each observation, then compiled those into one master checklist. We chose one teacher at random and filled out an observation checklist together; we worked collaboratively with the first half of the field notes, then independently with the second half to compare our separate analyses. After determining that we identified the same examples, I provided her with the remainder of my observation data. Her subsequent matching of data to the master checklists acted as a verification of my findings.

Triangulation. Researchers define triangulation as the process of using multiple methods and sources for data collection in order to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2007; Gall et al., 2005). Triangulation of data is recommended more than any other strategy in terms of trustworthiness: it enhances credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Krefting, 1991; Shenton, 2004). The importance of triangulation to this

study was highlighted in an early focus group session when teachers expressed concern

that I "shouldn't be able to tell necessarily who [they were] differentiating for because of

very sensitive high school social issues." They responded more positively after I

described how I planned to base my findings on a combination of data points including

observation notes, post-observation interviews, and documents that they would provide.

Writing the report or other format for presenting the study. Marshall and

Rossman (2011) suggest that writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the

analytic process because in the act of "choosing words to summarize and reflect the

complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape

and form—meaning—to mountains of raw data" (p. 222). In this sense, the process of

writing about the within- and across-case analyses not only facilitated the actual data

analysis, but it also assisted with structuring my summary of the findings in the next

chapter. For example, as I wrote about the similarities and differences I found within and

across cases, I began thinking in terms of specific themes (e.g., personal barriers versus

school- or district-imposed barriers) rather than just listing my findings.

Case analysis. Using the previously described methods, I conducted both within-

and across-case analysis. Merriam (1998) describes the process as such:

> For the *within-case analysis*, each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in
> and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the
> contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case...Once the
> analysis of each case is completed, *cross-case analysis* begins. (p. 194-195)

There is no one specific way to conduct these within- and across-case analyses, which

Ayres, Kavanaugh, and Knafl (2003) attribute to different blends of "interpretive choices,

analytic strategies, and research aims" (p.873). However, case studies are often criticized

for the fact that they operate under a loose design with few "fixed formulas or cookbook recipes" (Yin, 2003, p. 110) and minimal attention paid to how researchers get from "1000 pages of field notes and transcriptions to the final conclusions" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 5), so scholars have suggested being explicit about design decisions (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989; Meyer, 2001; Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2003).

Table 10 includes an explanation of the types of within- and across-case analytic strategies I used in the data analysis for this study. For the analysis within- and across-individual teachers, I examined the data collected for all sixteen teachers. For ten of the teachers, this meant focus group and interview responses. In addition to these, I analyzed observation and document data for the other six teachers.

Table 10

Within- and Across-Case Analytic Strategies

Comparison	Purpose	Strategy	Product
Within individual teachers	Identify themes	Close reading of observation data, individual responses in focus groups, individual interviews, and documents	Coding categories, themes (described above)
Within schools	Identify patterns / variations of themes within schools	Close reading of individual interviews and focus groups, information about EC / services by department chairs	Additional themes based on within-school patterns and variations
Across individual teachers	Identify patterns / variations of themes	Data coding and display (described below)	Subthemes
Across schools	Identify patterns / variations of themes across schools	Relational database display	Additional themes based on across-school patterns and variations

Although aspects of the data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, I began the within- and across-case analysis process by first reading through all the transcripts, field notes, checklists, and artifacts I had accumulated for each teacher. At this point, I began coding the data, as described above, writing analytic memos about themes and ideas and using those memos to make decisions about pertinent information and sort the data (Merriam, 1998; Miles et al., 2014). Once I completed analysis of the first teacher, I used the same data analysis steps for each of the additional teachers within that case, before repeating the steps for each of the teachers within the second case. Following the within-case analyses, I began the process of across-case analysis, focusing first on comparisons across teachers within the same school, then across schools. Throughout this process, I created a variety of data displays to assist in both the within- and across-case analyses. For example, in order to move from within- to across- analysis of teachers, I created a matrix using the categories from the checklists (Appendix H) to do a "squint analysis" across rows and down columns to see what jumped out (Miles et al., 2014, p. 117). I was able to use this table for comparisons within- and across-boundaries, or schools, as well.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the research methodology for this study. I began by explaining how my background influenced my motivation for conducting research related to general education teachers of disabilities. I then described my methodological orientation. The remaining sections delved into the actual design of the study: information about the selection of participants, methods of data collection based on the research questions, and phases of data analysis, including the ways I organized and

immersed myself in the data, generated categories and themes before and during coding,

and developed interpretations with consideration given to alternative understandings. In

the next chapter, I introduce the two cases and their bounded contexts before

summarizing the findings according to research question.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, I first describe the two cases, which includes information about the special education context, as described by a) the schools' Exceptional Children's department chairs and b) participants and other members of the special education community. Within these descriptions, I also present brief profiles of the teachers who make up each case. These profiles are kept deliberately short so as to more fully analyze teacher responses in relation to the three research questions. I then report my findings, based on my three research questions: a) How do secondary general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities? b) How do secondary general educators enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations? c) How do secondary general educators think current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these standards in inclusive classrooms?

Market High School

The information presented in this section was compiled and triangulated using information provided by Market High School's (MHS) Exceptional Children's Department Chair, comments made by teachers in focus groups and individual interviews, as well as by other individuals peripherally involved with the study and special education at MHS (e.g., administrators, special education teachers or assistants, and students). It is not meant to be a comprehensive description of Market High School; rather, the following narrative provides information related to general education teachers' instruction of students with disabilities in the bounded context of MHS.

Context

Market High School is the sixth oldest of twenty high schools in the district, established in 1959. Its 65-acre, college-style campus comprises 13 buildings organized by academic department, with a blend of old and new. Descriptive materials for the 2013-2014 school year describe the MHS student body as a "vibrant multicultural campus community" with a student population made up of 43% White, 27% African-American, 24% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1% Other students. At the time of the study, 44% of the student-body received Free and Reduced Lunch and 6% was classified as Limited English Proficient. Out of 232 students identified as receiving special education services – approximately 10% of the total school population – 41% were African-American, 31% Caucasian, 25% Hispanic, and 2% other. There were 175 certified staff members at MHS during 2013-2014, including two and a half facilitators, two deans, four assistant principals, a principal, seven counselors, and the support of two additional counselors assigned through the Communities in Schools program. Among the faculty, 44% held advanced degrees and 22 staff members were National Board certified. With regard to teaching experience, 42% had been teaching for ten or more years. Table 13, included in the comparison section following the description of Key High School, presents the two schools' demographic information side by side.

In our initial meeting, the principal identified several reasons this study would "be a good fit" for the school: many of the teachers had been in the classroom a long time and were reluctant to make changes in their practice; teachers often sent her emails complaining about the appropriateness of certain students (usually English language learners or students with disabilities) being in their classes and she was "running out of

ways to respond"; and teachers' effectiveness at teaching inclusion ranged from one end

of the spectrum to the other, although she believed it was more positive than not.

Building on that last point, she originally requested that she be able to select all of the

participants so that she could make sure she chose the ones at the lower end of the

spectrum, or those who "thought they were good at it will volunteer, and they aren't the

ones I want getting help!" I explained that the purpose of this study was not necessarily

to provide instruction, but to gather information about what teachers were already doing

in their classrooms. She asked if it would be appropriate to "encourage" teachers to

participate, to which I replied that I hoped she would. I then explained my purposive

sampling process and asked for her assistance in determining not only what general

education teacher / setting combinations were "typical" but also helping to narrow down

the groups for observation, also using "typical" as a criterion.

The principal also shared that many of Market's inclusive classrooms comprised a

blend of students with disabilities, English language learners, and other struggling

students, including a large population of SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal

Education) students who were primarily Honduran. In the same vein, the teachers often

referenced English language learners when talking about their inclusive classes; for

example, one teacher described how "using lots of visuals is good for everyone in the

class – ELLs, IEPs, 504s.[1]" Similarly, two of the teachers who participated credited a

SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, a research-based instructional model

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[1] Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met (U.S. Department of Education, Protecting Students with Disabilities, 2013b). Unlike students with an IEP, students with a 504 plan do not require specialized instruction; the plan is accommodation-driven.

designed to meet the needs of language learners) in-service as something that helped prepare them for teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Continuum of services. Students in the Exceptional Children's department at Market High School participate in either the Standard or Occupational Course of Study. The Occupational Course of Study (OCS) is one way that students with disabilities can receive a diploma in this state. It is intended to meet the needs of a small group of students with disabilities who need a greatly modified curriculum that focuses on post-school employment and independent living. In general, these students are only educated with the general education population for elective courses such as art, physical education, or career and technical education. At Market High School, I did not observe any of these elective courses.

Within the Standard Course of Study, students receive services at three different levels: Consultative, Co-Taught, and Learning Lab. According to the EC department chair, at the consultative level, students participate in standard and/or honors level classes and meet with the case manager the amount of time specified in the IEP (usually once per week). At the co-taught level, students participate in standard level classes that are taught by two teachers, the content teacher and the EC teacher. More information about which classes are co-taught is in the next section. Finally, students can also participate in the Learning Lab, where students complete assignments, learn study skills, and receive instruction in areas of need.

Although not necessarily part of the continuum of services, Market offers "Enrichment," a 40-minute period following the first class of the day, that rotates through

each of the four blocks on Monday through Thursday. What this means is that on Mondays, students stay in their first period class during that time; on Tuesday, they go to their second period class; Wednesday, third period; and Thursday, fourth. Teachers can use this time to provide remediation or additional instruction, allow students to complete assignments, work individually with students, or however else they deem necessary. I observed during two enrichment periods and saw one teacher conducting a review session for an upcoming test and another teacher allowing students to continue working on a study guide.

Decisions about inclusive classes. Generally speaking, there are two factors that schools take into consideration when making decisions about inclusive classrooms: for co-taught classes, subject areas; and for all settings, teachers. The following two sections detail how Market High School makes inclusive decisions in terms of these two factors.

By subject area. At MHS, there is an annual discussion about which classes should be co-taught. The first courses identified are those in which there are End of Course (EOC) exams. During the 2013-2014 school year, Math I, English II, and Biology were all co-taught EOC classes. Because Market operates on a 4x4 schedule, meaning that classes are semester long, all three of these classes were paired with an "introductory" class first semester, followed by the actual EOC course second semester: Foundations of Mathematics I and Mathematics I; Foundations of English II and English II; and Greenhouse Biology and Biology. English II is the only one of these that was co-taught as a standalone course, as well. The department chair explained that the co-teachers are present in the Foundations classes as well as the content classes "since it puts the EC teacher in the same light as the general education teacher. The students keep the

same teachers that they had in foundations, so this prevents the students being confused about why someone showed up at the beginning of second semester that wasn't already a part of the classroom climate/culture."

In addition to the three EOC classes, Market also offered co-teaching or alternative support as an option in three of the four main content areas (English, Mathematics, Social Studies), based on the current needs of their EC and ELL student populations.

English. Market High School offered co-taught options for all four English requirements during the year in which this study was conducted: English I, English II, English III, and English IV. As with English II, English I was also paired with a first semester introductory course – either Foundations of English I, or Literacy. While Foundations served as a basic introductory class, Literacy was designed for students with significant reading deficits. In this class, students were paired with an upperclassman tutor who provided one-on-one instruction in reading.

Mathematics. Students "with significant math difficulties" can earn the four required mathematics credits using mathematics substitution, which allows for Foundations classes to count toward their credit requirements. For this reason, Market also offers co-taught Foundations of Math II paired with Math II.

Social Studies. Although there were no co-taught social studies classes during this school year, there were a few World History (9th grade) and Civics and Economics (10th grade) sections where an EC assistant provided additional support to both students and teachers.

By teacher. In addition to determining which classes should be co-taught, schools must also make decisions regarding teachers of inclusive settings. In terms of consultative classes, this is often dependent on students' schedules, although there is some consideration given to which teachers "work well with [students with disabilities]." In terms of deciding on co-teaching pairs, teachers, department chairs, and administration are consulted to see which teachers they would like to work together. The final decision is dependent on, again, how well the teachers work with Market students with disabilities, but also on how well the general education and special education teachers work together. Confirming the sentiment expressed by the principal, the department chair noted that there are several teams that have been together for a few years and work extremely well together, while there are others that have struggled to "make it work." She went on to say that if they (teachers, administrators, department chairs) see that a team isn't working, they "troubleshoot" with that team; that is, they talk with the two parties, offer strategies, and in extreme cases, assist in the classroom. If those methods do not solve the problem, those teachers are not paired together again the following year.

General education teacher training. All teachers at Market High School attended a "brief in-service" put on by the EC department chair that covered reading IEPs and providing accommodations. However, only two of the seven teachers who participated in this study referenced this session, and one of them was rather vague: "probably through the faculty meetings in terms of legal jargon and the standard by-law…you know, 'you have to do this.'" Another teacher spoke highly about a session on learning styles provided the year before by the former special education department chair. The current department chair said that some of the teachers have attended district-level

in-services for new co-teaching pairs, but only one of the participants mentioned a professional development session related to co-teaching. Finally, as noted earlier, two teachers described SIOP in-services as beneficial for this student population, as well.

Participants

As described earlier, each case is made up of a group of general education teachers at a public high school who have taught or are teaching in inclusive classrooms (Table 8, in Chapter 3). All seven teachers at Market High School participated in focus groups and individual interviews. From that group, I selected three representatives of the typical inclusive settings identified by administrators and special education department chairs at both schools: a general education teacher solo-teaching, a general education teacher both solo- and co-teaching, and a teacher with a more diverse, or substantially different, classroom of students with specific needs. In the following section, I present a brief profile of each participant.

Focus group only. The following teachers participated in focus groups and individual interviews only. Each profile was developed using information from those sessions.

Edward K. At the time of this study, Edward was teaching mathematics at Market High School and was in his sixth year of teaching. He described his teacher preparation as lateral entry, naming a state-specific alternative licensing organization. In this state, lateral entry allows individuals to be hired for a teaching position and begin teaching, while working with one of the state's alternative licensing centers to obtain a professional educator's license as they teach. As part of that program, Edward took

courses through a nearby university. He only took one course related to teaching students with disabilities, and he emphasized that he "chose to take it." He described the course as covering "abbreviations and disabilities…mostly the high [incidence] disabilities" and credits his tendency to be very thorough with directions to the course. When asked whether this class prepared him for inclusive classrooms, he stated that it "absolutely" did not. In terms of Edward's professional development experiences, he referred to several in-service sessions related to English language learners as being helpful, in addition to an online co-teaching session. Although he said there were positive things that came out of these sessions, such as learning about tiered instruction and being more patient, Edward suggested that teachers can never be fully prepared for the reality of an inclusive classroom. He explained that he often reaches out to other teachers – usually general education teachers with experience in inclusive classrooms – for help. Edward's definition of inclusion is "taking kids with disabilities and putting them in the classroom with other students that do not have disabilities and mostly incorporating them."

Monica N. Monica, a chemistry teacher at MHS, was in her seventh year of teaching in the 2013-2014 school year. Monica's undergraduate degree was in science, after which she earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction for secondary education before entering the teaching field. As part of the master's program, Monica took two courses related to students with disabilities – one that she described as generic to exceptional children, and one called Science Techniques. She described the latter, a course taken in the semester before student teaching, as "taking all the classes that you [had taken and applying] that to science." While she credited that class with providing her with specific strategies for use in her classes, she also said that the fact her student

teaching took place in a "[Urban City] gang school where it was all gang kids and kids with disabilities" helped prepare her for more diverse classrooms. Monica said that she had attended more professional development related to students with disabilities in her previous state, but that she had attended a webinar here on differentiation. Echoing Edward's statement about how prepared teachers can be, she asserted that both of these things only "got [her] started" in terms of what she needs to know. Monica shared that she also works with a few younger students outside of the classroom, which helps her be more conscious about her work in the classroom. In addition, the fact that she has co-taught and had a good rapport with her co-teacher "gives her more experience than some others." Monica defines inclusion as "having everybody access the general curriculum at the same time in the same room."

Nancy S. Nancy was in her first semester of teaching at the time of this study, as she had started working at Market midway through the school year. She was certified after successfully completing a Master of Arts in Teaching program at a nearby university. Nancy referenced three courses that "could help" her in terms of inclusive classrooms, only one of which was dedicated to students with special needs. The other two "talked about students that come from poor backgrounds." She went on to explain that she couldn't really say how much or if those would actually help because she is so overwhelmed just by being a first year teacher, that she isn't fully aware of what she is doing right and wrong yet. She did say that she feels somewhat prepared by the fact that she has two daughters in high school, and one of them "is ADD so that's…helped [her] understand the frustration that they're going through." Nancy has also not yet engaged in any in-service training related to students with disabilities, since the "majority of

professional development is offered over the summer or in the beginning of the school year and [she hadn't] been a teacher yet during those times." Nancy defines inclusion as "making your classroom setting accessible to all types of learners."

Nicole Y. Nicole, who taught biology at Market during the time in which this study took place, was in her 10th year of teaching when I interviewed her. She was certified by completing a Master of Arts in Teaching program, through which she took one course that had "something to do with children with disabilities" in addition to a field experience with younger children, some of whom had IEPs. In terms of professional development, Nicole had only participated in in-service activities offered through faculty meetings where, she explained, you learn that "you have to do this." Nicole has taught in several co-taught classes and mentioned several times during focus group sessions that she thinks every teacher should have to do this at least once, and early on in their career. In fact, rather than attributing her comfort in inclusive classrooms to her master's program or in-service opportunities, Nicole said, "most of the training [she] got was through teaching inclusion." She defines inclusion as the "least restrictive environment for teaching students with disabilities with a special education teacher."

Focus group plus observation. The following teachers participated in observations and post-observation interviews in addition to focus groups and individual interviews only. Each profile was developed using information from those sessions.

Alicia N. Alicia, a social studies teacher who was teaching world history during the 2013-2014 school year, had been teaching for 19 years at the time of the study, longer than any of the other teachers at Market, and longer than more than half of the teachers at

Key High School. Alicia was certified through a lateral entry process, during which she

had to take several education courses. She described three that helped to prepare her for

inclusive classrooms: one specific to students with disabilities, one on diversity, and one

on reading preparation. The biggest takeaway from these courses, she said, is that she is

"very aware and conscious of who's in my classroom and recognizing the legal

ramifications of following the paperwork and the plans for each student." Alicia credits

her success with these students to the fact that she "had the practice to go [along] with"

her coursework and in-service experiences. Aside from "actually being in the

classroom," Alicia shared that she often calls on her aunt, who has been a special

educator for many years, for advice about serving specific students. She defines

inclusion as "providing equity to a student and making sure that they have the same

opportunity to succeed given similar circumstances but not the same circumstances."

When asked to expand on that, she explained that if teachers give students the "same"

education as everyone else, they aren't helping students succeed; instead, teachers should

provide modifications and accommodations such that students with disabilities are at a

similar starting point as everyone else in the class.

I observed in one of Alicia's World History classes, which included four students

with disabilities. There were a total of 16 students in the class, and Alicia described the

group as a "good group" who sometimes struggled with academic material. It became

clear early on that she had a very good rapport with the students, often laughing and

joking with them while also maintaining her position of authority. The overall

atmosphere in the classroom was one of mutual respect. In our first post-observation

interview, Alicia provided background information about the four students with IEPs,

sharing not only information that could be gathered from reading their files, but referencing specific details that could only come from intimate knowledge of the student within her classroom context. For example, one of her students was also identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Alicia provided multiple examples of ways she planned and individualized instruction for him. For example, she sits him near another student who is LEP and "very smart, but lazy" because that student "stays on top of [the student with the IEP] to make sure he understands and completes assignments.

Evan S. Evan, a chemistry teacher at Market, was in his second year of teaching when he became part of this study. Certified through a state-specific alternative licensure program (not the same as Edward), Evan said there was "very little talking about students with disabilities" in his program. He doesn't feel uncomfortable in inclusive classrooms, however, which he said is related to two things: he has attended multiple professional development sessions specific to students with disabilities, and he teaches summer school every year, which he says is "basically teaching those types of students, getting that exposure, and figuring it out." Evan explained that before coming into teaching, he hadn't really thought much about disabilities, so he really tries to "soak up" as much as he can at in-services, because "when you talk about trying to reach every child, it's really unfair if you don't have the background to help students with disabilities." Despite the fact that Evan teaches primarily honors chemistry classes, he always has a few students with IEPs on his roster, and this has helped shift his perspective from thinking of these students as "low" to thinking in terms of, as he learned in one of his PD sessions, "if you have 27 students in the class, there are 27 different learning styles in there." He defines

inclusion as "incorporating students with disabilities in the classroom, not outwardly defining the person as having a learning disability."

I observed in Evan's second period Honors Chemistry class. Similar to Alicia, Evan engaged in mutually respectful interactions with his students. It was obvious that his students thought extremely highly of him, as evidenced in the ways and types of conversations that occurred not only within the classroom, but also before and after classes, when students sought him out to discuss both class-related topics and other non-school topics such as sporting events, television shows, and types of music. Observing in this specific classroom was unique for several reasons, the most obvious being that Honors courses are not typically thought of as classrooms for students with disabilities. Additionally, this is actually a combined class – two honors chemistry classes were originally placed together because the mobile units weren't ready yet and because the other teacher was a first-year teacher whom administration felt could learn from Evan. Because they spent much of the first semester together, the two teachers decided to stay together and switch off teaching based on a variety of factors (e.g., comfort with unit). Other times, they send small groups who need remediation into a separate area with one of the teachers. It is a very large group of students – 42 total, with three who have IEPs. Evan said that the "sheer number of students makes differentiation difficult, so [he] often plans using the [Universal Design for Learning] assumption that what is good for students with disabilities will be good for all."

Lisa L. Lisa, who was in her 15th year of teaching in 2013-2014, teaches mathematics across multiple inclusive settings: in addition to co-teaching the class, she also solo-teaches to a class made up of students with varying abilities. Lisa received her

teaching certification through a local university that offers post-baccalaureate teacher licensure, and she was required to take a child psychology course in order to prepare for the instruction of students with disabilities. Prior to teaching in this state, Lisa was alternatively certified in another southeastern state; as part of this certification, she took a class titled Exceptional Children. Although she referenced specific things she does as a result of this coursework (e.g., using guided notes and visuals), Lisa commented, like Edward and Monica, that "there's not enough time to prepare a teacher adequately to teach special needs kids because there are so many different special needs and there are so many different levels within each [disability]." In terms of professional development, Lisa spoke highly about a SIOP in-service, stating that she doesn't think there is that much difference between language difficulties, learning difficulties, and processing difficulties. She also credits tutoring younger children with disabilities ranging from "ADHD to Asperger's to Cerebral Palsy" with helping her "really think about what each individual kid needs." Lisa defines inclusion as "where every child that's capable of learning in my classroom is in there. They don't have to be at the same level, they don't have to have the same ability. But if I can reach them and they can do what I need them to do then they should be included."

I observed in two of Lisa's Math II classrooms – one a first period solo-taught class and the other a fourth period co-taught class. There were 29 total students in first period, a class Lisa described as "mixed – half high, half low," including "approximately" five students "with IEPs or 504s, plus a few whose parents have requested special education but been denied." Lisa did not provide specific information or reference any documentation about which students had IEPs and which had 504s. She

stated that they "were mostly extended time and preferential seating." Reiterating comments she made during the focus groups, Lisa said she plans and instructs for these students based on "what [she] can do that won't single them out." For example, she provides all students with a copy of a completed study guide for use on test days instead of giving it to only students with disabilities.

Lisa's co-taught class had 13 total students, four of whom she identified as "either IEPs or 504s, not sure which." She said that she enjoys having the co-teacher in there because "the co-teacher really knows which students are his IEPs and 504s and he knows what works with them so he walks around checking on them – keeping them on task, awake, etc. – so that [she] can pay attention to all students and doesn't have to worry about not being able to give them the attention they need." In terms of planning and delivering instruction, Lisa said that she does the same planning for both the solo- and co-taught classes "since they are all pretty low."

In both classes, Lisa's interactions with her students were mainly limited to instructional or behavioral directions, or explanations for instructional decisions (e.g., "one purpose of this activity is timing for the test – working with a partner should help you speed up, and you need to work on finishing tests in one period"). In general, both classes contained a majority of students who did not do the work, instead talking to nearby students, texting or playing on their phones, or putting their heads down. Lisa inconsistently attempted to address these behaviors, but focused most of her attention on the handful of students who were completing assignments. As Lisa noted, the co-teacher mostly circulated the classroom redirecting individual students, in addition to performing duties such as making additional copies.

Self-ratings. Finally, I asked the teachers at Market High School to rate themselves on both their preparedness and confidence for teaching students with disabilities (Table 11). I decided to collect this information in order to see if and how teachers' self-ratings provided additional insight into their enactment of inclusive practices.

Table 11

MHS Teachers' Self Ratings of Preparedness and Confidence

	On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you have had no preparation and 5 meaning you could be dual certified as a special educator, where would you rank your preparation for teaching students with disabilities?	On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you panic as soon as you see a student with a disability on your class roster and 5 meaning you barely notice because you plan every lesson to meet each student's individual needs, where would you rank your confidence in your ability to teach students with disabilities?
Edward K	3	3
Monica N	4	4
Nancy S	2	2
Nicole Y	3	4
Alicia N	3	3
Evan S	1	2.5
Lisa L	4	5

Key High School

The information presented in this section was compiled and triangulated using information provided by Key High School's (KHS) Exceptional Children's Department Chair, comments made by teachers in focus groups and individual interviews, as well as by other individuals peripherally involved with the study and special education at MHS (e.g., administrators, special education teachers or assistants, and students). It is not

meant to be a comprehensive description of Key High School; rather, as with Market High School, the following narrative provides information related to general education teachers' instruction of students with disabilities in the bounded context of KHS. As I described in Market High School's introduction, Table 13, in the section following the description of Key High School, compares the two schools side by side.

Context

Key High School is one of the newest additions to the district, established in 2006. Situated within one of the newest and fastest-growing communities in the city, KHS has quickly made a name for itself, earning an Honor School of Excellence designation. Descriptive materials for the 2013-2014 school year describe Key as a "student-centered community" with a population of 62% White, 13% African-American, 13% Asian / Pacific Islander, 6% Hispanic, 5% Multiracial, and 1% American Indian students, which is markedly less diverse than Market's population (43% White, 27% African-American, and 24% Hispanic being the largest groups). Out of 160 students who were identified as receiving special education services that year, 125 were educated along the inclusive spectrum (consultative or co-taught classes), while 35 were educated in a self-contained classroom. There were 146 certified staff members at KHS during 2013-2014, including the principal, six administrators, six counselors, and one Career Development Coordinator. More than half of the faculty had advanced degrees and ten or more years teaching experience, and 24 staff members were National Board certified, which is fairly similar to Market's staff.

In my initial meeting with the assistant principal in charge of professional development, she described Key High School as an ideal setting for this study mainly because they have a "very strong EC program but are always looking for ways to improve." In addition, she explained that the environment at Key is extremely welcoming of its students with disabilities, partially because of the specialized academic curriculum (SAC) classes and classes for students with autism, both of which are self-contained. This was echoed by special education assistant teachers, paraprofessionals, and students who talked about the waitlist to join the "Friends Club," an extracurricular club where "regular kids get to hang out with SAC and AU kids." Activities range from on-campus get-togethers to off-campus trips to bowling alleys, parks, etc. Although these students are only educated with the general education population for certain electives, various individuals say that their visibility and involvement in a number of school activities (e.g., school plays) contributes to an overall supportively inclusive environment. At Market High School, on the other hand, there was very little mention of any students on the Occupational Course of Study, and I did not see any groups of students with noticeable disabilities or traveling with teachers during any of my observations.

The EC department chair explained that Key High School is a "very hard academic school" – it is one of the top 10 in state and top 2 in district. In terms of inclusion, this means that students with disabilities are being educated with "students who are skewed toward the high," although there are classes she referred to as "special classes" which are comprised of students with disabilities and other struggling students identified by school counselors. In contrast to the Market principal's concern that "the

ones she wanted getting help" wouldn't participate, the department chair at Key spoke highly of the work that KHS teachers do with special education students, citing the fact that their "biggest growth grad rate" was Exceptional Children. More information follows about the various classes and services provided to students on the inclusive spectrum.

Continuum of services. As Market's department chair explained, students with disabilities can work toward either a Standard or Occupational Course of Study diploma. Key High School offers the same continuum of services as Market: ranging from self-contained (previously described SAC and AU programs) to consultative services, with the least restrictive environment determined by the student's IEP. Approximately 35 students are educated in self-contained classrooms but participate alongside general education peers, with assistance from special education teacher assistants or paraprofessionals, in elective courses such as art and physical education. Due to the high number of self-contained students at Key, and the fact that their presence has such an impact on the inclusive environment of the school, I observed in a physical education (PE) class to learn more about roles and responsibilities related to these students. Additionally, this teacher (Melanie) had been identified by both the assistant principal and the special education department chair as someone who "was really phenomenal" with their "EC population, especially the SAC kids."

Of the approximately 125 students who received inclusive services during the course of this study, 15 of them were consultative, meaning they participated in solo-taught classes, met regularly with their special education case manager, and – to some extent – had developed the ability to self-advocate, compensate for their disability as

needed, and apply study skills. The department chair attributes the low number of students at the consultative level to the fact that "unlike other schools," KHS exits these students from special education. The remaining 110 students were served, as was the case at Market High School, in co-taught classes or in learning labs, or in some cases, in both. In the following sections, I describe how Key High School makes these instructional decisions.

Decisions about inclusive classes. As noted above, schools have to make decisions about not only the specific content areas in which special educators will provide support as co-teachers, but also about which teachers will provide instruction to students who participate in the general education curriculum. In keeping with the description of KHS as a "student-centered community," the department chair emphasized how all of these decisions "begin with the student." She participates in the school's scheduling process, and she is the only one on staff aside from the master scheduler who "has the right to work with scheduling." Rather than scheduling teachers and classes, then trying to fit students with disabilities in, Key starts with what each student who has an IEP needs (e.g., how many students should receive co-taught mathematics in the tenth grade) and creates those classes, then "drops in" the rest of the student population. This system has been so successful that the district's chief academic officer has asked the department chair to run sessions at each of the district high schools teaching and showing them how to "do this and replicate success throughout the system." The following two sections detail how Key High School makes decisions in terms of subject area and teacher of record.

By subject area. Because Key's decisions about which classes should be inclusive are driven by student IEPs, their scheduling is designed around grade level more so than by subject area, although the department chair pointed out that "the emphasis is always on test scores, so our emphasis is on EOC classes": Math I, Biology, and English II. She explained that Marilyn Friend, who is a well-known scholar and leader in the field of co-teaching, has given the district recommendations about how to assign teachers (placing special education teachers with specific content knowledge in those departments), but Key has chosen a different technique. Instead, they do grade level grouping, which is significantly harder to schedule, but allows for students to travel together from one content area to another with the same special education teacher, who then provides Learning Lab instruction to those who need it. By placing the students into groups, she said, they are able to better determine what classes need to provide support. She cited benefits related to re-teaching challenging material and developing study skills specific to actual assignments. Elaborating on the study skills piece, she explained that "the bar for study skills [at KHS] is significantly different than most places in that it is much higher": due to the academic rigor at Key, there is no modification of the curriculum, retesting, or study guides, since none of these are appropriate for college-bound students. The following sections, then, are organized by grade level as opposed to content area, which drove the decision-making at Market High.

Ninth grade. During the 2013-2014 school year, both English and mathematics were offered as co-taught classes, while students who received this level of service were also "clustered together" in world history and earth science. This decision was made so

that the coursework could be addressed in the learning lab. In addition, the department chair stated that this helped students make the "jump from middle school to high school."

Tenth grade. The same type of scheduling was done for tenth graders, although "because 10th grade is the state test year," there are more co-taught classes than in any other grade. In addition to English and mathematics, biology – an EOC course – is also offered as a co-taught class, "the only science we go into." Similar to the ninth grade clustering, students were clustered into Civics and Economics classes so that assignments could be covered during the learning lab.

Eleventh and twelfth grade. In this state, all high school students are required to complete a graduation project that includes a research paper written during their junior year and a portfolio, product, and presentation during their senior year. Although there is some additional support provided (clustering for history in 11th grade and physical science in 12th), this project drives inclusion for these grades. The same special education teacher serves as the co-teacher for both 11th and 12th graders, to help with continuity on the project. As such, the department chair designs students' schedules so that all juniors who need support are in English III first semester, while seniors take English IV second semester. Juniors also receive learning lab instruction every day during English III to ensure that they are working on the research paper throughout the semester. For the 12th graders, the special education teacher also acts as a community college specialist. She organizes administration of the placement exam on campus, and works with the college to come to campus and register students with disabilities before registration opens to the public.

By teacher. In terms of identifying which special education teacher works with which grade, the department chair prefaced her statements by saying that they are "extremely lucky in that most of the special education teachers at [Key] could be department chairs anywhere else." She went on to say that the junior / senior teacher has stayed the same for several years because of her familiarity with the graduation project process and the relationship she has developed with the local community college. For ninth and tenth graders, however, special education teachers "loop" with students as they move from ninth to tenth grade, before rotating back again (Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996).

When it comes to making decisions about which general education teachers to assign to inclusive classes, various other factors come into play, such as how well teachers have worked with "their students" in the past. She gave an example of one mathematics teacher who is consistently selected to teach inclusive classes, saying, "if it doesn't work out for him to have a co-teacher, it won't fall apart. We call it the 'special class' – it's not an inclusion class, it doesn't lead to the next level of math. It is made up of some IEP kids and other kids the counselor has identified." She described a biology teacher who has also worked with them for several years, saying that while the general policy is not to give one teacher more than one co-taught class, this teacher doesn't trust anyone else on the science team, so she sometimes has two. In addition, after the department chair, scheduler, and administrators have decided on teachers for content classes, they then go to the teachers "in the EC department to say, I'd rather have that person than that person." She then acknowledged that occasionally there are "only bad

choices so some compromises are made" but in all cases, decisions are primarily based on "dialogue about what would be best for students."

General education teacher training. The department chair stated that this is "probably [Key's] most significant weakness," although teachers said almost the exact opposite, going as far as to say that they "are lucky" to get so much training at Key, whereas the Market teachers rarely referenced any specific training received through the school. She went on to say that she provides a lot of [professional development] in the beginning of the year, on teacher workdays. The entire staff attends multiple sessions led by different school leaders (e.g., testing coordinator, 504 coordinator, athletic director), and when they rotate to her, she provides training on various special education topics. In the 2013-2014 school year, the training focused on how to work with all types of struggling students within the classroom, not necessarily just students who have IEPs. She described the session as "really out of the box from the canned EC thing" in that she role played three students with various issues (i.e., issues with reading comprehension, with processing speed, and with working memory) in order to help teachers identify strategies and accommodations that would work in their classrooms. Several teachers referenced this specific training not only during their interviews, but also as an example of something that "worked for me in in-service" during focus groups.

Reiterating her assertion that the teachers in the EC department at Key could be department chairs anywhere else, she said that the fact that their department is "really strong" makes them easily accessible to general education teachers. More specifically, it's not as necessary to train teachers who get paired "with us…because they get it onsite. Inclusion teachers are excellent about taking brand new baby teachers and developing

and elevating them." This was echoed in teachers' post-observation and individual interviews – Key teachers consistently described talking with their co-teacher or other special education teachers when they needed help with something. This is rather different from Market, where teachers stated they "don't have access" to special education teachers and only described their co-teachers in terms of them not "[wanting] to know too much about the subject because they [don't] want to give away answers" or "teaching misconceptions" because of a lack of content knowledge. Additionally, Key was about to participate in a grant with a local university that would include teacher training as one of its two main foci.

Participants

All nine teachers at Key High School participated in focus groups and individual interviews. As I had done at Market, I involved an administrator and the department chair in the process of selecting typical cases for observation: a general education teacher solo-teaching, a general education teacher both solo- and co-teaching, and a teacher with a more diverse, or substantially different, classroom of students with specific needs. In the following section, I present a brief profile of each participant.

Focus group only. The following teachers participated in focus groups and individual interviews only. Each profile was developed using information from those sessions.

Anna R. At the time of the study, Anna was the media specialist for Key High School, a position she had held for 16 years (not all at KHS). Prior to serving in this capacity, Anna was a classroom teacher, also for 16 years, none of which overlapped,

giving her 32 years of experience in the school system, far more than any other teacher in the study. Anna graduated from a traditional undergraduate teacher education program, although she was quick to point out that "IF anything, there was probably one class in students with disabilities," but "imagine how long ago it was." She went on to clarify that the understanding of how to educate students with disabilities has changed so much in the last thirty years, especially in regard to whether and how they receive instruction in a general education classroom. Similarly, because she has been out of the classroom for the last sixteen years, Anna said the only professional development she has received related to students with disabilities is what has "been brought out in other sessions she's attended." She said she usually misses out on the in-service sessions offered at Key in the beginning of the year because she has to run media-specific sessions.

Additionally, Anna is a National Board Certified Teacher, and she credits much of what she did in the classroom as a teacher and what she does now in the small groups she leads in her media specialist position (e.g., book club for students in the SAC and AU classes using modified texts) to the National Board process, especially in terms of "paying more attention to students as individuals and taking their learning styles into consideration." Anna said that apart from anything she has gained from coursework or professional development, the fact that she has "a child who is disabled" has provided her with real life experience that she is able to transfer to working with other students. When I asked Anna to define inclusion, she began by saying that "…we all have disabilities…just some are more recognizable than others…and I think it's important for us to make people feel successful wherever they're coming from." She went on to say

that inclusion is "taking students that have a known disability and putting them in with students that supposedly do not have a disability and letting them learn from each other."

Julie R. During the 2013-2014 school year, Julie was a health and physical education teacher in her 20th year of teaching. Prepared through a traditional undergraduate teacher education program, the only coursework about students with disabilities that was required for Julie was what is now known as Adapted Physical Education. Unlike Anna's assertion that her coursework took place so long ago that it was almost irrelevant, Julie said that not much has changed in terms of adapting physical education for this student population. Teaching Health, however, is a different story, as she points out that physical education teachers, "at least when [she] went to school" received very little information about actual classroom instruction. Julie stated that "the little she does do in health" (e.g., proximity control, guided notes), she learned from attending the in-service sessions Key puts on at the beginning of the school year. Julie defines inclusion as "putting students who have IEPs or who may have physical disabilities in regular classrooms."

Karen N. Karen was currently serving in her first year as the assessment coordinator at Key, in what was her 22nd year in the school system. She was prepared through an undergraduate college of education, but like Anna, she emphasized the fact that "back then the only real disability we were dealing with was ADHD and that was just a matter of keeping him focused, letting him stand up behind the chair or jump if he needed to." Karen described herself as the "type of person who, if I don't know, I ask" before explaining that she attends various professional development sessions that focus on students with disabilities, including "so many of [Marilyn Friend's] workshops when

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the inclusion movement started about 11 years ago." She said that most of what she does in her classroom comes from her own research, professional development, and through collaboration with special education teachers. As was the case for many of the other teachers in this study, Karen also attributed her success to "on-the-job training….and learning how to step back, reflect, figure out what didn't work, and think about how to make [the lesson] better." She defines inclusion as "where you have a second teacher in the classroom and if an observer walked in, they should not be able to tell who the Gen Ed teacher is and who the inclusion teacher is….basically it's two teachers working together to implement strategies to meet the needs of all your kids."

Nick R. Nick, a social studies teacher at Key, was in his fourth year of teaching, all four at KHS. He stated that in his teacher education program (undergraduate college of education), there was no coursework related to students with disabilities, nor did he have experience with these students in his student teaching placement in an Advanced Placement classroom. In addition to the sessions offered by Key during teacher workdays, Nick said he has sought out his own professional development, in the form of a book study on differentiation. This particular session helped him to realize that differentiation can be applied to all levels of learners, "even between a gifted learner and a high achieving learner." Nick also speaks often with teachers in the Exceptional Children's department and says that "being friends with [them]" has made it such that he feels comfortable approaching any one of them for help. He defines inclusion as "making sure every student who's in the lesson or the classroom gets the same basic instruction in a variety of different ways and no one is left behind."

Rachel R. Rachel, who was teaching science at Key during the time of this study, has the most varied experience of all of the teachers who participated. In her 23 years of teaching, she taught two years "overseas in a third world country, five along the border, and 16 in urban school districts, including this one." When she was initially certified, it was through a volunteer-based organization that had paired with a large university, which led to the two years overseas. Rachel did not recall any specific preparation in regards to students with disabilities, nor was she able to remember participating in any professional development on the topic. As with the other teachers, she credits most of her knowledge about and preparation for teaching this student population to a combination of experience and collaboration. Specifically, Rachel said that when she first began teaching in the states, she "was faced with a very low motivated population – very urban, very gang, and that is where [she] started to develop skills in chunking and [learning styles] and all that sort of stuff. Then when [she] moved into the disabilities population, just collaborating with inclusion teachers, talking to them and discussing ways to enhance the experience for these kids" became a means for "learning what [she] should be doing." She defines inclusion as "putting the kids in the least restrictive environment…into classes where they can be successful but where they have support."

Renee S. Certified in science and teaching Marine Biology, Renee was in her 15th year of experience at the time of her interview. While she did not remember any coursework specific to students with disabilities, she did say that much of the lesson planning and activities she completed required her "to spin it for higher level kids, lower level kids, and that kind of thing." While Renee also referenced the professional development sessions offered at Key, she too placed more emphasis on the fact that she

had "been doing it a long time" and "had really great experiences with EC teachers and co-teachers." Building on that, she said she had learned more from these two things than she had "in any workshop." Renee defines inclusion as "putting students with disabilities into a normal situation and allowing them to do what they need to do with everybody else but also helping them with whatever their needs may be."

Focus group plus observation. The following teachers participated in observations and post-observation interviews in addition to focus groups and individual interviews only. Each profile was developed using information from those sessions.

Erin R. Erin, who was teaching Chemistry during this study, was in her second year of teaching. Originally a biology major, she decided during her senior year of college that she wanted to teach and went directly into a master's program in education. Although Erin did not take any coursework specific to student with disabilities, she remembered one class that had a heavy focus on differentiation. Additionally, she said that her student teaching placement was with a teacher who was very organized in terms of both lessons and students with disabilities, so Erin was given a spreadsheet early on that detailed exactly what each student needed and a file cabinet full of lessons and materials that she could use, "without having to worry about what [she] was going to teach and how it fit into the curriculum because it was already done for [her]." Similar to the other teachers at Key, Erin described the beginning of the year professional development, attributing her ability to be more empathetic to these sessions. For example, she said the role-playing workshop helped her to stop saying, "Oh great, I have to print these notes for this kid, they're going to sit there and be lazy and take advantage of it" and think instead, "I have to print these notes because it's hard for this student to

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think and write at the same time." Outside of teacher preparation and professional

development, Erin also ascribed her understanding of how to teach students with

disabilities to experience, saying she "learned more in [her] first month of teaching than

[she] did in the whole master's program." Erin defines inclusion as "classes where…you

have a large percentage of IEP students and you are given an EC teacher, assistant

almost…somebody else in there who is just a co-teacher.… So it's more of the teacher

leading and the EC teacher helping around."

I observed in Erin's third period "standard" chemistry section. The class was

made up of 33 students in total, seven of whom had IEPs and one who had a 504 plan.

Using her accommodations spreadsheet as a reference, Erin provided specific information

about each of these students, including how and why they were seated where they were

seated if they had preferential seating as an accommodation. For example, because the

class was so large, many of the students would sit at the lab tables along the side of the

classroom rather than in desks. The desks tended to shift to the right during the course of

the period, making it difficult for her to easily get to students sitting in the lab tables on

that side of the room. She strategically placed several of the students she knew she

would need to check in with regularly at the lab tables on the other side of the room so

that she could get to them easily. Erin emphasized that "the majority of the low kids in

this standard class are not my kids with IEPs so a lot of what I plan is for those kids,

rather than the students with disabilities, although it definitely helps them, too."

Heather T. Heather, who taught Math II in both solo- and co-taught settings

during the 2013-2014 school year, was in her tenth year of teaching. Heather received

her bachelor's degree in mathematics with a minor in secondary education, but, as did the

other teachers who attended college in the late 1980s and early 1990s, said that "when [she] graduated college, it was a different world. Yes, you have the same disabilities – learning disability, hyperactivity – but now you've got more kids in the EC department with more issues." She took one class related to students with disabilities that "went over vocabulary of all the different disabilities and the state and national rules." Heather had not attended any in-service sessions on this topic outside of the ones provided by Key, and attributed most of her knowledge to "learning on the job" and informal conversations with special education teachers. She asserted that neither teacher education nor professional development had fully prepared her for this student population; rather, she was "still learning as [she goes]." Heather defines inclusion as "making sure all the students in [her] classroom understand the concept at the end of the day."

I observed Heather's Math II class in two settings – one where Heather was the teacher of record, and one where she co-taught the class. Heather's relationship with her students was extremely professional – all of her interactions were instruction-based. She had obviously high expectations for her students, regardless of which class it was, and her students worked to meet those expectations. In the solo-taught class, there was still a member of the EC department who sat in the class and took notes "so that if any of the EC students are out they have them (though I do that as well) – during guided practice, if she feels comfortable, she will help them. She also takes them out for separate setting." This class had a total of 28 students, five with IEPs. Heather keeps a detailed accommodations checklist that includes a space for additional notes to write about the student and his or her use of the accommodations (e.g., shortened assignments). She is the only teacher I observed who actually modified student work for students with

disabilities rather than operating under the assumption that all students would benefit from the accommodation. Specifically, she created two sets of class notes – one contained space for completing problems and included blanks throughout for students to fill in as she "gave notes" while the other, for students who had "Copy of Teacher's Notes" as an accommodation received a handout that still had the space for completing problems but had the blanks already filled in.

Heather's co-taught class was much smaller – out of 17 total students, 11 of them had an IEP and 1 had a 504 plan. Heather used the same accommodations spreadsheet in this class, but did assert that the co-teacher is able to tell Heather more about how "her kids" will specifically struggle. As Erin had, Heather offered detailed information about why students were seated as they were. She uses a seating arrangement that places "two high students and two low students" in a group of four, so that when she gives the direction to "work with someone beside, in front of, or behind you, there is a mix of skill level in each group." As with the co-taught class at Market High School, the co-teacher in this class mostly took notes and circulated the classroom, although she provided individual instruction as needed more often than she had to redirect students.

Melanie Y. Melanie, a physical education teacher at Key HS, was in her 12th year of teaching when this study was conducted. Melanie has both a bachelor's and master's degree in physical education, in addition to National Board certification. She said that during her teacher preparation, she took two classes centered on teaching students with disabilities: Adapted PE (she took two versions of this, one in her undergraduate degree and one in her master's), and one that was a "legislative education-type class." Melanie was also required to complete an internship teaching an adapted PE class, which she

attributes much of her present classroom practices to. Making a similar point as other teachers in the study, Melanie suggested that "you can't be prepared [for students with disabilities]," at least not without "hands-on experience." Like Julie, Melanie's preparation and comments revolved around low-incidence disabilities and students with physical disabilities. She referenced the professional development sessions provided by Key, but described her takeaways in terms of how they translated to physical education classes (e.g., repetition and routine). When asked about how she prepares for students with IEPs in her health classes, Melanie again referenced the Key in-service activities, describing specific things she does, such as repeating instructions and communicating regularly with "the EC case manager for those kids." Melanie defines inclusion as "trying to treat them as if they are no different from anybody else."

I observed in two of Melanie's physical education classes – one that included multiple students with severe disabilities, and one that included students with more high-incidence disabilities, such as a specific learning disability. While I observed only minor adjustments for the second class (such as repetition of instruction, as noted in the previous section), observing in Melanie's other class provided a useful glimpse into various ways to modify instruction and include students who are typically segregated from the general education student population. For example, Melanie had described to me ahead of time some of the widely varying levels of ability within the small group, stating that "you can't just assume that all of them are low or at the same level." Indeed, the group of students interacted with the general education students in different ways, including one student who participated in every activity the larger group did, with the help of a "friend."

Melanie explained that she always had students that wanted to be "friends" or peer buddies, to the small group of students; friends would walk, run, and stretch with the group during warm-up activities, and remain with them throughout the lesson. Other times, she paired students based on other factors. For instance, one student had suffered a severe back injury and put on weight, and was extremely self-conscious about his inability to participate in athletic activities he had previously excelled at. Melanie described conversations with the student and his parents about depression that had evolved from this self-consciousness, and made sure that the student was paired with someone in the small group on these days. I watched the student interact with his "friend", a young lady with Down Syndrome who clearly looked up to him and eagerly participated on days that they were paired. Although this classroom and the observation focused on a very different subset of students than I observed in the other five classrooms, it provided useful information about including special education students with the general education population. Additionally, I learned much from the students and paraprofessionals about the inclusive nature of KHS during these observations.

Self-ratings. As at Market High School, teachers at Key were asked to rate themselves on both their preparedness and confidence (Table 12).

Table 12

KHS Teachers' Self Ratings of Preparedness and Confidence

	On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you have had no preparation and 5 meaning you could be dual certified as a special educator, where would you rank your preparation for teaching students with disabilities?	On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you panic as soon as you see a student with a disability on your class roster and 5 meaning you barely notice because you plan every lesson to meet each student's individual needs, where would you rank your confidence in your ability to teach students with disabilities?
Anna R	4	4
Julie R	2.5*	4
Karen N	3	4
Nick R	2	3.5*
Rachel R	2.75*	3.5
Renee S	3	3
Erin R	2	4
Heather T	1	4
Melanie Y	3	5

Note. In some cases*, teachers said they were between two numbers – the number in the table is then an average of those two numbers.

Comparison of the Schools as Bounded Contexts

As described in the two previous sections, Market High School and Key High School are not remarkably different from each other. In Table 13, I present the demographic information provided in the contextual sections for each school, which highlights one key difference between the two schools. Namely, the Hispanic population at Market High School (24%) is markedly higher than at Key (6%), a fact that was underscored in MHS administrator and teacher comments about their student population. Specifically, Market teachers often spoke about students with disabilities and students who are Limited English Proficient in the same group of "lower" or "struggling" students. There did not seem to be any evidence of collaboration with English as a

Second Language (ESL) teachers, nor did I observe the presence of any ESL teachers during any of my site visits.

Table 13

Comparison of MHS and KHS Demographic Information

	Market High School	Key High School
Student Demographics	African-American: 27% American Indian: N/A Asian: 3% Asian / Pacific Islander: N/A Caucasian: 43% Hispanic: 24% Multi-racial: N/A Other: 1%	African-American: 13% American Indian: 1% Asian: N/A Asian / Pacific Islander: 13% Caucasian: 62% Hispanic: 6% Multi-racial: 5% Other: N/A
Faculty	Advanced degrees: 44% Teaching for ten or more years: 42% Number of National Board Certified Teachers: 22	Advanced degrees: 50+% Teaching for ten or more years: 50+% Number of National Board Certified Teachers: 24
Other Info	Demographics of EC students: African-American: 41% Caucasian: 31% Hispanic: 25% Other: 2%	Number of EC Students at each level of service (out of 160): Self-Contained: 35 Co-Taught and/or Learning Lab: 110 Consultative: 15

In addition to the demographic differences, I also looked at the two schools' special education services (as they relate to this study) side by side (Table 14). Specifically, there are more foundations level courses offered at Market High School than at Key. According to the Market EC department chair, five out of the seven co-taught options during the 2013-2014 school year were year-long classes paired with a foundations / introductory level section (Math I, Math II, English I, English II, and biology) as opposed to the standard semester-long class. This is not uncommon at the high school level in this state, but Key's course selection shows the year-long offerings only being applied to two of the three "EOC classes." It is possible this is due to what the

Key EC department chair described as students with disabilities taking classes alongside "students who are skewed toward the high."

Table 14

Comparison of MHS and KHS Special Education Services

Continuum of Service from Most to Least Restrictive	Self-Contained → Learning Lab → Co-Taught → Consultative	
Classes with Support	*Co-Taught:* • Foundations of Math I / Math I • Foundations of Math II / Math II • Foundations of English I (or Literacy) / English I • Foundations of English II / English II • English III • English IV • Greenhouse Biology / Biology *EC Assistant:* • World History • Civics and Economics	*Co-Taught:* • Foundations of Math I / Math I • Foundations of English I / English I • English II • English III • English IV • Biology *EC Assistant:* • Foundations of Math II / Math II *"Clustering":* • World History • Civics and Economics • U.S. History • Earth Science • Physical Science

As described previously, one goal of this study was to ensure general educators' involvement in conversations about inclusion. In this sense, I wanted to present a more comprehensive description of the inclusive context at each school by incorporating the perspective of general education teachers, as well, rather than relying solely on the information provided by administrators and special education department chairs. I was worried, however, that the teachers would only share positive comments because of my special education background or other factors (i.e., not wanting negative comments to be

made known to administrators and/or special educators). In order to encourage honesty, I

emailed all of the teachers with a link to respond to three inclusion-specific questions

anonymously. The only identifying information teachers had to provide, for the purpose

of comparison, was their school's name. A total of 11 teachers (out of 17) completed the

survey: five from Market, and six from Key. I asked the following questions:

1) How do you feel about inclusion?
2) How do you think inclusion works at your school?
3) Do you feel supported as a general education teacher of students with disabilities?

In regard to the first question, teachers at both schools generally spoke positively

about inclusion. One teacher at each school said inclusion is beneficial if it is

implemented "correctly." One teacher at each school said inclusion is a good idea but

difficult to execute. Three teachers (one at Market, two at Key) mentioned the necessity

of support systems: "without a solid framework of support, it can be stressful and even

disastrous"; "inclusion is a positive concept if….provided the support it requires." Two

teachers at Key referenced special education co-teachers, in terms of having "a strong

synergistic relationship" and helping "identify different strategies for reaching all

students." One teacher at each school mentioned barriers:

> Market: The problem I see is with class size - ours are too big for any kind of learner to succeed.

> Key: I do think that if one student is taking all of the teacher's time and the other 30 students are sitting there missing out that maybe that should be revisited.

Finally, two teachers, again one from each school, responded more positively than

any other teachers and did not include any caveats to their responses:

> Market: I think inclusion is a rewarding process for all parties involved. Students with disabilities are not labeled as such and students without can work with students who do to broaden their scope. Furthermore, it really hits home the idea

that all teachers are responsible for the education of all students (not just a select few).

Key: I believe inclusion should be at the top of the food chain. Providing an environment where students can grow socially and academically without feeling insecure in any way should be the #1 goal of all teachers.

In the two previous sections, I presented information about how Market and Key make decisions about which classes should have the support of a co-teacher. For both schools, co-taught classes are established first based on the state's requirement for end-of-course exams. Other classes are scheduled as co-taught based on student needs: exceptional children only at Key, but exceptional children and English language learners at Market. The teachers in this study, however, either did not know or did not mention either end-of-course exams or student needs in their responses to the question about how inclusion works at their schools. Only three teachers (one at Market, two at Key) described the process as occurring as a result of collaboration between administration and the "EC" Coordinator or Department.

Aside from this one comment, the Market teachers' responses seemed to indicate less understanding of their being any system to scheduling. For example, one teacher said, "Students are assigned with no thought to levels of ability - this holds everyone back." Another teacher said that students with disabilities "are free to enroll in any class they choose." Teachers at both schools referenced the "limited number of inclusion teachers" (Key) and "co-teachers [being] too few and far between."

In this same vein, one teacher from each school made statements about teaching inclusive classes without a co-teacher. The Key teacher said that "with classes that do not have a co-teacher there is a lot of collaboration with the EC department and the regular

education teacher" while the Market teacher said, "unless you have a co-teacher at this school, you do not work with special education staff unless you seek them out. They will give you paper work on your students, but it is assumed that if you need help you will seek them out." These responses fit well with the third question I asked teachers in this anonymous survey, about how supported they felt as general education teachers of students with disabilities.

Teachers' responses to this question highlighted a third difference between the two schools. At Key, all six of the teachers said they felt supported, although they also suggested ways that more support could be provided (e.g., "…we could use some easier forms and wording on the forms as well as a simplified version of the accommodations"). At Market, on the other hand, only two of the five teachers said they felt supported. A third teacher said s/he felt "mostly supported," going on to say that s/he knew what to do because of experience, but there is not "nearly enough support at my school for new teachers when it comes to students with exceptionalities." Two of the five teachers said they did not feel supported and went on to explain that receiving copies of 504 plans and IEPs is not support.

Although the two schools are relatively similar to each other in terms of student demographics, faculty credentials, and course offerings in inclusive settings, there are three main differences. First, Market has a much higher population of Hispanic students, including a large group of English Language Learners and SIFE students. Whether it was purposeful or not, the administrators and teachers at Market often spoke of these students and students with disabilities interchangeably and with similar vocabulary (e.g., "lower"). For example, one teacher explained that "[being an] English language learner [is] not a

disability but it is a challenge, so that's why I talk about them together." Second, although the two schools offer very similar co-taught classes, at Key, the classes are mostly semester-long, versus the year-long format employed by many high schools in the state to meet the needs of "average- and below-average achieving students." Finally, the teachers at Key High School feel more supported as general education teachers of students with disabilities than do the teachers at Market, at least according to the participants who completed the online survey.

Initial Analysis

In this section, I report my findings on the three research questions. In Chapter 2, I described the existing professional standards for general education teachers of students with disabilities, including a review of the literature that discusses what these teachers should know, from the vantage point of practicing teachers. This review culminated with a table detailing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (or inclusive practices) for general education teachers of students with disabilities (Table 6). Using Spillane's (1999) model of enactment zones, I conceptualized the following inclusive practices, generated out of this review and verified in focus groups (described in more detail in the findings by research question), as occurring in teachers' zones of enactment:

Instructional Practices: This includes the broad notion of individualizing instruction, using multiple instructional strategies to vary instruction (e.g., differentiation, grouping, chunking), and incorporating multi-modal instruction (e.g., visual, kinesthetic) to address different learning styles.

Professional Practices: In terms of professional practices, the most commonly addressed practice was collaboration, especially as it relates to co-teaching. In addition, there was an emphasis in the literature on accessing and utilizing resources

that address students' strengths and needs, which is included on the state evaluation as being "knowledgeable of effective practices" and providing "research-based, effective practices" by soliciting "assistance from within and outside the school to address those needs" (citation removed for confidentiality), including accessing professional development.

<u>Legislative and Associated Responsibilities</u>: Three topics related to legal responsibilities were equally discussed in the standards, literature, and focus groups: providing accommodations as mandated by students' Individualized Education Program (IEP); knowledge of disability characteristics, especially as it relates to designing instruction: and knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements as they relate to general education teachers.

<u>Dispositions</u>: Finally, dispositions were only minimally addressed in standards literature; however, it was a recurring theme in the practicing teacher literature and confirmed by focus group comments, as well. This list included flexibility (the most commonly referenced), approachability, and respectfulness (including other characteristics such as tolerance and sensitivity).

By conceptualizing these inclusive practices as occurring within teachers' enactment zones, I drew upon data sources, including focus groups, individual interviews, observations, post-observation interviews, and observation-related documents, to answer the three research questions:

1. How do secondary general educators make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities?

2. How do secondary general educators enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students with disabilities as identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations?

3. How do secondary general educators think current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these standards in inclusive classrooms?

Making Sense of Roles and Responsibilities

My first research question asked how secondary education teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities in relation to students with disabilities. As part of this question, I also sought answers about the factors that facilitate or hinder the enactment of these roles and responsibilities, whether these factors or barriers vary by setting, and how the barriers might be overcome. Through this question, I hoped to include and more deeply explore general education teachers' perspectives as they relates to their roles and responsibilities. Specifically, I searched for information about the factors that facilitate and barriers that hinder the enactment of those roles and responsibilities, as well as solutions for overcoming those barriers. The findings provide useful data about ways to overcome barriers and support teachers' instruction of these students. I present those findings here.

Roles and responsibilities. Generally speaking, the teachers in both cases identified the same roles and responsibilities that had been identified in the literature. In some cases, teachers used the exact same language that was in the standards. For example, every focus group (four total) included *differentiation*, *collaboration*, and *IEP* and/or *accommodations* as things they need to know, although they at times highlighted different aspects. The two groups at Market High School used the term *differentiation* on its own and in general terms, such as "classroom differentiation" and "differentiated instruction." Key teachers, however, separated differentiation into various categories (i.e., assessment, assignments, grading, groups, instruction, and lesson plans), while also highlighting the importance of understanding what differentiation actually is.

Similarly, when teachers talked about the importance of *collaboration*, they used a variety of terms, although in almost all instances, the conversation was about co-teaching and working with co-teachers, often describing the problems that go along with co-teaching. This – along with teachers' more positive comments – is detailed in later sections that examine the sub-questions related to factors that facilitate or hinder certain types of knowledge and how they vary by setting. At Market High School, teachers primarily discussed collaboration in terms of relationships and attitudes, or teachers' experiences, while teachers at Key High School emphasized communication. At times, teachers made comments related to actual classroom instruction. Table 15 displays these responses by case and category.

In the review of literature on general education teachers' roles and responsibilities in co-taught classrooms, I found that general education teachers *mostly* provide content instruction while special education teachers *mostly* provide remediation and individual assistance. This finding repeated itself for my two cases. Teachers at both schools insisted that they believed (MHS) or wished (KHS) that co-teachers shared the responsibility for instruction, but – with minimal exception – described their roles as presenters of content and the co-teachers' in terms of accessing students and helping teachers with strategies. In both co-taught classrooms I observed, the special education teachers were not involved with instruction; they took notes and assisted individual students, supporting the claim in the literature that one teach, one assist is the most commonly used model of co-teaching.

Table 15

Teacher Language Around Collaboration, Sorted by Category

	MHS	KHS
Relationships and Attitudes	• Got a good thing going with your co-teacher • Establishing those boundaries and creating that relationship • Build a good relationship with that teacher • If you're co-teaching you guys should be in on it together	• We are in this together • I would rather be seen as two teachers than Miss S and this other teacher in the room doing I don't know what
Experiences	• My co-teacher and I would have conversations • We went through and decided • It was hammered into us that our co-teachers are licensed teachers / colleagues / equals • Checkbox on my evaluation: how we work with the people in charge of students with disabilities • Three comments about one team: best co-teaching group I've seen; you walk into that classroom and you have no idea who is what; they're really a team	• I wish she would feel the class was equally hers • My co-teacher and I never plan together
Communication	• Having a second mind on that it'd be like, why don't I collaborate on this and figure it out	• Communication with case manager • Coordinating with the EC department for assessment • Know someone in the EC department they can go to • Collaboration with the EC department • Start at the beginning of the year and say how much you want to do
Instruction	• Co-teaching implies you are sharing responsibility for instruction • When you have a co-teacher who's truly teaching	• I would rather be seen as two teachers than Miss S and this other teacher in the room doing I don't know what

Even though teachers at both schools made similar comments about the roles of the general educator and special educator in a co-teaching relationship, using Weick's seven characteristics of sensemaking to look within- and across-cases allowed me to identify additional information about how teachers made sense of these roles. For example, the teachers at Key often grounded their responses in retrospection (e.g., "that's the way we do it here is that the content teacher does the teaching, the co-teacher is there to help"). Market teachers' comments, on the other hand, although grounded in retrospection, were also related to plausibility. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) suggested that, "to deal with ambiguity, interdependent people search for meaning, settle for plausibility, and move on" (p. 419). Plausible explanations don't need to be exact or accurate, but they do provide a reasonably possible explanation that allows us to move forward. In this case, the Market teachers offered various suggestions as to why co-teachers were less likely to teach content (e.g., "the co-teacher I had didn't want to know too much about the subject because they didn't want to give away answers").

The third topic addressed by teachers in all four focus groups was the importance of understanding IEPs and providing accommodations for students. Although teachers identified knowing about the IEP and their legal responsibilities as something that was necessary, this was often accompanied by discussion about how they did *not* know much about it. More details about this will be provided in the section on barriers. More often than not, when teachers at both schools talked about Individualized Education Programs – and often in conversations that never mentioned the phrase IEP – they referred only to providing accommodations. The phrases "following the IEP" and "providing students' accommodations" were used synonymously in several instances, suggesting that general

education teachers – at least the teachers in these two cases – consider the provision of accommodations to be their only responsibility related to the IEP.

In fact, Monica, from MHS, noted this in the first focus group, asserting that "[general education teachers] get so hung up on how to accommodate [students with disabilities] that we forget to look at that other part which says what their goal is…I don't feel like all the time we get that information because we just get the IEP at a Glance." In the same vein, teachers at both schools indicated that in terms of the IEP, "they would like to know more about" individual student profiles, either by learning more about disability characteristics as they relate to instructional strategies in a specific content area, or from being given "a sheet in normal language that Billy can do this and he gets real nervous when he does this and he might benefit from this."

In keeping with the categories established by the literature, teachers also stated that general educators should use a number of instructional strategies to vary instruction. Some of the groups were more specific – one Market group identified chunking, relooping prior content, station work, and guided notes – while others left the recommendation at "techniques" (MHS), "instructional strategies" (KHS), and "adapting materials" (KHS). At times, teachers referenced specific strategies when they were discussing accommodations. For example, teachers at both schools mentioned guided notes, and one group at each school discussed the use of grouping strategies.

Teachers generated all the previously described types of knowledge without prompting from the researcher or the literature. In the final focus group sessions, however, teachers were provided with the checklist developed out of the research and used in observations, at which point they then agreed – more so at Key than at Market –

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that a teacher's disposition could determine "whether they would make a good inclusion teacher or not." Additional analysis of the transcripts revealed that while teachers didn't specifically list any dispositions on the charts shown in Figure 10, they made statements throughout the focus group sessions about being "good with the kids" and "building rapport" that highlighted the importance of disposition. Similarly, teachers at both schools stressed the importance of having conversations with students, with Market teachers saying more about discussing accommodations and modification of assignments early in the year, while Key teachers talked about getting to know the students, building rapport, and communicating with the parents. Figure 10 shows the final lists generated by each of the focus groups.
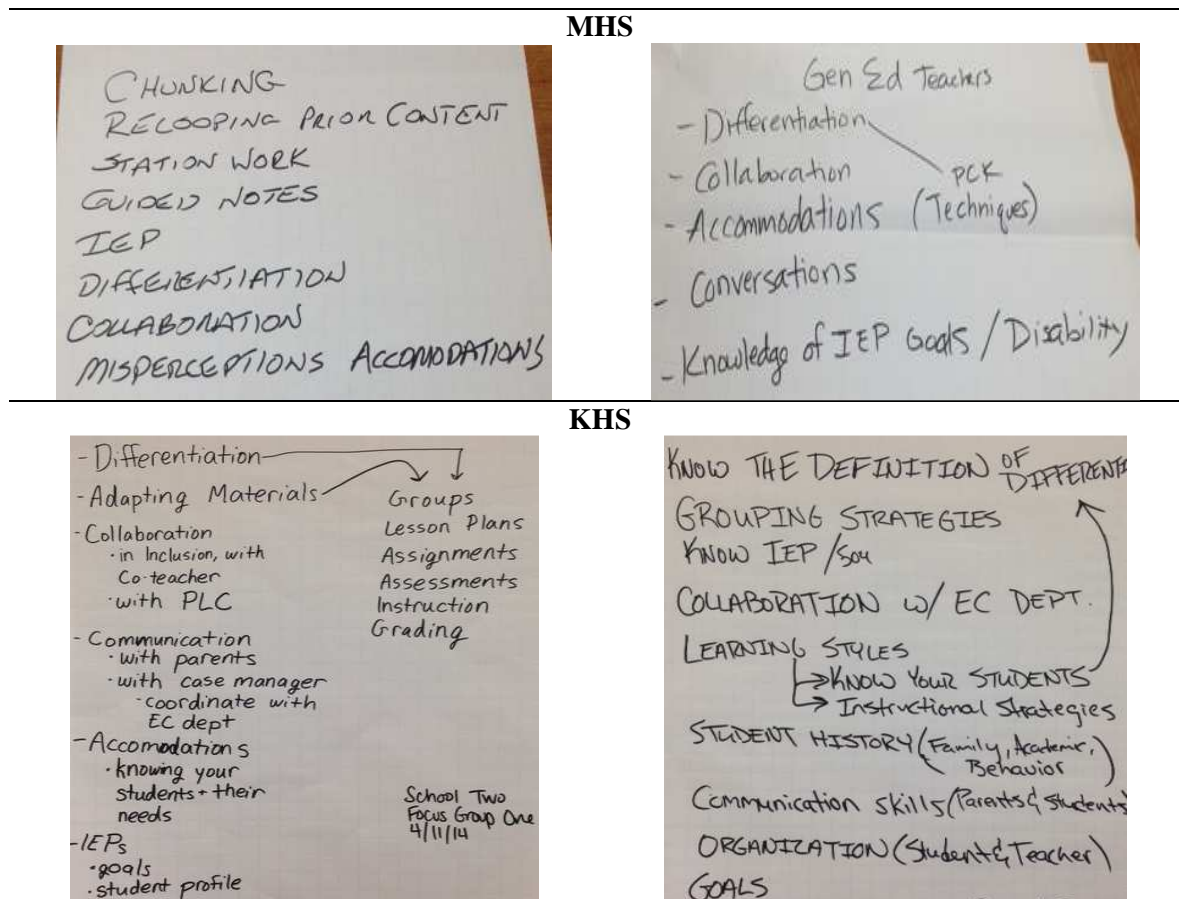
MHS

KHS

Figure 10: Focus Group Lists of What Teachers Should Know

Facilitating factors. By and far, the most commonly mentioned factor that facilitates teachers' instruction of students with disabilities was experience, followed by having access to and speaking with teachers in the exceptional children's department or with a special education background. Additionally, one teacher mentioned the importance of "good mentors and caring principals" to her journey.

As I noted earlier, I originally coded the items under experience as different things (e.g., co-teaching experience). This initial coding helped me to separate the types of experience teachers referenced into three categories: teacher preparation, personal, and on-the-job. Teachers gave examples from teacher preparation far less than the other two, and the examples generally fell under two categories: "exposure" to students with disabilities during student teaching (four teachers: one at MHS, three at KHS) and specific activities from coursework. For example, Renee (KHS) was required to "spin [lesson plans and activities] for higher level and lower level kids" and Monica's Science Techniques course gave her an arsenal of instructional strategies specific to her content area. In terms of student teaching, Erin (KHS) credited her lead teacher for getting her into the habit of using an accommodations spreadsheet. Other teachers simply noted that their student teaching placements included students with disabilities. Teachers also described specific professional development experiences as they had helped in this area: all of the Key teachers at least mentioned the sessions that they were provided during teacher workdays, with teachers saying how "lucky" they were not only in regards to the training but also because of their specific EC department chair. One Key teacher explained how her National Board experience "really pointed out to [her] to pay attention more to students as individuals," which has helped her with all students, but especially

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those with disabilities. Another credited most of her "inclusive knowledge" to the

number of "Dr. Friend's inclusion workshops" she attended.

During individual interviews, a number of teachers provided examples of personal

experiences that contributed to the way they approached and provided instruction to

students with disabilities. For some teachers, this involved a family member – two

teachers, one at Market and one at Key, have children with Attention Deficit /

Hyperactivity Disorder and Down Syndrome, respectively, and one Key teacher has a

brother-in-law with Autism. In other instances, teachers referenced working with students

with disabilities as tutors (MHS and KHS) or summer camp counselors (KHS).

Generally speaking, all of these teachers ascribed a greater sense of empathy and patience

toward this student population to these relationships.

More than anything else, teachers in both cases suggested that "on-the-job

training" has been the number one factor in facilitating their approach toward and

instruction of students with disabilities. Five teachers referenced various benefits of

experience in co-taught, or "inclusion classes":

> I learned a lot about myself and my teaching style having another special educator
> in the classroom. – Nicole, MHS

> It makes you a much stronger teacher. I've gotten much better with classroom
> differentiation strategies because of having taught an inclusion class. – Alicia,
> MHS

> Ten years ago when I started being an inclusion teacher I was a total greenhorn
> but thank goodness I had a very experienced EC teacher. – Karen, KHS

> I think I'm prepared because I've been doing it a long time. And I've had
> inclusion classes. I've had really great experiences with EC teachers and co-
> teachers – I think I learned more from them in the experience than I did with
> workshops and things like that. – Renee, KHS

> When I taught at the elementary level, I had inclusion classes with all kinds of kids in the class – they were not homogeneously grouped. And so I learned a lot at that point to try to find the best way to reach them and help them to have success. So I guess it started back there and then just as I have gotten older and more experienced, I've just built on what I learned in the field. – Lisa, KHS

Other teachers simply attributed their ability to teach students with disabilities to learning "on-the-job" (Heather, KHS), because of the "hands-on" aspect of teaching (Erin, KHS), and as an "evolutionary process through my career" (Rachel, KHS). Teachers' emphasis on previous experiences as something that facilitated their enactment of inclusive practices is representative of several of Weick's characteristics. In particular, they made sense of their roles (identity construction) by looking back (retrospection) at specific examples (extracted cues) to explain why (plausibility) they did certain things in their classrooms (enactment).

In terms of Spillane's (1999) model, I noted that the three types of experience (teacher preparation, personal, and on-the job) did not all necessarily go into the same category. I identified both teacher preparation and on-the job training as *professional*, but felt that teachers' personal experiences were more appropriate under the *personal* category, which Spillane includes at the center of his model "because other influences – public, pupils, professional, private and policy – are mediated in and through teachers' personal resources." This led me to look within- and across-cases, especially for the teachers I observed, to determine if and how personal experiences impacted their enactment. This is presented in more detail in the discussion section of the next chapter.

As alluded to in the previous chapter, I noted a disturbing trend where teachers only used language such as "lower" or "struggling" to describe students with disabilities. Additionally, several teachers referenced "helpful" experiences based in extreme

populations: one teacher described her experiences in a "gang school where it was all gang kids and kids with disabilities" as preparing her for inclusive classrooms (Monica, MHS); another shared that she "started in a monolingual Spanish environment, faced with a low motivated population that was very urban, very gang" and that is where she started to develop the strategies she uses for students with disabilities (Rachel, KHS); finally, one teacher explained that his involvement with summer school, which is "mostly kids who don't care, fail all their classes, or have behavior problems" had shaped how he teaches inclusion (Evan, MHS).

After experience, the other main source of assistance teachers identified was having access to and communicating with other teachers. The most common response involved talking to or collaborating with teachers in the special education department. Others described reaching out to special educators they knew (i.e., a college roommate; an aunt). Two teachers (one at each school) said they had visited other schools to talk with or observe their teachers. As with experience, I coded this facilitating factor as *professional*, as well.

Barriers. I initially assumed that the handout I created for the second focus group session (in Appendix D) and the accompanying discussion would be enough to provide me with answers about the factors teachers see as barriers to enacting the standards. This chart listed all of the inclusive practices as detailed in the literature and focus groups, then asked teachers to respond as to 1) whether or not each item is incorporated into the way they plan for and/or provide instruction, 2) how difficult each is to implement on a scale from easy to hard, and 3) where they had learned how to incorporate each practice. After teachers finished filling out the handout, I planned on

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identifying potential barriers through a discussion based on why certain items were difficult to enact (the second column). For the most part, however, teachers filled out these charts suggesting that they enacted almost all of the standards, at least sometimes. The most commonly identified response for "No, I don't do this" was attending professional development (two of the seven at MHS and four out of nine at KHS). After that, a few teachers marked no for incorporating knowledge of disability characteristics, and one teacher from Market said no about designing instruction for individual learners and collaborating with specialists.

In terms of whether or not items were difficult to implement, only two teachers at Market marked anything "Hard" on the document: Evan said flexibility was hard, and Edward listed instructional strategies and knowledge of disability characteristics (i.e., selecting strategies or designing instruction based on specific information related to a disability) as sometimes / hard to implement. More teachers at Key identified items as hard: three said attending professional development related to SWDs, two said knowledge of special education policies, two said disability characteristics, one said flexibility, one said approachability, and one said collaborating was sometimes easy / sometimes hard – for a total of six teachers. A majority of teachers at both schools said that items were "Sometimes Easy / Hard to Implement;" however, they struggled to say what made them hard. With some probing, I was able to identify some barriers. For example, teachers at both schools said that attending professional development related to students with disabilities is hard because a) they are required to attend in their content area, or b) they only attend sessions put on by their school. As noted earlier, teachers also asserted that they don't feel they have the knowledge to enact certain items under

legislative responsibilities (such as applying knowledge of disability characteristics). Beyond this, however, teachers were unable to formulate reasons why other items were sometimes hard to enact.

In order to learn more about the factors teachers felt hindered their ability to enact these standards, I went back through focus group and interview transcripts and post-observation notes to determine if teachers had discussed barriers within the context of conversations about the standards. I identified seven barriers as a result of this analysis, which I initially classified as either personal or school/district-imposed. Under personal barriers, teachers at both schools described 1) a lack of time, 2) problems with organization (knowing how to and having the time to), 3) fear of stigmatizing students, and 4) issues with teacher preparation (i.e., the amount of time that had passed since teacher education; lack of knowledge). In my secondary coding with the ZoE framework, I identified all four of these as *personal* factors, although I also put problems with organization and teacher preparation as *professional*, and fear of stigmatizing students, as described previously, as *pupil*. In terms of school/district-imposed issues, teachers expressed an issue with 5) not having common planning with co-teachers, 6) class sizes and 7) pressure from accountability as barriers to their enactment of many of the standards. I identified common planning as *professional*, while I determined that class size and pressure from accountability belonged in the *policy* sector. There were no barriers that were unique to either of the cases; on the contrary, teachers at both schools addressed all seven.

For the majority of these barriers, I discuss potential solutions for overcoming them in the next section. For two of them, however, solutions are not immediately

apparent – and are perhaps left to another study: pressures from accountability and concern over "sensitive high school social issues," or stigmatizing students. It is clear that teachers' concern over "making sure students pass the test" is a barrier to individualizing instruction. For example, one teacher said, "differentiating assessment is very difficult because of the expectation for a common assessment. All children take the same test, honors and standard kids take the same final." Additionally, teachers at Key often discussed accountability and students with disabilities in terms of inclusion being "unfair": unfair that they were held to the same standards for these students and unfair that they were judged on test scores "when they had [this number] of inclusion kids" in the classroom.

Similarly, teachers expressed concern with providing accommodations or modifying assignments so as not to single students out or have to explain to other students why some students "have it easier" (e.g., receive extended time, take tests in separate settings). From the perspective of someone who taught in secondary classrooms, I understand this concern; however, I am not sure how to avoid it. Broadly speaking, individual teachers handle this situation according to their own teaching styles. Using Weick's (1995) sensemaking lens highlighted this as a plausibility issue: teachers referenced their concern about singling students out to explain why they didn't always provide accommodations or modifications, especially when the students do not ask for or want the accommodations. As I suggested, this is an issue that probably needs to be examined in its own study, but is important to note as a barrier to teachers' instruction of students with disabilities, especially in the secondary setting.

As part of this first research question, I asked if the barriers differed according to setting (i.e., by school, by inclusive setting – solo-taught versus co-taught, or by academic setting – honors versus standard). Although there was no variation by school, teachers did suggest some ways that the barriers changed in different settings. Specifically, teachers at both schools said that time and organization were more of a barrier in solo-taught classes while concern about stigmatizing students and pressure due to accountability, although not unique to, were greater issues in honors classes.

Suggestions for overcoming barriers. The two barriers that are easiest to overcome are unfortunately also the least likely to change, partially because they are school/district-imposed: not having common planning with co-teachers and class sizes. The difficulty with common planning is that special education teachers are often placed in more than one content area, which is how planning periods are usually assigned. The teachers who expressed a desire to co-plan also posited that they were not sure how the special education teachers would have time to plan with them, "because of everything they have to do." In particular, if IEP meetings are held after school, the special educator loses that time, and if they are held during planning periods, then they lose that time. One solution is to ensure that special education teachers are only assigned to a particular subject, so that they can also have that planning period, but, as I described in the contextual background of each case, schools make decisions about how to assign their teachers based on the school's and students' needs.

The other of these two barriers, class size, is one that has been cited in numerous reports, especially as it relates to student achievement (e.g., Hanushek, 1996; Hoxby, 2000). The teachers in the current study asserted that aside from how class size affects

student achievement, having so many students in a classroom makes it more difficult to individualize instruction for any one student, or even in some cases, to check in on or redirect students without the assistance of a co-teacher. There has been some attempt to accommodate this problem, at least as I observed as part of this study. The two co-taught classes I observed, which typically include a larger population of students with IEPs than a solo-taught inclusive class, had no more than 20 students in each. As far as solo-taught classes, there is no class size limit in the state, where teaching salaries and the education budget are tenuous, causing an increase of teachers leaving the field and shortage of teachers in the classrooms, so it is unlikely that these classes will be reduced.

The other barriers that teachers identified can be categorized as personal barriers: a lack of time, problems with organization (knowing how to and having the time to), and the amount of time that had passed since teacher education / the difference between teacher preparation and actual teaching. With respect to the third, I address recommendations for teacher preparation and in-service training in the findings for my third research question.

In Chapter 3, I described the phases of data analysis, including the creation of analytic memos, and provided an example of one such memo (Figure 8). In that memo, I organized "recommendations" for better teacher preparation into four categories: 1) this is what worked for me in my teacher education program; 2) this is what worked for me in in-service; 3) do / change now; and 4) suggestions for change (straightforward responses to the research question). Further analysis made apparent that teachers' "do / change now" suggestions served as potential solutions for overcoming the remaining personal barriers, as well as many of the barriers brought up during the final focus groups

(attending professional development, knowledge of disability characteristics and special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements). Table 16 pairs these suggestions with the appropriate barriers.

Table 16

Teachers' Suggestions for Overcoming Certain Barriers

Barrier	Do / Change Now Suggestions
Lack of Time	Teachers acknowledge this is a difficult barrier to overcome, but suggest that if other issues were addressed, such as the organizational one, they would be able to regain the time they spend on those types of things.
Organization	Provide teachers with templates (accommodations spreadsheets / forms for when students turn down accommodations / documents to prepare them for IEP meetings – asking specific questions about students use of accommodations, etc.)
Lack of Access / Preparation / Knowledge Regarding Professional Development, Disability Characteristics, and Special Education Policies / Procedures / Legal Requirements	Create school-specific professional development sessions that provide "more than just information about what an IEP is": - Inclusion / Co-Teaching for <u>all</u> teachers, especially new, at the beginning of every year - Content-specific - Provide examples - Connect specific disabilities to instructional strategies - Policy overview (yearly or as necessary to say, "this is what has changed, this is what you're responsible for, this is why we ask you do this")

Note. More about professional development will be included in response to RQ3

Summary. The first research question in this study asked how teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities, including the identification of factors that that facilitated or hindered their enactment as well as suggestions for overcoming barriers. For the most part, teachers identified the same roles

and responsibilities that were documented in the literature review: differentiation, collaboration, instructional strategies, and knowledge about IEPs and disability characteristics. Although they did not explicitly mention dispositions until the second focus group, when the teachers saw the actual list from the literature, there was extensive conversation about the importance of co-teachers getting along, and comments about how well the co-teachers or special education teachers worked with the students.

The two most commonly noted factors facilitating teachers' feelings of preparation for, approach to, and instruction of students with disabilities were prior experience with students and/or other people (e.g., family members) who have disabilities and access to people with special education backgrounds. Teachers identified many more barriers than facilitating factors: 1) a lack of time, 2) problems with organization, 3) fear of stigmatizing students, 4) issues related to teacher preparation, 5) not having common planning with co-teachers, 6) class sizes, and 7) pressure from accountability. Two of these – time and class size – have been established in the literature (Berry, 2011; Buell et al., 1999; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Jenkins & Ornelles, 2009; Kamens et al., 2003; Olson et al., 1997).

An additional barrier reported in the literature was a lack of resources, including sufficient training (Berry, 2011; Buell et al., 1999; Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Cramer et al., 2010). Three of the barriers identified by the teachers in this study – issues with teacher preparation, problems with organization, and no common planning – could be categorized as a lack of resources. In the previous section, I described potential solutions for overcoming many of these barriers, as constructed from teacher responses to the actual question, as well as by examining earlier teacher statements through a

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sensemaking lens and by using Spillane's (1999) Zones of Enactment model to categorize them.

Enactment of Roles and Responsibilities

The second research question is as follows: How do secondary teachers enact the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in standards developed by professional teacher organizations? This question included sub-questions related to whether there were substantive variations and if so, whether there were any identifiable patterns to the variations. I asked this question because my review of the professional standards literature failed to include data collected through observation of teachers' actual practices. Additionally, in the literature related to what teachers think they should know, teachers consistently asserted that they did not feel as though they had been prepared to do the things required of them. It is my intention that this research will provide a starting point for identifying which responsibilities are more difficult or less likely to be enacted, which could then be used to inform teacher education and professional development providers.

While the main sources of data for answering this question were teacher observations and post-observation interviews, including relevant documents, I also looked to teachers' specific references to their classroom practices in focus group and interview transcripts. I made this decision so as not to discount the teachers who were not observed, but any examples cited without accompanying observation data should be interpreted with caution. For example, at least one of the teachers I observed attested in focus groups that she "always" or "often" used multi-modal instruction; however, that was not evidenced during observations. Spillane (1999) noted this phenomenon as well,

finding that some teachers believe they are enacting the initiative when there is little evidence to support that view.

Instructional Practices. Within this category, I looked for examples of teachers a) designing and adapting instruction for individual learners' strengths, needs, and/or learning styles; b) using multiple instructional strategies to vary instruction (e.g., differentiation - of activities, assessments, etc.; grouping; chunking; pacing); and c) incorporating multi-modal instruction (visual, kinesthetic, etc.) and/or assessment that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of products and performances. Of these three, the use of multiple instructional strategies for varying instruction (b, above) is the only one that I observed regularly. The other two items (individualizing instruction and incorporating multi-modal instruction) occurred minimally, and at times were evidenced only by teachers' self-reports of their use.

Using instructional strategies. I observed the use of multiple instructional strategies to vary instruction more than either of the other two practices in this category (i.e., adapting instruction for individual learners and incorporating multi-modal instruction). All six teachers incorporated visuals when appropriate and four (two at Market, two at Key) used some form of guided notes. Two teachers at Key, Erin and Heather, referenced mnemonic devices in their instruction. In three instances (one at Market and two at Key), I observed teachers going out of their way to incorporate vocabulary instruction into their lessons. In another class – Heather's Math II class at Key – I witnessed her grouping strategy (two high, two low, described earlier in this chapter) in action as students successfully solved problems by working together. At Market, Alicia incorporated strategy instruction into her lesson as she taught students

how to take Cornell notes and selected students with experience using the strategy to act as group "teachers" – regardless of whether or not they had a disability. Another teacher at Key who was not observed – Nick, social studies – described in one focus group session the different types of grouping he uses in his classes, depending on student characteristics. For example, he said that, in one of his classes, he noticed that one student with an IEP "thrives on being a leader" so when he split students into groups, he made her the leader of the group and surrounded her with "high flying students" to ensure success in the group.

Despite the fact that every teacher at both Market and Key at least mentioned differentiation, which also appeared on every focus group's list of what general education teachers need to know, I only observed one example of a teacher actually differentiating an assignment by modifying it for students at various levels of ability, although other teachers provided verbal descriptions of how they differentiated assignments. Erin, the chemistry teacher at Key, designs worksheets so that the problems progress from easiest to most difficult. She does this so that students at both the lower and higher levels of ability in the class have an appropriate amount of work to complete. She also said that she purposely selects problems such that the group of students completing only the first part of worksheets is approximately the same size as the group completing the entire thing. Most of the remaining teachers said that they differentiated but did not elaborate any further than that. Two teachers, however, provided specific examples. In her post-observation interview, Alicia described differentiating assessments for students with disabilities by reducing multiple-choice options (MHS). And in a focus group session,

Renee explained that she takes "whatever activity – they all do the same activity but I shorten it or lengthen it to meet the needs of certain classes over others" (KHS).

  Individualizing instruction. I only observed two instances of individualizing instruction in practice. Alicia – the social studies teacher at Market – detailed in her post-observation interview some of the ways that she adapts instruction for individual learners. On one of the days I observed, students created a worksheet with boxes for each letter of the alphabet. Alicia asked the students to fill in three words, events, or ideas related to the WWI Interwar Years – if they could – for each letter. They began the activity working on their own, before being placed in pairs to share their responses, then into groups of four, before individuals went up to the SMART board to fill in answers. In the post-observation interview that day, Alicia explained that if the activity had been for students to complete entirely on their own, which she had required before, she would have had her student who was both LEP and had an IEP fill in one word for each box versus three. She did this, she said, so that the assignment was "more about meeting the objective of identifying key aspects of the WWI Interwar Years and less about spending extra time to translate words to see if they were appropriate."

  The only other teacher I observed adapting instruction for individual students was Melanie, the physical education teacher at Key. Her situation is markedly different than the other teachers, however, with students' more severe disabilities requiring her to adapt their instruction. For instance, at the beginning of the class period, when students were completing their warm-up routine of running and stretching, one young lady was continuously shouting random numbers. Melanie sat down with her and started counting from one to ten several times until the student began counting along with her, and then

"led" the counting for the rest of the class. During the same period of warming up, while the majority of the class was jogging and skipping in lines, Melanie situated this group of students on the center line and instructed the paraprofessionals / assistant teachers and "friends" to lead the students from one side of the gym to the other in whatever way was most comfortable or appropriate for each student.

It is possible that the reason I did not witness many examples of individualized instruction has to do with teachers' beliefs about "sensitive high school social issues," as noted earlier. Teachers at both schools made comments during focus group sessions about how they had to "be careful" not to single students out, and that they usually provided accommodations to all students (e.g., extended time) both to avoid this stigmatism and because "if the accommodation is good for one student…, it may be good for all students." This will be discussed further in the section detailing enactments within the legislative and associated responsibilities category.

Incorporating multi-modal instruction. The use of multi-modal instruction or assessment to allow learners to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of products and performances was neither the most nor least observed of the different types of instructional knowledge. Teachers at both schools described using visuals in their instruction, and generally speaking, I did observe this in all of the classrooms, albeit to varying degrees. Some teachers used visuals (e.g., videos, models, drawings) multiple times during their instruction. Others occasionally drew a figure on the board and called that "using visuals" during their post-observation interviews. There were no significant differences in this enactment: Evan and Alicia, the science and history teachers at Market, respectively, used both videos and pictures in their instruction, while Lisa only

drew pictures one time during each observation as they related to specific word problems. Erin, the science teacher at Key, also used a combination of videos and images, and Heather, the mathematics teacher, not only incorporated multiple figures into her instruction, but she also led students through drawing or creating these figures on their own, which is also an example of tactile instruction. It was more difficult to observe this in Melanie's class, although she often modeled what she wanted students to do, or used other students to do the same, which is, in essence, a visual strategy.

Various teachers – both those who were observed and those who were not – went out of their way to reference the ways they incorporate "kinesthetic" learning into their instruction; however, I saw very few examples of teachers having students move around the classroom or during instruction. Aside from the movement that occurred during Alicia's chart activity, "movement" in the classroom generally involved students moving from their desks into small groups. The only notable exception to this happened on another day, also in Alicia's classroom. At both Market and Key, some third block classes leave in the middle of class for lunch, and then return for the second half after lunch. On one day that Alicia's students returned from lunch and were acting lethargic and disengaged, she had her students stand up and do in-place exercises (e.g., jog in place, shrug shoulders) to "wake them up." During her post-observation interview that day, Alicia explained that she usually tries to plan activities that involve movement for the second half of class for exactly that reason, but that on days she doesn't have kinesthetic activities planned, she tries to get students moving in other ways.

I also observed Evan's students participating in a chemistry lab, and laboratory experiments are often cited as kinesthetic and/or tactile because of the fact that students

are "doing" science. In addition to leading her students through drawing or creating figures during note-taking in her solo- and co-taught Math II classes, Heather had one student flip a coin multiple times when she introduced the concept of probability, but the rest of the class simply sat in their seats and watched the one student flip the coin. In terms of demonstrating learning through alternative products, the only time I witnessed this was with Erin. In her second-to-last post-observation interview, Erin explained that for the final unit of the semester, she was working with another chemistry teacher to "flip the instruction" and have the "students be the teachers." She said that she made this decision because at the end of the school year "it is really hard to get them to pay attention but this information will be on the test." Erin was hopeful that giving the students two days to learn "and figure out how to present" the information would "at least make sure they learn that one part, and hopefully they will get the rest because they are interested in the other students' work." On my last observation in her classroom, I was able to see two student groups' content instruction. Although the presentations were mainly lists of information taken from the textbook, online videos, and occasional posters, all of the students in each group seemed equally engaged in their respective presentations.

Professional practices. In terms of professional practices, I investigated how teachers collaborated with various specialists (e.g., special education teachers, related service specialists, paraprofessionals, and/or families); accessed and utilized resources that address students' strengths and weaknesses; and sought out professional development or other learning opportunities related to students with disabilities. This category was the most difficult to find evidence for during observations. Part of what

complicated the observation is that the three examples overlap with each other quite significantly. Specifically, both collaboration with specialists and professional development opportunities are examples of ways that teachers can access resources.

Accessing resources. The InTASC standards provide the following examples of resources: mentors, special education teachers, support professionals, social service agencies, Internet sites, professional education organizations, and professional journals, books and other documents. Generally speaking, resources include any material teachers can access that supports the practice of teaching and the education of students with disabilities. One example of this happening was with Evan's class at Market. Evan shared in a post-observation interview that another of his classes operates as a "flipped classroom." There is no one model for how this looks, but the general idea of a flipped classroom is that teachers create videos and interactive lessons so that "instruction that used to occur in class is now accessed at home, in advance of class [and] class becomes the place to work through problems, advance concepts, and engage in collaborative learning (Tucker, 2012). Although the class I observed was not flipped, Evan explained how he often encourages *any* student who is struggling to take advantage of the videos. The only other example I observed of teachers accessing resources was Melanie, who said she often goes online to watch videos and find ideas for new ways to adapt her physical education curriculum. Finally, one teacher at each school (Julie, at Key, and Edward, at Market) referenced observing and learning from other teachers.

Professional development. As presented in the beginning of this chapter, teachers at both schools engaged in professional development related to students with disabilities, although for the most part their participation was limited to whatever sessions were

presented at their respective schools. At Market High School, the department chair described the "brief in-service" as specific to reading IEPs and providing accommodations, but only two teachers referenced this session. The other teachers referred to either older sessions or in-service they had received at previous schools. At Key High School, both the department chair and the teachers detailed specific information from the teacher workday sessions, with the department chair calling this their "weakest" area and teachers praising the in-service, saying how "lucky" they were to have received this training. Across the board, however, teachers indicated that attending special education-specific professional development was difficult for them to do, for reasons described under barriers, above.

Collaboration. There were only two instances in which I actually observed teachers enacting any of the items under professional knowledge, and both had to do with collaboration. In one, Heather and her co-teacher met briefly at the conclusion of a co-taught class to discuss one of the students. In the other, Melanie used the time that students were completing their warm-up routine to talk with one of the EC assistant teachers about behavioral problems that one of the students was displaying. During this conversation, they came up with a plan for how to respond if he "acted out" during the physical education block. I did observe Evan collaborating with the chemistry teacher whose class was paired with his, but I did not witness any interaction between either of them and the special education department. All of the teachers I observed provided – at a minimum – verbal descriptions of times and ways they had collaborated with special educators, but only three (Alicia, MHS, and Erin and Heather, KHS) also had physical documentation (i.e., email communications) of this collaboration.

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Although I did not observe that many instances of collaboration, I don't consider that an indication of it not happening. The fact that teachers in both groups identified "collaboration with the EC department" or other people with special education expertise as something that facilitated their enactment of inclusive practices highlights the probability that collaboration does indeed occur more often than what I saw during my time- and location-constrained observations.

Legislative and associated responsibilities. As noted in an earlier chapter, only one of the items in this category is easily observable: providing accommodations as mandated by the Individualized Education Program. In my original explanation, and when I presented them to teachers, I acknowledged that the other two items would most likely be evidenced through conversations with the teachers, though they *could* be demonstrated through other means, as well. Those two items, discussed below, were: knowledge of specific disability characteristics and knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements.

Knowledge of disability characteristics. The physical education classroom, where students with physical and/or severe disabilities are included, is the only one in which I observed the application of knowledge related to disability characteristics. For instance, one day Melanie had a small group of the SAC students and their "friends" rolling tennis balls back and forth to each other. In her post-observation interview, I asked why they were working on that while the rest of the class played football, and she explained that the group of students who was sitting there all needed to work on their fine motor skills, referencing several students' specific disabilities. Although I did not observe this in any other teachers' classrooms or during interviews, one disability-specific theme I did note

was that teachers at both schools mentioned coursework or experiences related to students with autism and described how they "use lots of repetition and routine" because it is good for "those kids." I did, in fact, note that teachers employed these strategies in their classrooms; however, none of these classrooms actually included any students with autism.

Knowledge of special education policies. Aside from teachers providing accommodations, discussed separately, I did not find evidence of any other knowledge about special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements as it related to the planning and implementation of teachers' instruction. Rather, teachers repeatedly said that they had "no idea" about these things and "felt bad" for special education teachers because they were "expected to know it all." I included these assertions as "lack of knowledge" under the barrier of "preparation," and coded them as both *policy* (for content) and *professional* (because the comments were often embedded in conversations about professional resources teachers wished were provided to them).

Providing accommodations. The analysis of transcripts and interviews made evident that, like differentiation, teachers see "accommodations" as one of the main responsibilities for general educators in inclusive classrooms. I observed the provision of accommodations in all six classrooms, to varying extents.

In two of the classrooms, the only accommodation I observed was preferential seating, an accommodation typically assigned at the beginning of the semester and rarely changed unless the student requests it. One of these classes was Evan's honors chemistry class and, aside from extended time, preferential seating was the only accommodation required on his students' IEPs. The other class was Lisa's Math II class – both the solo-

and co-taught sections. There was no evidence to suggest that Lisa was providing students with accommodations during any of the five times I observed her (two co-taught classes, two solo-taught, and one enrichment period). As stated earlier though, in my re-coding of her statements in focus groups and transcripts, more than any other teacher, Lisa asserted that I would not be able to see "differentiation or accommodations because a lot of it is discussed ahead of time with the kid" and that "the accommodations that [they] normally do for a 504 and IEP [they] really have to be put in place for everybody because really 95% of them need it." While this provided some explanation as to why I was not observing the provision of any accommodations, Lisa also never provided any list of her students' accommodations, nor did she clearly discuss those accommodations in any post-observation interviews. For example, during her first post-observation interview, I asked her how she kept track of her students' accommodations. She responded in generalities such as "most are just extended time and preferential seating." Because she did not provide me with more specific information, I was not able to determine if, as in Evan's classroom, I observed little to no provision of accommodations because the students only required unobservable accommodations (e.g., preferential seating).

I did not observe accommodations being provided in Melanie's class, either, as it was a physical education class and, generally speaking, accommodations are academic in nature (e.g., present instructions orally, test in a separate room, provide copy of teacher's notes). However, for the group of students in that class, adaptive physical education WAS their accommodation. As such, technically every activity Melanie provided students constituted an "accommodation."

All three of the other teachers maintained spreadsheets for keeping track of students' accommodations. Each teacher's system of organization was different: Alicia had a binder in which she kept copies of students IEPs along with documentation of various types (assignments, signed papers turning down accommodations, etc.); Erin's was a list of students, their disability, required accommodations, and case manager's name; Heather's was a template she created that had columns for student names, checkboxes for the seven most common accommodations that she sees (for example, extended time), and a space for writing information about students' use of the accommodations or additional modifications she provided (e.g., "shortened assignments"). In each of these classrooms, I witnessed (or marked as enacted based on teachers' descriptions) multiple accommodations being provided. For instance, in Erin's chemistry class, I observed her verbally give and repeat the directions for a quiz, after which she collected one student's quiz fairly quickly. I asked her about this in the post-observation interview, and she explained that he has "Read Aloud" as an accommodation and that he likes to read the problems out loud to himself, which he can't do in class, so he does what little he can in class and comes back either at lunch or at the end of the day to finish when he can read aloud. Alicia and Heather also presented instructions orally (and word problems in the mathematics classes), Erin provided large print worksheets, and Heather offered modified class notes.

Dispositions. In terms of teacher dispositions, I focused mostly on teachers' interactions with their students and colleagues, in addition to considering certain aspects of their instruction, in order to document whether or not teachers were respectful, approachable, and flexible regarding the exceptional children population.

Respectful. Overall, the teachers who participated in this study were respectful of their students, although in some cases the respect did not seem mutual. For example, students in both of Lisa's mathematics classes talked back, at times using profanity. It was evident that the two teachers with the strongest relationships with their students were Alicia and Evan, both teachers at Market High School. Regardless of whether they were lecturing, communicating expectations, enforcing rules, or engaging in out-of-class conversation, they displayed an ease with their students that was unmatched by the other teachers in this study. Aside from teaching at the same school, the only other similarities they had were that they were both certified by alternative licensure programs, and they were both non-white: Alicia self-identified as African American; Evan as multi-racial. In all other categories they differed: Alicia had been teaching 19 years, Evan 2; Evan was teaching honors chemistry classes while Alicia was teaching the lowest section of standard World History offered.

Approachable. Although I did not observe any instances of students approaching teachers about their IEPs or accommodations, I also did not note any circumstances where teachers seemed unapproachable. In fact, the only thing I coded that had anything to do with approachability in a negative manner had to do with "the potential to alienate students." During one of her classes, Lisa was talking to the students about the End of Course exam and told them they "have about two hours to complete the test, which is enough time if you know the material, but there's not really thinking time built in, so people who don't finish within that two hours, it's because they don't know the material." Based on the fact that she had said most of her students had extended time as an accommodation, this comment seemed insensitive. However, the students did not seem

to react, nor did it seem to alter the way they interacted with her, which was already somewhat tenuous.

Flexible. Flexibility proved the easiest to observe, perhaps because it could so clearly be tied to teachers' instructional actions. For example, Evan has an established routine that students enter the room, take a copy of the guided notes, and proceed to their seats. While students are completing their warm-up activity, Evan removes the guided notes, and any students who forgot to pick them up are required to take notes by hand. When Evan noticed that one student with an IEP had not picked up the notes, he discreetly placed a copy on her desk. In Lisa's classes, she allows students to work in pairs, but when she notices that students are stuck "because often two kids who are low like to work together," she encourages pairs to add a third and/or fourth. She does this because she has noticed that "the kids who are having trouble will migrate to other students and form larger groups as they realize they are struggling which helps them to work through problems rather than just sit there." Heather uses a similar strategy, allowing students to work with the people sitting near them when they start to struggle. Finally, when students in Erin's class panicked about a co-occurring assignment due date and unit test, Erin changed the due date so that the students could focus on preparing for the test.

Summary. The first research question asked how teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities in regards to teaching students with disabilities; specifically, what things did they think were essential for general education teachers to know and be able to. The results were largely consistent with what has been suggested and identified in the literature: specific knowledge related to instructional, professional, and legal

practices, as well as certain dispositional traits. In both the literature and this study, however, teachers said they did not feel they had been prepared to enact standards related to these items. With this second question, I investigated whether and how these things are being enacted, including the identification of any substantive variation in the ways they are enacted.

The majority of the examples I identified under instructional practices through both observations and additional coding of transcript data had to do with the use of multiple strategies to vary instruction, and even those were minimal: utilizing guided notes was the most common, with some teachers also employing mnemonic devices, vocabulary instruction, varied grouping structures, and strategy instruction. As I noted previously, the use of multi-modal instruction (e.g., visual, kinesthetic) to address different learning styles was addressed minimally in the literature, but it is a key component of the state evaluation tool and was mentioned extensively during focus groups. Perhaps because those are the two terms used on the state evaluation, teachers used the terms "visual" and "kinesthetic" specifically.

In terms of professional practices, I primarily observed examples of collaboration. The provision of accommodations was the most obvious legal practice of teachers, although it was at times difficult to observe because of teachers' insistence that they provided the most "common" accommodations to all of their students. Finally, in terms of dispositions, all of the teachers demonstrated the three traits most commonly addressed in the literature: flexibility, approachability, and respect (which includes other characteristics such as tolerance and sensitivity) to varying degrees.

My findings did not indicate any substantive variation in the enactment of these standards; in contrast, I observed and coded for the same examples under each category for teachers in both cases. The fact that I identified more instances of these items in practice at Key High School is due to the fact that I observed all three teachers enacting a variety of inclusive practices, while at Market, I only saw evidence for two of the three teachers consistently enacting these practices.

Because this study places emphasis on teachers' constructions of knowledge, I revisited the self-rating data teachers provided in their interviews. When asked to rate themselves in terms of their preparation, Market teachers rated themselves slightly higher, on average, than Key teachers (2.8 versus 2.5). In terms of confidence, teachers at both schools rated themselves higher, but Key teachers' ratings were higher (3.9 to 3.3). When I asked teachers for this rating, I intended to compare it to their observation data and see if I noticed anything significant (if, for example, the teacher who most consistently enacted inclusive practices had also rated themselves highest). However, the opposite turned out to be true. Most teachers scored themselves between two and four for preparation, and between three and four in confidence. The only teacher who rated herself a five, on confidence, was Lisa.

In Lisa's classroom, however, I observed minimal enactment in the use of instructional strategies to vary instruction, no enactment of multi-modal instruction, and no provision of accommodations. Because I had selected a matching teacher at Key (Heather, also teaching standard Math II in both solo- and co-taught classes) who did these three things to some extent, I am relatively certain that the variation was not due to academic or inclusive setting, or content area. I concluded that the lack of enactment,

then, had to do with the teacher more than it did with the school, subject area, academic or inclusive setting.

   Enactment in relation to barriers. Teachers identified seven barriers to enacting standards for educating students with disabilities: 1) a lack of time, 2) problems with organization (knowing how to and having the time to), 3) stigmatizing students, 4) issues related to teacher education (time since graduating and the theory/practice gap), 5) not having common planning with co-teachers, 6) class sizes, and 7) pressure from accountability. In Table 17, I present the standards that were most minimally enacted and attempt to match teachers' assertions of barriers as a potential explanation for why those standards were not observed.

Table 17

Matching Barriers to Minimally Observed Standards

Category	Specific Example	Potential Barriers
Instructional	Differentiating for Individual Learners	Lack of time Stigmatizing students Class sizes Accountability Preparation[a]
Professional	Collaboration[b]	Lack of time No common planning
	Accessing Resources	Lack of time Preparation
Legal	Disability Characteristics	Lack of time Lack of organization Preparation
	Special Education Policies	Lack of time Lack of organization Preparation

[a] Preparation refers not only to years since teacher education and differences between teacher preparation and actual practice, but also to items coded as "lack of knowledge" such as teacher comments about "not knowing" how to do something or where to access the information
[b] Collaboration was marked for all teachers based on verbal or documented evidence (i.e., email) – it is included on this list because even in co-taught classes, it was only minimally observed.

Additionally, scholars suggested there are myriad complexities related to implementation of inclusion at the secondary level. For example, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) suggested that the emphasis on content area knowledge, the need for independent study skills, the faster pacing of instruction, high-stakes testing, high school competency exams, less positive attitudes of teachers, and the inconsistent success of strategies that were effective at the elementary level all pose significant obstacles to inclusion in the high school setting. Other researchers describe high school-specific challenges such as the wider gap between students with and without disabilities (Smith, 1997) or less willingness to make accommodations because of large class sizes (Ellett, 1993). Many of these challenges are related to or included in the list of barriers generated by the teachers in the current study. It is likely that asking the same question to teachers in the elementary or even middle school setting might uncover different barriers to the enactment of inclusive practices.

Preparing Teachers

As detailed in the two previous sections, the first part of my study involved reporting on how general education teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities for educating students with disabilities, in relation to existing professional standards, followed by an investigation into whether and how those roles and responsibilities were enacted in secondary inclusive classrooms. This included gathering information from teachers about factors that facilitated and hindered the enactment of these standards. Building on that aspect of the design, the final research question asked teachers how current and future teachers would best be prepared to enact these standards in inclusive classrooms. Other researchers have made recommendations about the preparation of

general educators; however, these recommendations are often limited to lists of topics or competencies. For example, Grskovic and Trzcinka (2011) narrowed down the Council for Exceptional Children's list of 213 standards to 31 essential standards to "inform core curriculum for the better preparation of secondary content teachers for inclusion" (p. 105). The current study sought not only to identify the things that general education teachers should be prepared for in their teacher education and/or in-service programs, but also draw on teachers' experiences to present recommendations for how those things should be taught. During the second set of focus groups, teachers created lists with suggestions specific to each category (i.e., Instructional, Professional, Legal, Dispositions).   The findings presented in this section were generated out of these focus group documents as well as from reading through focus group and interview transcripts with a sensemaking lens.

Instructional practices. Although there were other suggestions – such as requiring preservice teachers to "pair up with a SWD" during student teaching to learn more about how the IEP matters for specific content areas – there were two main recommendations from teachers about better preparation with respect to the three items in this category. First, teachers suggested incorporating content-specific strategy instruction. In addition, they recommended grounding this content-specific strategy instruction in terms of how to implement the strategies and what they should look like in action.

Teachers explained that one of the main reasons they struggled to incorporate a variety of instructional strategies was that they didn't know which ones were most applicable to their subject area, or they felt they "had only learned strategies that were

helpful for reading." Similarly, teachers at both schools stressed the importance of being given content-specific examples of differentiation. Nancy – a mathematics teacher at Market – said that part of the reason she doesn't understand how to differentiate in her classes is because "differentiation in the academic world [is] not differentiation in the real world." One way teachers suggested solving this problem was to provide preservice and/or in-service teachers with a compilation of content-specific "best practices" or "cheat sheets" that provide examples of differentiation and other instructional strategies to use as a template for creating and modifying their own lesson plans.

Building on this first recommendation, teachers further explained that it "really isn't enough *just* to give" examples of content-specific strategies. They asserted that teacher educators should model the strategies in their own instruction of preservice teachers and incorporate "hands-on practice" into coursework. They struggled to expand on this during the focus group sessions; however, in earlier focus groups and during individual interviews, teachers shared experiences during which this had occurred in their own training. For example, in Renee's master's program, one of her classes required that she "spin" lessons for higher and lower students. In order to show them how to do this, the professor differentiated the actual assignment for preservice teachers who were currently in their own classrooms (had to use their own lesson plan) versus those who were not (the professor provided them with one).

Professional practices. Teachers' recommendations for items under the professional category generally involved suggestions about how to structure professional development. Many of their comments were similar to those described in the previous section: give lots of examples and model how to do certain things. Additionally, three of

the four focus groups emphasized the importance of general education teachers and special education teachers (co-teaching pairs, if possible) attending professional development sessions together, observing "successful partnerships," and planning together. Karen, a Key teacher who graduated "way back when in 1992" said in one focus group session that if she could go back through her teacher education program now, she would ask to do her student teaching in a co-taught classroom. Heather added to this, saying how helpful it would have been to be paired with her roommate, a special education major, to learn then how to work together on developing lesson plans and providing instruction.

Teachers at both schools also recommended requiring "quality" professional development "about the things [they] really *need* to know, instead of just what an IEP is" for all general education teachers, regardless of whether or not they were assigned to be in a co-taught class that year and, especially for all new teachers, at the beginning of the school year. Melanie stressed that it wasn't enough to have "one and done" because of how much everything "seems to change from one year to the next." This point was reiterated in regard to teacher knowledge of special education policy, and will be discussed further in the Legal section. Finally, teachers at Market questioned whether having a person on staff who was a "content / EC specialist" would be beneficial in terms of helping teachers access resources related to their content.

Legislative and associated responsibilities. Despite the fact that teachers requested "more meat, less potatoes" when it comes to the information under this category, they offered minimal suggestions for how to provide that "meat." As alluded to in the Professional section, one group suggested a recurring professional development

session during which general education teachers are provided with a "policy overview" as it relates to their work with students who have disabilities. They also recommended an accompanying "cheat sheet" detailing the relevant policies and requirements for them. The idea of a cheat sheet was recurring: in addition to the one referenced for instructional strategies and this one, teachers also suggested a cheat sheet on accommodations and modifications – explaining the difference between the two and providing examples of each. In a similar vein, the two Key groups stressed how templates for documenting the provision of accommodations and additional notes or requirements would assist them in getting around the barriers of both time and organization.

Two groups – one at each school – made nearly identical suggestions related to how preservice teachers could be prepared for this information. The Market group suggested using case studies or scenario situations in order to introduce and highlight what teachers at Key described as the "specific significance to labels of OHI, LD, etc." especially in terms of what the labels mean "in the context of [their] classrooms" and "how the diagnoses should influence instructional decisions." Lisa (Market) and Nick (Key) both mentioned the importance of student teaching placements to this category, as well. As described earlier, Lisa suggested being paired to work one-on-one with a student who has an IEP, while Nick asserted that student teaching should be yearlong because "you may have a child half a year and then you are gone but as you proceed through the year sometimes the disabilities and the strengths and weaknesses start to show themselves as the curriculum becomes more difficult."

Dispositions. All of the teachers agreed that it is nearly impossible to teach dispositions. Each group made a comment along the lines of dispositions being traits that

you already have or things that "you consciously strive" to change in yourself. Although there were statements to the effect that "some people will never change" and "it's impossible to teach them," the teachers did identify several ways to at least address the necessity of certain traits in inclusive classrooms. In all four groups, the main suggestion was to make discussion about disposition explicit during preservice and in-service activities. One teacher at Key, Karen, posited that "the disposition of the teacher depends a lot on whether they would make a good inclusion teacher or not" in support of the claim that it is "necessary" to talk about these things as "early on" as possible.

Teachers at Market described experiences that they felt "helped [their] attitudes" when it came to students with disabilities: one teacher worked at a school near a large university, and the university's college of education recorded them teaching, then "did a video breakdown of what [they] were doing in the classroom, like about how [their] behaviors were causing other behaviors"; another teacher said during her student teaching, they were observed with the specific focus of how their behavior affected other people in the classroom. One group at Market listed classroom hours within "certain types of settings" as a preservice requirement, a concept that was brought up throughout various individual interviews, as teachers attributed patience and empathy to experiences working with or tutoring students with disabilities in one-on-one settings.

Summary. I categorized teachers' suggestions for how to better prepare general educators (Appendix I) into three broad categories: 1) show me, don't tell me; 2) give me the tools; and 3) let me try. For all four of the topics (instructional and professional practices, legislative and associated responsibilities, and dispositions), teachers asserted that "better preparation" would involve instructors modeling or demonstrating how to do

the things they were teaching (e.g., rather than simply defining and telling teachers to differentiate, showing them what differentiation "looks like"). Expanding on that, teachers also recommended giving general educators tools to get around the barriers of time and organization. They used the term "cheat sheet" often to refer to different items (such as types of instructional strategies or examples of modifications), but for the same purpose. Finally, teachers' recommendations were often grounded in hands-on, practical experience, both in terms of preservice and in-service opportunities. For example, they suggested requiring teacher candidates and practicing teachers to practice selecting and applying specific instructional strategies, such as differentiation of activities or text modification. Others recommended being paired with a special education major in a co-taught student teaching placement so that teachers could begin learning how to collaborate at the preservice level.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first described the special education context and presented brief profiles of the participants for each of the two high schools, Market and Key. I reported my findings on general education teachers' sensemaking and enactment of their roles and responsibilities regarding students with disabilities, including the identification of factors that both facilitated and hindered their enactments. I also documented teachers' suggestions for how to overcome the barriers to and better prepare general educators for this student population.

Teachers identified three of the four categories of standards that had been previously established by the literature: instruction, professionalism, and legal requirements. Although they only included the word "disposition" after being shown the

standards checklist in the second focus group session, teachers often used language that underscored its importance. For example, Nick said it was important for teachers to know their students, and elaborated by explaining that he has "a good rapport with [his] kids and they feel comfortable telling [him], 'Okay, I learn best by doing this.'"

Through a combination of direct questioning and culling through teachers' responses with a sensemaking lens, I identified two facilitating factors and seven barriers that affect teachers' enactment of these roles and responsibilities. In terms of facilitating factors, teachers credited various types of experiences – personal, training-related, and on-the-job – in addition to access to people with special education backgrounds. On the other hand, teachers listed many more barriers: 1) a lack of time, 2) problems with organization (knowing how to and having the time to), 3) fear of stigmatizing students, 4) issues related to teacher preparation (and/or lack of knowledge), 5) not having common planning with co-teachers, 6) class sizes, and 7) pressure from accountability.

In order to identify gaps in teachers' enactment of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities, I observed in six teachers' classrooms and coded focus group and interview transcripts through a sensemaking lens to determine whether and how these standards are being enacted in secondary inclusive settings. There was no significant variation according to type of teacher preparation, years of experience, academic or inclusive setting. In general, I observed and coded for the same examples under each category for teachers in both cases. The most commonly observed items, in order of occurrence, were positive dispositions, the use of multiple instructional strategies, such as mnemonic devices, and the provision of accommodations (e.g., read aloud of directions).

Reported mostly through teachers' assertions that they happen, the next most commonly observed inclusive practices were the use of multi-modal instruction and collaboration with specialists. The four least observed types of knowledge were adapting instruction for individual learners, accessing resources, and knowledge of disability characteristics and special education. Although in some cases, the standards I did not observe were due to potential complications with actually observing them (e.g., knowledge of disability characteristics), data collected during focus group and interviews supports the claim that these are in fact areas in which general educators struggle with. For example, these four minimally observed items came up repeatedly during conversations about barriers, standards that are hard to enact, and recommendations for teacher preparation.

The fact that there did not appear to be any substantive variation in the enactment of teachers' roles and responsibilities is promising in terms of making suggestions for how to better prepare practicing and preservice teachers for this student population. As Grskovic and Trzcinka (2011) posited, a "concise curriculum is needed to prepare secondary general educators to effectively teach students with disabilities in content area classes" (p. 98). The teachers in this study provided three specific ways that teacher training can be adapted in such a way that a total redesign is not required: model multiple content-specific examples; provide teachers with tools to assist in the planning and delivery of instruction, and give teachers opportunities to practice skills related to inclusion and students with disabilities. In the next chapter, I reanalyze how teachers make sense of and enact inclusive practices using Weick's (1995) properties as a guide

for understanding. Based on that reanalysis, I provide more information about the

implications of these recommendations for teacher preparation as well.

CHAPTER 5: MAKING SENSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine how secondary general educators make sense of and enact their roles and responsibilities regarding students with disabilities, in relation to existing professional standards. Using Spillane's (1999) model of enactment zones as a conceptual framework, I also explored factors that hinder or enable teachers' enactment of these inclusive practices. Finally, I gathered information about how current and future teachers could be better prepared for teaching this student population. In this chapter, I first discuss the findings in terms of how teachers made sense of their roles and responsibilities, as well as how various factors affected their enactment, using Spillane's model. I then detail the contribution this study makes to current research and describe the implications for practice, based on teachers' suggestions and the gaps in their enactment of inclusive practices. Finally, I address the limitations and implications for further research, before presenting my overall conclusions.

Discussion

As I introduced in the second chapter, I used Spillane's (1999) Zones of Enactment (ZoE) model, which is grounded in sensemaking, as a conceptual framework for approaching the design and analysis of this study. In the previous chapter, I described my findings according to research question, including some of the ways that those findings fit within Spillane's (1999) model. In addition, I also drew on Weick's (1995) seven characteristics to provide more robust explanations about the ways teachers made sense of and enacted inclusive practices. In this section, I use these two interrelated theories to synthesize the findings for all three research questions.

As a result of my review of the literature, I presented a table detailing specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for general education teachers of students with disabilities (Table 6, referenced throughout this document as "inclusive practices"). For the purposes of this study, I conceptualized these inclusive practices as occurring in teachers' zones of enactment (Spillane, 1999), and I used Spillane's seven-pronged model to examine the factors that hinder or enable teachers' enactment of those practices. The teachers who participated in this study explicitly confirmed three of the four inclusive practices detailed in the literature, meaning that they identified the same categories and examples on their lists of general educator roles and responsibilities. They placed the most emphasis on instructional practices (i.e., individualizing instruction, drawing on a repertoire of strategies to vary instruction, and incorporating multi-modal instruction), followed by professional practices (collaborating with specialists, accessing resources, and attending special education-specific professional development). Teachers also stressed the importance of legislative and associated responsibilities, although they did not express confidence in this area.

Rather than rely only on the lists generated in that first focus group session, I revisited the transcripts to determine what, if anything, was missing. Through this process, I noted that teachers made a number of statements that were grounded in both retrospection and identity construction to underscore the importance of disposition, as well. For example, three of the seven Market teachers and four of the nine Key teachers described how outside experiences (e.g., tutoring, family member with a disability) had made them more empathetic, patient, or sensitive. This addition to the teacher-generated lists then confirmed all four of the primary inclusive practices suggested by the literature.

It is not surprising that teachers confirmed the same inclusive practices as were detailed in the literature. The list that was generated for this study represented a compilation of all the overlapping areas in professional standards, literature related to the standards, and data collected from practicing teachers. As such, the items should have been relatively uncontroversial. As demonstrated in other sections of the literature review, the "problem" is not necessarily with identifying what general education teachers need to know. Rather, it has to do with the fact that despite common agreement about important inclusive practices, despite efforts by teacher education programs to incorporate these topics into curricula, despite a continual increase in the numbers of students with disabilities being served in general education classrooms, general education teachers continue to express feelings of ill-preparedness and inadequacy for teaching these students. The "problem," then, has to do with figuring out how and why certain inclusive practices are easier to enact, or enacted more often, than others. That information can then be used to determine what changes need to be made in terms of teacher preparation.

To approach the topic in this manner, I recalled Weick's (1995) assertion that sensemaking involves the question, "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?" (p. 18). In particular, sensemaking asserts that people act on the basis of the meaning they attribute to situations (Weick, 1995). Therefore, I recoded the transcript and observation data to determine if and how teachers' sensemaking of inclusive practices related to the ways they were or were not enacted (e.g., teachers made sense of special education policies and procedures more narrowly than I did). Additionally, I used Spillane's (1999) framework of enactment zones to better analyze the factors that

facilitated or hindered teachers' enactments. These findings are detailed in the remainder of this section.

Instructional Practices

Three items were included under the category of instructional practices: the broad notion of individualizing instruction, the use of multiple instructional strategies to vary instruction (e.g., differentiation, grouping, chunking), and the incorporation of multi-modal instruction (e.g., visual, kinesthetic) to address different learning styles. Despite teachers' assertions that these were things that all general educators needed to be able to do, the only one I saw consistently enacted in classrooms was the use of multiple strategies for varying instruction, followed by the incorporation of multi-modal instruction (mainly visuals).

Individualizing instruction. Teachers at both schools referenced similar examples in their discussions about individualizing instruction, such as "checking in" with individual students, allowing them to "work at their own pace," or giving the option to work independently or in pairs / small groups. In my further examination of the transcript data, however, I noticed quite a disparity between the responses of the teachers at Market High School versus Key High School.

Even though teachers at both schools talked about addressing the "needs of individual students," the teachers at Market did so in one of two ways. First, they frequently related statements about meeting individual student needs to descriptions about how they provided accommodations for all of their students. Teachers' justification for this was either a) if it's good for one kid, it's good for them all; or b) not

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wanting to single students out or make them feel uncomfortable. Second, the Market teachers often attributed this responsibility to the special education co-teacher. For example, Lisa said, "If I'm in a room with 30 kids and it's just me, you know, I can't stop teaching and go over and sit with Johnny and say, 'okay now, I know you didn't get that last problem' but [the co-teacher] can."

At Key High School, on the other hand, teachers grounded their statements about meeting individual students' needs in language related to knowing the student. At times, this was related to learning styles. Nick, for instance, explained that he has conversations with individual students to find out "how they feel they learn best…[because] they are going to learn more if they feel comfortable and they know that teachers are actually trying for them." Similarly, Julie described how she starts each semester of her health class by having students complete a "learning survey" which she then uses to design instruction around students' learning styles. Teachers also emphasized other aspects of knowing the child, such as knowing their history. Heather suggested that learning about a student's academic and non-academic history (e.g., family, behavioral) can help teachers determine not only how to design instruction, but also how to communicate with specific students.

Revisiting the observation data with teachers' constructions of what it means to individualize instruction only changed the results at Key. In particular, there was evidence to suggest that all three – rather than just one – of the teachers at Key demonstrated "knowledge of the student," at least through the post-observation interviews. For example, Erin's description of how she allows her student to take quizzes and tests at lunch or after school because "he says it makes more sense to him if he can

read the questions out loud to himself" is clearly an example of how her knowledge of this student led to the individualization of his assignment (or quiz, in this case).

Using varied instructional strategies. Having a repertoire of instructional strategies for varying instruction, such as differentiating assignments, varying student grouping, and chunking information, has been identified in the literature as necessary for teachers of students with disabilities. In general, teachers at both schools used all of these terms. They addressed differentiation more than any other topic, but my additional analysis of the transcript revealed that not a single teacher defined or provided an example of differentiation. Looking to the later focus group sessions where teachers made recommendations for teacher preparation, one teacher at Key asserted that teachers needed to know the definition of the term, while teachers at both schools expressed a desire for content-specific examples of differentiation "so [they would] know what it's actually supposed to look like." This may account for the minimal differentiation I saw during observations. The recoding of the data did not account for any other differences in terms of the way teachers made sense of this category, and, despite the fact that I only saw evidence of differentiation in one classroom (Erin's chemistry class at Key), all of the teachers demonstrated evidence of at least one or two, if not more, of these types of instructional strategies.

Incorporating multi-modal instruction. Teachers at both schools used the terms "visual" and "kinesthetic" almost exclusively when discussing multi-modal instruction. This may be due to the fact that the state evaluation tool uses only these two words as examples of multi-modal instruction, which was revealed when one of the Market teachers quoted the state evaluation tool to explain why she incorporates visuals

into her instruction as much as possible. Key High School teachers' conversations about multi-modal instruction overlapped with the discussion about individualizing instruction in terms of designing instruction based on learning styles. As with the use of instructional strategies, this additional analysis did not account for any change in the enactment data.

Professional Practices

There were three items addressed in the literature review in terms of general education teachers' professional practices: collaboration, accessing and utilizing resources that address students' strengths and needs, and relatedly, attending professional development specific to the instruction of students with disabilities. As noted earlier, aside from collaboration, the items in this category are difficult to observe and were mostly documented based on teachers' assertions that they did these things.

Collaboration. At both Market and Key High Schools, teachers identified collaboration with the special education department as not only a necessary skill for general education teachers, but also a factor that facilitated the enactment of other inclusive practices. As detailed in Table 14, most of the language surrounding collaboration was related to co-teaching. Because the two co-taught classrooms I observed were Lisa's and Heather's, I looked more carefully at their statements about collaboration in the recoding of the data.

At Market High School, Lisa contributed very little to the conversation about collaboration other than in her descriptions of co-teaching. In both instances, her

comments seemed to suggest that students with disabilities were the responsibility of the special education co-teacher:

> I think it should be different because that person knows the LD part of the kid as far as what that kid needs very specifically and what way to address that child's needs. I might have a bigger picture and I might know about that LD but not as much detail as that person would. So I think that they should be more responsible for the details and really making sure that everything is ticked for that kid.
>
> I have a co-teacher and I think I still feel just as responsible for them as if he weren't in the room but he IS there and he knows who his kids are and he's able to keep an eye on them and when he sees them struggling he'll go over and sit with them right away.
>
> I coded both of these as a combination of identity construction and plausibility.

In terms of identify construction, both statements provide information about how Lisa perceives her role as a teacher of students with disabilities. In addition, Lisa's emphasis on "[not knowing] as much detail as that person would" and "[knowing] who his kids are" seems to represent the plausibility for her identity construction. Although this does offer explanation as to why Lisa's co-teacher was the only one to consistently approach individual students, it does not change the fact that I did not observe any instances of collaboration. In fact, during the two co-taught classes I observed, the only time I saw the two of them speak to each other at all was when Lisa asked the co-teacher to go make copies of a study guide.

Likewise, the majority of Heather's comments were about co-teaching. Two of these provided insight into her identity construction, as well:

> …that's the way we do it here is that the content teacher does the teaching, the co-teacher is there to help I guess is what I'm saying. It's not like in elementary school where there is maybe a 50/50 sharing of these kids. The way we do it here is we got a learning lab and my kids from second block would then go with my co-teacher and she reinforces and reteaches.

> Both of us are in that classroom helping both the regular ed kids and the ones with IEPs at each stage…and I think for the most part the kids in my classes don't see us any different like they don't see that I only talk to regular ed kids and [she] only talks to EC kids. No, it's much more inclusive and we are helping ALL the kids.

Heather also made statements related to specific ways that she and the co-teacher communicate. In terms of Weick's framework, Heather drew on specific examples (extracted cues) to explain how she and her co-teacher collaborate (enactment):

> When I have my co-teacher in there, she sees things in the lesson and she would even stop me and go 'oh, how about we try doing it this way.'

> I have an EC teacher with me and so if they take the students out and one refuses [the accommodation] and decides to stay with me she knows immediately but then I'll follow it up with an e-mail just so she gets a record of it.

As with the application of this further analysis to Lisa's observation data, this information, while providing additional explanation, does not change anything in terms of what I observed. Unlike Lisa's data, however, this is because I had cited evidence of Heather's collaboration through both direct observation and information gathered during post-observation interviews. For example, Heather and her co-teacher had a number of conversations throughout the co-taught periods to "check in with each other and see how the lesson was going and point the other toward students that seemed to need more assistance."

Accessing resources. In my initial coding and analysis of the observation data, I only identified two examples of teachers accessing resources: Evan's use of his flipped classroom videos, and Melanie's reliance on websites to find new and engaging adaptive PE techniques. However, every teacher indicated on their focus group document that

they accessed resources at least some of the time. At Market, six teachers said they do this all the time and one said some of the time, while at Key, three said they access resources all the time and six only some of the time. Based on the fact that all teachers said they access resources, I recoded the data to determine how they made sense of "resources." I identified a number of statements to support my earlier assertion that the three items listed under professional practices are very much overlapping, in that both professional development and special education teachers are resources that general education teachers can draw on.

As noted in the earlier analysis of collaboration, various teachers pointed to the importance of "having someone in the EC department that they can go to." All three teachers who I observed at Key High School described informal conversations in the hallway or during lunch and/or planning periods "either about certain kids or to get ideas for activities." Two of the three Market teachers similarly stressed the importance of reaching out to people "in the EC department or anyone who can help with EC related stuff."

In the initial coding and analysis, I reported each teacher having provided evidence related to their attendance of professional development focused on students with disabilities. In this round, however, I examined teachers' statements for evidence not only that they attended professional development, but also that they had drawn on it as a resource. For example, Alicia said in a post-observation interview that she is "concerned when people say they haven't been trained. It comes in the form of differentiation and not necessarily for an IEP. So if you're sitting through training about how to structure enrichment period, it all pertains to teaching your EC kids, but no one is saying it is."

This explanation of how professional development of any type can "pertain to teaching your EC kids" demonstrates the plausibility of Alicia's professional development experiences as a resource.

Although I initially referenced evidence for all six teachers, to varying extents, under collaboration and professional development, I had only observed two teachers accessing resources. This recoding demonstrated how, through teachers' plausible explanations of applying information from professional development or reaching out to special educators, all six teachers actually did provide evidence of accessing resources.

Legislative and Associated Responsibilities

Three topics related to legal responsibilities were equally discussed in the standards, literature, and focus groups: providing accommodations as mandated by students' Individualized Education Program (IEP); knowledge of disability characteristics, especially as it relates to designing instruction, and knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements. As with the professional practices category, only one of the items in this area – providing accommodations – is easily observable. Also similar is that despite the fact that I observed almost no evidence of teachers' knowledge of disability characteristics or special education procedures and policies (i.e., only Melanie was observed designing instruction specific to knowledge of disability characteristics), the teachers indicated the opposite on their focus group worksheets. Specifically, all but two teachers, one at each school, said that they incorporated knowledge of disability characteristics into their instruction, and every teacher said that they had at least some knowledge of special education policies and

procedures despite the fact that in all four focus groups, teachers expressed a lack of knowledge about both of these items.

The only additional information that the later analysis provided regarding knowledge of disability characteristics was in terms of specific disabilities. As I mentioned earlier, teachers often referenced skills they had learned either by working with or learning about students with autism (i.e., repetition and routine). In this recoding, however, it became clear that the only disabilities teachers mentioned their students having were specific learning disabilities and attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder. Similarly, in the classes where teachers provided redacted IEPs and on some of the accommodation spreadsheets, these two disabilities seemed to be the most prevalent in general education classrooms. While this does not necessarily provide additional information related to teachers' enactment of inclusive practices, the prevalence of certain disabilities does provide contextual information for the preparation of secondary teachers for inclusive settings.

The reanalysis also showed that teachers made sense of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements almost entirely in relation to the Individualized Education Program (IEP). In addition to the previously mentioned statements about lack of knowledge (e.g., "it doesn't mean anything to me – I'm reading about all kinds of stuff but I mean it's just words"), teachers also talked about:

- The IEP itself

  The only thing you really have to know is what is the goal for that kid? Because sometimes their goal for the class is not the same as every other kid's goal. So here we are in English class and their goal is to be able to write an argumentative something or whatever. You really need to know what their goal is or what their mastery is, this kid is shooting for this percentage or that…

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Because sometimes we get so hung up on how to accommodate them that we forget to look at that other part which says what their goal is. If they're shooting for this or if they're tying develop the skill or this is what we really think that they should be able to do at the end. Then that's something that we need to know too and I don't feel like all the time we get that information because we sometimes get the IEP at a glance or the 504 at a glance.

I normally get the whole packet which tells you specifically a lot more, the classroom teacher will do that. And you normally just get the little tick boxes that shows you the kid accommodation, not their entire plan. But the entire plan has all the goals, the classroom teacher would do this, we're trying to get the student to do this, so on and so forth. There's a lot more information that either you don't get a copy of it or nobody goes to try and (read it).

There are a lot of acronyms on IEPs that are just a foreign language to me…Like LD I get, but I never seem to be able to get down to the nitty-gritty of what it really is you know, what is the OHI other health impaired?

- IEP meetings

I think teachers need to give feedback after you have the student because, for example, if I'm going to an IEP review meeting – well half the time I haven't even had the students yet or I'm going then I can actually say 'well, she's using this, she's not using this, he really struggles here' and then I can actually give input. Or at the end of the year you turn it back in with notes on it. So I know that we're starting to do that at least with our testing accommodations but they're not using them. We're actually journaling what they are and are not doing.

- Training related to the IEP

And we get a lot of that kind of stuff going over the IEPs and going over the 504s – but I think it's more important for the teachers who were going to be teaching the inclusion classes to have straight out professional development at the beginning of the year because I have everybody, classes with all kids. But there are teachers who have specific inclusion who have never even seen an IEP before and they get the 9th grade inclusion class and then there they are.

If you look at the general ed curriculum for general ed teachers in college they really don't have a lot of special ed classes, you may have one on the law, you have to follow the IEP, you have to do this.

> You also need just a whole 'nother course on strategy but also on learning how to read an IEP and 504 as well.

> I also think not to add anything else to teacher work days but at the beginning of the year, during a teacher work day part of your welcome back or whatever you need to take an hour and say okay this is what has been updated in the legislature, this is now what's required.

Once it became clear that teachers generally made sense of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements for general educators primarily in relation to the IEP, the enactment data changed fairly significantly. I went back through each teacher's observation field notes, checklists, and post-observation interview data to find evidence of any kind that demonstrated knowledge of the IEP as it related to students' instruction. Generally speaking, teachers' enactments in this category then more closely aligned to the data regarding the provision of accommodations. For instance, all three of the Key teachers and one of the Market teachers (Alicia), in addition to the documented provision of accommodations, organized and discussed their students' accommodations in terms of their IEPs, by referencing IEP meetings and conversations with both students and case managers.

Dispositions

Teachers' dispositions, more than any other category, were the easiest to observe. In general, every teacher demonstrated the three characteristics most commonly addressed in the literature: flexibility (the most commonly referenced), approachability, and respectfulness (which includes other characteristics such as tolerance and sensitivity). As noted previously, teachers made statements grounded in retrospection and identify construction throughout the focus group sessions about being "good with the kids" and

"building rapport" that underscored the importance of disposition when it comes to the instruction of students with disabilities. No additional information resulted from the further analysis.

Summary

Using Weick's (1995) list of sensemaking properties provided explanation as to why several items were not observed during the collection and initial analysis of enactment data. For example, after determining that teachers made sense of "resources" as both accessing people with special education knowledge and application of learning from professional development, the number of teachers demonstrating evidence to this effect went from two to all six. Although the change was not as significant in every category, there were changes throughout to support sensemaking theory's claim that people act on the basis of the meaning that they attribute to situations (Weick, 1995). Appendix H includes the original matrix used to organize the observation data as well as the modified matrix based on this recoding.

Applying Spillane's (1999) Framework

Spillane (1999) found that the following organizations, associations and individuals contribute to teachers' zones of enactment: the *policy sector* (federal, state and local government policies); the *professional sector* (formal associations and informal contacts among educators); the influence that *pupils'* response to schooling has on teachers; the *public* (in terms of parent and community concerns); and the *private sector* (textbook and curriculum publishers). Additionally, Spillane suggested that these factors were mediated in and through the sixth P – teachers' *personal resources* for learning about practice. I conceptualized the inclusive practices described in both professional

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standards and the literature, and confirmed by the teachers in this study, as occurring within enactment zones. In this section, I discuss teachers' constructions of both facilitating factors and perceived barriers to enacting those practices according to the Zones of Enactment model, including a modified version of Spillane's (1999) model as it relates to these findings.

Facilitating Factors

Teachers identified two main factors that facilitate their enactment of inclusive practices: experience and access to people with special education knowledge. In terms of experience, teachers referenced three different types:

- specific aspects of their teacher preparation, such as coursework in a college of education or type of professional development
- on-the-job, as in lessons learned as a practicing teacher
- personal, either from a family member with a disability or by working with student(s) with disabilities in out-of-school settings (e.g., tutoring)

Although all three of these things could technically be categorized as teachers' *personal* resources, I labeled only the third – personal, out-of-school experiences – as such. Teachers' descriptions of these experiences were grounded in identity construction and differed from the other two in that teachers primarily shared this information as a way to explain that they "understood" or "were sensitive" to students' needs. This suggests that every aspect of their instruction of students with disabilities, including things they had learned from other experiences, would be mediated through the fact that they had this personal experience.

I categorized both teacher preparation and on-the-job experiences as fitting within the *professional* category. Spillane (1998) describes the *professional* sector as both formal and informal means for "teachers to develop their knowledge and skills about reforming their instruction" (p. 33). Given that the experiences teachers described were connected to learning, or "[developing] their knowledge and skills," it is appropriate to place these learning experiences within this category.

Similarly, I determined that the other factor teachers identified as facilitating the enactment of inclusive practices, access to people with special education knowledge, was also an example of how the *professional* sector can influence teachers' enactment zones. This aligns with Spillane's (1999) finding that an important characteristic of teachers' enactment zones is that they extend "beyond their individual classrooms to include fellow teachers and local and external 'experts' on the reforms" (p. 171-172).

To summarize, teachers identified two elements that facilitate their enactment of inclusive practices and which can be categorized under two separate dimensions according to Spillane's framework. Personal, out-of-school experience with someone who has a disability contributes to teachers' *personal* resources, while teacher education (preservice and in-service), on-the-job training, and access to people with special education knowledge are all examples of *professional* factors.

Barriers

Teachers at both schools identified a number of barriers that hindered their will and capacity to enact certain inclusive practices (Spillane, 1999). In particular, they said that a lack of time, problems with organization, fear of stigmatizing students, issues

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related to teacher education, no common planning with co-teachers, class sizes, and pressure from accountability all affected the way they plan for and instruct students with disabilities.

Several of these barriers fit into more than one category. For example, I placed organizational issues in three categories: *personal*, *professional*, and *policy*. I made this decision because of the conversations during which this barrier was introduced. At times, teachers said they did not have time or patience to create templates for organizing information related to students with disabilities (e.g., accommodations spreadsheets), making this a *personal* issue. However, they also indicated that the provision of organizational tools during in-service training sessions (*professional*) and in relation to all of the legal requirements they were expected to know and follow (*policy*) would be helpful in overcoming this barrier.

In addition to problems with organization, I also included lack of time, fear of stigmatizing students, and issues related to teacher education (because of teachers' emphasis on how long it had been since they had been in a teacher education program) as specific to teachers' *personal* resources. As with organization, two of these – fear of stigmatizing students and issues related to teacher education – were categorized elsewhere, in *pupil* and *professional*, respectively. Finally, I identified common planning and class size as barriers related to the *professional* sector, but also included class size, in addition to pressure from accountability, under *policy*. I placed class size in this category because there is no restriction on class size in this state. In addition, state policy-influenced teacher shortages have impacted class size as well. Pressure from

accountability falls under *policy*, because of the various state and national policies that have mandated state testing, student growth, and the like (e.g., No Child Left Behind).

Summary. The factors that teachers identified as either facilitating or hindering their enactment of specific inclusive practices can be categorized under four of the six areas that Spillane (1999) suggested: *personal*, *professional*, *policy*, and *pupil* (Figure 11). Although none of the teachers in this study identified anything related to the public sector, I would argue that parents (and more specifically, parents who are strong advocates for their children) can definitely be a factor that facilitates the enactment of inclusive practices, especially as that enactment relates to their child's specific needs.
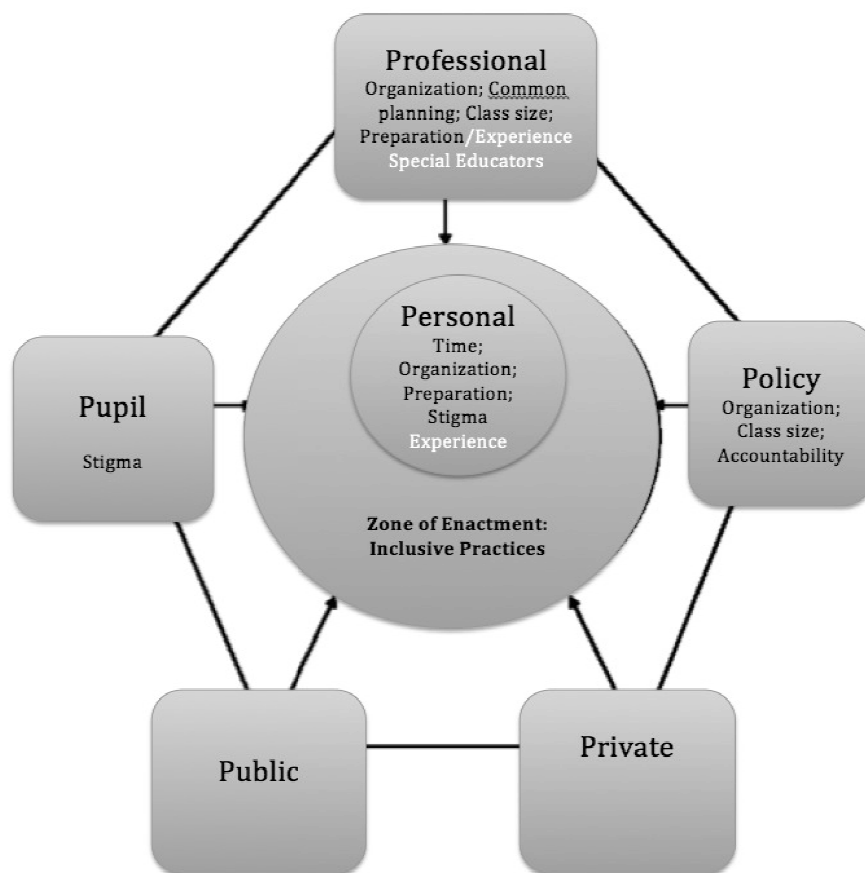
Figure 11: Factors Affecting the Enactment of Inclusive Practices (white text indicates a factor that facilitates, while black text represents teachers' perceived barriers)

I also went through all of the focus group transcripts and coded teacher's statements (in addition to and including comments about facilitators or barriers) with Spillane's (1999) P's to provide a clearer image of how the various factors interact within and across the cases. Not every statement was placed into a category; I coded only those statements that

- clearly fit into at least one of the categories (e.g., "with my standard kids I got to try to keep it as simple as possible or they are just going to blank out and stare off into space" goes under *pupil*); and

- were not a direct repeat or agreement with something said before it (e.g., "yeah, like knowing what LD means").

Table 18 details how often each group of teachers made statements that fit into the six categories.

Table 18

Focus Group Comments According to the 6 P's

	MHS	KHS
Personal	10	9
Professional	15	27
Policy	22	14
Public	0	3
Private	2	1
Pupil	20	25

As shown in the table, the two schools are relatively similar with the exception of two categories: *professional* and *policy*. Additionally, Market teachers seem to place the most emphasis on *policy* (with most comments related to accountability), then the *pupil*, followed by the *professional* sector. Key teachers on the other hand, place the most emphasis on factors out of the *professional* sector, then, as did the teachers at Market, the

pupil, followed by *policy*. Learning more about how these differences manifest themselves, including the effect there is at each school site, would likely involve more directed questioning (i.e., specific to the six categories) of a larger number of teachers at each school. However, in an attempt to take steps toward understanding how the six categories relate to teachers' enactments, I also looked at the specific statements made by the six teachers I observed (Table 19). These numbers are drawn from statements made in focus groups, as well as individual and post-observation interviews.

Table 19

Observed Teacher Comments According to the 6 P's

	MHS			KHS		
	AN	*ES*	*LL*	*ER*	*HT*	*MY*
Personal	5	1	2	5	1	1
Professional	4	8	3	4	9	11
Policy	7	6	2	3	6	5
Public	0	0	0	2	0	0
Private	1	1	0	0	0	0
Pupil	7	10	6	5	8	7

This is not a quantitative or mixed methods study, so this information is not meant to represent anything of statistical significance; rather, it is only meant to summarize the types of comments teachers made regarding the factors that affect their zones of enactment. As such, I wanted to look beyond the *number* of statements for additional information about how the ranking of each category differed within- and across-cases (Table 20). I ordered teachers' rankings based on the number of statements made in each category, as indicated in Table 19. I then determined the average ranking for the observed teachers at each school.

Table 20

Observed Teachers' Ranking of the 6 P's

	MHS				KHS			
	AN	*ES*	*LL*	*avg*	*ER*	*HT*	*MY*	*avg*
Personal	3	4	3	4	2	4	4	3
Professional	4	2	2	3	3	1	1	1
Policy	1	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
Public	6	6	5	6	5	5	5	5
Private	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	6
Pupil	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1

At Market, the observed teachers placed the most emphasis on the *pupil*, with statements related to the *policy*, then *professional* sectors following. Key teachers, on the other hand, placed equal emphasis on the *pupil* and on *professional* factors, followed by equal emphasis on *personal* resources and *policy* sectors. This finding supports the earlier assertion that Key High School has a more supportive, collaborative environment than Market. In his study, Spillane (1999) concluded that the enactment zones of teachers whose instruction had not changed alongside mathematics reforms were "chiefly private and individual, affording them few opportunities, absent some threshold of capacity, to engage in ongoing inquiry about the ideas represented by key reform themes, and what these ideas might entail for their day-to-day practice" (p. 168). This table indicates that Market teachers' enactment zones seem to be more "private and individual" than the Key teachers; however, the enactment data suggests that this doesn't make as much difference as Spillane noted, at least in terms of the enactment of inclusive practices.

Rather than assume these private enactment zones were representative of all Market teachers, I compared the observed teachers' rankings to those of the whole group

(Table 21). In particular, I hypothesized that the observed teachers would place more emphasis on the *pupil* because I included post-observation interview data, during which teachers often spoke of individual students. This only proved true at Market High; however, the whole group placed more emphasis on *policy* and less on *pupil*. At Key, the *pupil* ranking stayed the same for the two groups, but the group of all teachers placed slightly more emphasis on the *professional* sector.

Table 21

Average Rankings for Observed Teachers versus All Teachers in the Case

	MHS		KHS	
	Observed T's	All T's	Observed T's	All T's
Personal	3	4	3	4
Professional	3	3	2	1
Policy	2	1	3	3
Public	6	6	5	5
Private	5	5	5	6
Pupil	1	2	2	2

Contributions to the Field

Early on in my dissertation process, several people – well-respected scholars in the field of teacher education – expressed concern with the topic, because, from their perspective, we (meaning colleges of education) have already taken steps to address this problem. The issue is not with establishing what it is that general education teachers need to know, as prior research has done this by examining a) suggestions and/or advice for new general education teachers; b) beliefs about inclusion and in-service needs; c) skills related to inclusion and collaboration; d) teacher competencies for inclusive settings; e) essential standards for effectively teaching students with mild disabilities in included

settings; f) knowledge and skills to teach students with disabilities; g) necessary information for more effectively teaching students with special needs; and h) attitudes and attributes of effective inclusionists. Nor is the problem necessarily with passing along this information to colleges of education, as the development of both legislation and professional standards for general educators in relation to students with disabilities has led to changes in the way teachers are prepared in both the preservice and in-service settings. The problem is that despite these things, general education teachers still don't feel as though they have the capacity to teach students with disabilities, especially at the secondary level. The literature related to general education teacher knowledge, however, is mostly atheoretical, relying on description rather than explanation (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Furthermore, there has been no research conducted to date with the goal of learning exactly what it is they struggle with doing, and why.

In order to address this problem, I designed the study using sensemaking (Weick, 1995), and Spillane's (1999) model of enactment zones specifically, as a framework to provided deeper, more robust explanations of teachers' conceptions of the responsibilities for students with disabilities, as detailed earlier in this chapter. Broadly speaking, sensemaking theory served as a useful lens for identifying whether or not general education teachers' notions about what it means to be an inclusive educator is consistent with the ideas put forth in the literature. Although teachers made sense of these roles and responsibilities fairly similar to what was described in the literature review, there were some ways that teachers' conceptions were markedly different. In general, these differences seemed reflective of "the real world" as opposed to "the academic world" as Nancy described it. For example, although it perhaps makes sense to say that general

educators should know and understand special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements, it is more feasible for them to know only those aspects that apply to them. In most cases, "special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements" primarily means "the IEP", at least in terms of general education teachers. All of the teachers stated that most of the training they had received (preservice and in-service) was about what an IEP is, but their statements about the IEP process during our sessions indicated that they struggled to understand its relevance and design instruction related to goals or specific disabilities. This example, along with the other changes noted earlier in this chapter, suggests that when it comes to inclusive practices, teachers make sense in terms of what is relevant and applicable to actual classroom practice.

Additionally, applying Spillane's (1999) ZoE model to the data provided insight into determining what types of factors hinder or enable teachers' enactment of inclusive practices. Specifically, the facilitating factors and potential barriers that the teachers in this study identified were categorized under four of the six P's introduced in Spillane's model: *personal, professional, pupil,* and *policy.* Teachers' statements during focus groups, individual interviews, and post-observation conversations primarily fit into these four categories. While this study does not indicate that only those four factors impact teachers' enactment of inclusive practices, more directed questioning and the participation of special educators would likely be required to learn more about how the six categories manifest themselves at each school and factor into teachers' enactments.

Finally, scholars in this area have indicated a need for research that more closely examines secondary inclusive settings, details the types of training that would be most beneficial for general educators, and involves general education teachers in the

conversation about inclusion. This study was designed to address all three of these recommendations, in addition the previously described gaps. The findings, therefore, lead to important implications for practice and research in terms of how to make sense of teachers' enactment – or lack thereof – of inclusive practices, at both the preservice and in-service levels.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study have useful implications for the preservice and in-service preparation of general education teachers of students with disabilities. These recommendations are particularly relevant to colleges of education and providers of professional development, as well as to individual schools. Teachers at both schools made a number of suggestions for how to better prepare current and future teachers for this specific student population. Specifically, the teachers in this study developed these recommendations by discussing their roles (identity construction) as a group (social) in relation to specific experiences (extracted cues) they had had (retrospection) to explain how (plausibility) those experiences had helped them thus far (ongoing) and would potentially better prepare future teachers for inclusive classrooms (enactment).

Additionally, in terms of teachers' enactment of the inclusive practices detailed in this study, there did not appear to be any substantive variation by school, academic level, subject area, or inclusive setting. This finding is promising with respect to the preparation of practicing and preservice teachers. It suggests that rather than a complete redesign, colleges of education and providers of professional development can instead look to incorporate these suggestions into their existing programs (Figure 12).
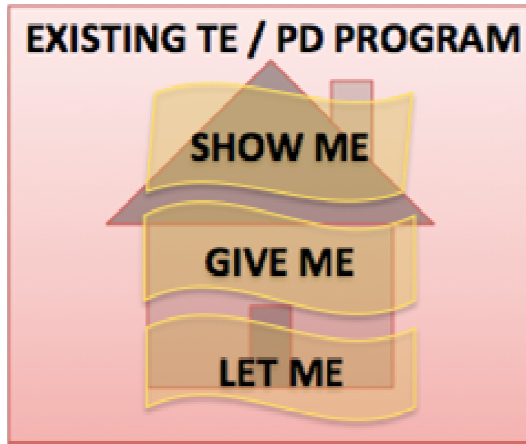
Figure 12: Applying Recommendations

In the remainder of this section, I shift the sensemaking lens away from the teachers and toward myself, drawing on my background as 1) a researcher of teacher education and professional development, and 2) an instructor of secondary general educators in a college of education. In this regard, I remain true to the representation of the teachers' suggestions while also contributing to a larger conversation about what teacher education and professional development could look like as a result of these findings.

Show Me

A majority of teachers' recommendations had to do with being <u>shown</u> how to enact inclusive practices. For example, in terms of the items categorized under instructional practices, teachers expressed frustration with a) being given generic strategies without an understanding of how to use them in a given content area, and b) learning about strategies solely from textbooks and/or lectures with minimal, if any, demonstration of strategy use. Additionally, some teachers expressed frustration and disbelief that this recommendation could be achieved because "so many professors have

never taught in inclusive classrooms and don't know what it's like." One way to address this is to ensure that there are course / professional development instructors who have done recent work in classrooms. Based on teachers' suggestions related to instructional practices, I make the following recommendations for both preservice and in-service teacher education:

Rather than offering separate courses or sessions for content area versus special education, incorporate strategies for all types of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners) into content courses. It may be beneficial to have a co-instructor with a special education background or expertise with individualizing instruction and using various instructional and/or multi-modal strategies. Designing teacher preparation in this manner provides teachers with the background knowledge to make more informed instructional design choices in their own classrooms.

Recalling Nancy's statement that differentiation in the academic world is different than differentiation in the real world, teachers said that **it isn't enough to say, "x strategy works well for breaking down large sections of scientific text" without providing examples and/or demonstrating what x strategy looks like.** One teacher recounted her experience having a professor differentiate an assignment on differentiation, which helped her to understand how differentiation might look in practice. Incorporating this modeling more consistently into teacher preparation could be a starting point for helping teachers bridge the gap between the "academic world" and the "real world." Using the example provided at the beginning of this paragraph, the science content instructor might create one or more graphic organizers (e.g., a visual summarizing key information; a form for taking structured, or guided, notes) related to a

specific topic. Further, teachers suggested that instructors should be explicit about the incorporation of the strategy (i.e., "This is an example of a graphic organizer. How might using one or both of these graphic organizers help meet the needs of students with disabilities? Can you think of another strategy that might work better?").

The teachers in this study expressed similar concerns in regard to professional practices, most commonly in the context of co-teaching and collaboration. In particular, teachers said they mostly understood co-teaching in terms of their own experiences. Some teachers, for example, had been in partnerships where the two teachers shared equal responsibility and used a variety of co-teaching approaches. Others made sense of their roles as solely responsible for content instruction, and of the special education teacher as someone to help out with individual kids and strategies. To keep with the idea of "showing" preservice and in-service teachers how to co-teach, **I recommend that teachers attend at *least* one class or professional development session in which there are co-teachers who demonstrate all possible co-teaching approaches**. As with the previous recommendations, **this modeling should be accompanied by discussion about the approaches.** Co-instructors could also make the less visible practices more visible by engaging in them in front of and with the preservice or in-service teachers. For instance, the two instructors could set aside time at the beginning or end of class to plan together, first acting as if no one is watching, and then engaging the teachers in a discussion about how and why they made certain instructional decisions. This may help teachers internalize the various ways to co-teach and feel more prepared for teaching in co-taught classrooms.

Teachers had fewer suggestions for how colleges of education and professional development programs could "show" them legislative and associated responsibilities. Their primary focus in this area was on how to design instruction based on the IEP and/or specific disability characteristics. **This may be the one area in which an argument can be made for continuing to offer a special education-specific course or PD offering, as this is more specialized knowledge, unless it is possible to include someone with this background during content area instruction. Most importantly, teachers stressed the importance of making the information relevant.** For the most part, every teacher could recount one course or session in which they learned "what" an IEP is, or got a brief overview of different kinds of disabilities, but many of them did not understand how this was related to their instructional planning and implementation. If someone in special education is part of the instructional staff in content methods courses, then this relationship could be presented and explored with, or in the same manner as, the "showing" of inclusive instructional practices (e.g., "X strategy is a good choice for students who struggle with reading fluency and/or comprehension because….What other strategies might help a student with this issue?). Finally, as noted before, teachers suggested that **engaging in explicit conversations about the importance of dispositions** is the best way to teach something that "you either have or you don't."

Give Me

In addition to the incorporation and modeling of inclusive practices, **teachers made several comments to the effect of how much easier or more manageable their jobs would be (in regards to students with disabilities) if they had access to tools that would assist in the planning and implementation of inclusive instruction.** For

example, they requested a collection of "best practices," or multiple examples, content-specific if possible, of strategies, techniques, and lesson plans that they can "tweak" for their own purposes. Two of the three science teachers at Market said they often struggled to figure out how to apply any strategies other than guided notes, since most strategies were either "reading-specific" or, more problematically, "best for younger kids." They felt if they had a sampling of secondary science lessons that had been modified or incorporated different strategies for teaching students with disabilities, they would more easily be able to design lessons using those best practices as a starting point.

In terms of professional practices, I noted that several teachers had expressed a desire to co-plan with their special education counterparts. When I asked how they currently included special educators in lesson planning, all of the teachers responded similarly. Rachel, for example, said, "Sometimes I tell her – hey, this is what we might be doing tomorrow I'm going to need your help with this. And sometimes she just walks in and we just go with it. But I mean we don't have the same planning. I never see her throughout the day when she's not with me." She went on to say that if they planned all of their lessons together, she thought it would "help [co-teachers] feel more empowered, like a true equal." Given that teachers express a desire to co-plan but don't seem to have a framework for doing so, **an additional tool we could provide general education teachers is a collection of templates for designing inclusive instruction** (see, for example, the Co-Teaching Planning Form in Ploessl, Rock, Schoenfeld, & Blanks, 2010).

The idea of providing teachers with templates was most commonly addressed in relation to their legislative and associated responsibilities. In particular, teachers requested "cheat sheets" specific to policies, organizing accommodations, and planning

for IEP meetings, or "anything else we might need to organize." Erin, who had one of the most detailed accommodations spreadsheets of all the observed teachers, said she had adapted the form based on one that her mentor teacher gave her during her student teaching placement. Although colleges of education could certainly provide their preservice teachers with some type of **organizational packet containing tools specific to students with disabilities (e.g., a template for keeping track of accommodations)**, a packet such as this may be more appropriate at the in-service level, where it can contain school-specific forms. At Key, for example, there is an email sent to teachers before IEP meetings that asks a series of questions about the student's progress and use of accommodations. For teachers who have already been a part of this process, they know to expect this email and may or may not take notes throughout the semester to answer those questions. New teachers, on the other hand, may be surprised by the email and not have answers. Schools can compile these types of requests and create a packet of forms or templates for general educators.

Let Me

Although it seems obvious to say that **teachers need the opportunity to enact inclusive practices,** it became startlingly clear during the course of this research that many general educators enter the classroom with little to no experience teaching students with disabilities. Many of the teachers asserted that having the opportunity to **teach in inclusive classrooms during their student teaching experiences** would have "done wonders" to prepare them for their current classrooms. Similarly, most of the teachers described how hard it was to co-teach when they had no experience whatsoever with teaching or working with someone in that manner (an idea that has been discussed in the

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literature, as well). Going one step further than student teaching in an inclusive classroom, then, **I recommend that content area preservice teachers be paired with special education preservice teachers in a co-taught student teaching placement.** As part of this placement, the two preservice teachers would be required to plan together, design lesson plans and activities, and engage in the act of co-teaching. Although every co-teaching partnership is different (due to subject area, teachers' personalities, etc.), this would at least provide teachers with the opportunity to experience co-teaching before they are " just thrown into it," as the teachers in this study described it.

Another way to ensure that preservice and in-service teachers have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of inclusive practices is to make it a part of all assignments. For example, **rather than giving one assignment on which students have to adapt instruction for students with disabilities, make this a part of all assignments.** After all, in "the real world," teachers don't have to do this just once a semester. Additionally, teachers expressed quite a bit of frustration with the relevance of professional development. They made two in-service suggestions related to both the instructional and professional categories of inclusive practices. First, in content area sessions (during which they hope instruction related to students with disabilities and other student populations is occurring), **allow teachers to practice designing lessons using their own class rosters.** Second, rather than attending a session about what co-teaching should look like, teachers described how helpful it would be **for co-teaching partners to attend a session together, in which they would plan lessons and/or activities for their group of students, based on the topic of the in-service.** A related recommendation I would make to schools is to **make decisions about co-taught classes and teachers early**

enough that both teachers can attend relevant in-service sessions (e.g., co-teaching, as previously described; content area for the special educator).

It is more difficult to make recommendations related to the application of teachers' legislative responsibilities. However, there are a few ways that teachers could be given opportunities to practice these responsibilities. For example, **teachers could participate in role-playing IEP meetings or reading IEPs and designing instruction based on student goals. Preservice teachers** in student teaching placements that include students with disabilities **could participate in their mentor teachers' preparation for IEP meetings** or attend IEP meetings with the mentor teacher (if given school and parent permission). Finally, in terms of dispositions, two teachers made recommendations based on their own experiences. Both recommendations had the same focus: to **shed light on how teachers' behaviors affect other people or behaviors in the classroom.** This could be done in the same manner it was for the teachers in this study: through video analysis and/or observation focused on teachers' dispositions. As noted earlier, the key with dispositions is being explicit and conscious of their importance to the instruction of all students, but especially students with disabilities.

Summary

In the previous sections, I detailed recommendations for better preparing general education teachers for the instruction of students with disabilities. The recommendations were compiled using a combination of teachers' sensemaking and my own. For the most part, all of the recommendations could be implemented at either the preservice or in-service level. Grounded in teachers' desire for relevance and applicability to actual classroom practice, the recommendations can be broadly described in three categories:

Show Me how to do these things, *Give Me* tools so that I am better able to do these things, and *Let Me* practice doing these things. As noted throughout this section, course instructors and leaders of professional development should be explicit and intentional about the connection to students with disabilities. Similar to the notion that asking students to explain their thinking enhances educational outcomes (Legare, 2014), engaging teachers in conversations about inclusive practices increases the likelihood that they will internalize these practices, while also helping to develop their reflective skills.

Limitations of this Study and Implications for Further Research

As Patton (1990) pointed out, there are no perfect research designs. One limitation in this study is that the sample size is both small and made up of teachers who volunteered to participate. There were a total of sixteen participants who participated in the focus groups, only six of whom were observed. Additionally, each case is made up of practicing teachers in only one state, located in the southeast. As a result, there may be contextual differences that exist in other locations that preclude the results from being generalized elsewhere. To address these limitations, I used purposive, typical case sampling in multiple cases so that the findings are suggestive for researchers and educators in similar settings (Merriam, 1998).

A related limitation is that I was only in each school for a limited amount of time and observed teachers during time-constrained periods selected to represent typical teacher/setting combinations. I attempted to avoid this issue by observing each teacher to the point of data saturation, and performing additional observations so that all teachers were observed the same number of times. One way to avoid these limitations in future research would be to explore the same topic with either a narrower or broader scope. In

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particular, it may be more beneficial to shadow teachers for their entire teaching workday, over an extended period of time. Narrowing the focus of the research to only a few teachers in one location would allow researchers to conduct fine-grained analysis, maximizing the type and quantity of data to be collected, on the ways teachers plan for and implement instruction related to students with disabilities. Alternatively, broadening the scope to explore how teachers in multiple school settings could provide insights into how teachers' sensemaking of their roles and responsibilities varies based on school type (e.g., rural versus urban), student population (race, socio-economic status, etc.), or some other dimension (e.g., disability type, subject matter). Similarly, all data were gathered from the general education teachers' perspectives, thus excluding the perspectives of other persons who may have significant influences on the teachers' zones of enactment, such as: members of the exceptional children's department, administration, students, and parents. A better understanding of the environmental factors influencing teachers' zones of enactment may have been gained by interviewing other people involved with inclusion at each site.

In addition, it is possible the participants' knowledge of my background in special education led to a "halo effect" where the participants did not state their true feelings in regards to students with disabilities. It is possible that teachers' enactments of the inclusive practices were influenced by the study itself. Teachers knew that I was examining the ways they prepared for and provided instruction to students with disabilities, and after the first observation, had seen the checklist I was using as a lens to observe their classrooms. As I described earlier in this chapter, I took a number of steps

to ensure the trustworthiness of the data, including researcher self-reflection, member checking, inter-rater reliability, and triangulation.

Additionally, as explained when I introduced the conceptual framework, I did not use Spillane's (1999) model to evaluate teacher *change*, which is how he applied it in his study of teachers' enactments of mathematics reforms. I believe that I provided ample justification as to my use of the ZoE model to examine teachers' enactment of inclusive practices, but future research could incorporate a learning component, or time-based comparisons (i.e., beginning of the year to the end) to examine teacher change as opposed to just enactment.

Aside from implications related to the limitations of the current study, there are several recommendations for further research based on other aspects of this work. First, I suggest more research on inclusive practices. While the checklist used in this study was created out of a combination of professional standards and literature about what general educators need to know, there is little to no research that describes what these things look like in practice. Although I analyzed the data in this study in such a way that I offered some explanation about what these inclusive practices look like, I did not evaluate teachers' enactments or attempt to connect their instruction to student outcomes. In light of the fact that there is much research being conducted on high-leverage, or core, practices in various subject areas (e.g., Forzani, 2014; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), it would be beneficial to determine whether there are high-leverage practices specific to special education. Second, as I noted in my comparison of the two cases, there was a tendency for teachers to talk about students with disabilities and English language learners in the same context. In my reflections on how this may have

developed, I considered the fact that in my search for professional standards, much of the language referred to "diverse" student needs rather than students with disabilities. As such, it may be beneficial to examine more closely the ways that teachers are prepared to instruct different student populations.

Conclusion

Federal legislation and individual state requirements have prompted exponential growth in the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom, for which general education teachers report not feeling prepared. In addition to an accompanying increase in both preservice and in-service offerings, various organizations have established standards (also called competencies, knowledge and skills, etc.) detailing the expectations for what general education teachers should know and be able to do; however, minimal research has been conducted that examines these standards in terms of the teachers who are expected to meet them or in terms of determining why certain inclusive practices are more often and easily enacted than others.

My goal in this study was to examine the ways that teachers make sense of their roles and responsibilities related to students with disabilities and use that information to learn more about how and why certain inclusive practices are enacted more than others. Because teachers continue to say they "weren't prepared" for this student population, an equally important goal was to connect that information to recommendations for the preparation of current and future teachers. I designed this study with the notion that when it comes to general education teachers in inclusive classrooms, those teachers are the experts. Despite the fact that I have a special education background, I have never

been in the position of being a general educator with limited preparation for and

knowledge of students with disabilities. As such, I performed multiple rounds of coding

and analysis, using different lenses each time in order to ensure that the data were

representative of the teachers' sensemaking and enactment, rather than my voice. In that

vein, it seems most appropriate to conclude with a statement that Evan, a teacher at

Market High School, made during his individual interview:

You know, when you talk about trying to reach every child,

it's really unfair if you don't have the background to help students with disabilities.

Appendix A

Literature on Practicing Teacher Judgments

Study	Methodology	Participants	Purpose / Research Question(s) Relevant to the Topic of this Study	Knowledge / Skills Suggested by Researchers OR Relevant Findings
Berry (2011)	QL: focus group	46 experienced teachers (36 general education, 6 special education, and 4 other [e.g. librarians]) in five elementary schools	To explore experienced teachers' perceptions of what new general education teachers need to know and be able to do in order to effectively teach students with disabilities in general education contexts	Teacher Generated Topics: • Instruction • Knowing the child • Training/resources • Policies/procedures • Classroom dynamics • Communication with colleagues • Building self • Parent-teacher relationships • Understanding inclusion
Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer (1999)	QN: survey (forced choice)	289 teachers (202 general education, 87 special education) of all grade levels in a single state	To explore the relationships between teachers' feelings of efficacy concerning educating students with special needs and to identify the training and supports teachers need to be successful with these students in inclusive program settings	Skills Suggested by Researchers: • Program modification • Collaboration • Assess academic progress • Assess social interaction • General knowledge • Communication with parents • History of inclusion • Adapting curriculum • Managing behavior problems • Developing IEPs • Assistive technology
Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez (2009)	QL: survey (forced choice and open-ended)	46 teachers (18 general education, 28 special education), both elementary and secondary (even	To examine beginning general and special education teachers' perceptions of their preparation and importance of skills associated with their collaborative roles under IDEIA, current training needs, and	Skills Suggested by Researchers: • Planning • Instructional pacing • Evaluating • Adapting course content

		split for each – 14/14 and 9/9)	plans to remain in the teaching field	• Progress monitoring • Individualizing instruction • Providing accommodations • Having appropriate expectations • Participating in teams
Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand (2010)	QL: descriptive, based on surveys and interviews used in two previous studies (FL – MM, CA – QL)	Florida: 4 secondary science co-teachers in one school located within a large multicultural urban school system (number not included) California: 10 general educators and 10 special educators working in co-teaching relationships at one high school	To extrapolate information from two previously conducted studies in order to inform teacher education programs about the necessary skills, knowledge, and professional dispositions that urban secondary teachers must demonstrate for teaching diverse student populations	Knowledge and skills suggested by researchers, based on data: • Flexibility • Collaboration • Impact on students with disabilities • Instructional responsiveness • Differentiated instructional processes • Differentiated assessment products
Dingle, Falvey, Givner, & Haager (2004)	QN: survey, expert consensus model	76 stakeholders (18 special education teachers, 46 general education teachers, 12 administrators) from all grade levels	To identify and validate the essential competencies for special and general educators needed to effectively educate students with disabilities within inclusive settings	Essential competencies (highest ranked by participants) for special *and* general educators: • Integrity, competence, ethics, and professional judgment • Positivity / Interpersonal skills for working with students and other adults • Fair and respectful environment that reflects cultural diversity • Selects, adapts, or modifies core curriculum to make it accessible for all students and increases participation of students with disabilities • Instructional adaptations, styles, practices, and procedures Essential competencies (highest ranked by

				participants) for general educators only: • General education assessment procedures • Lesson plans that are appropriate for diverse learners • Facilitates the physical classroom environment that allows for flexible scheduling and transition times • Knowledge of procedures and regulations for reporting child abuse and the legal rights and responsibilities of teachers and students
Grskovic & Trzcinka (2011)	QN: survey (forced response)	441 special education teachers	To identify which of the CEC standards would be essential for preparing content area teachers to effectively teach students with mild disabilities in secondary schools	31 indicators identified as essential under seven constructs, with the highest number of these falling under the constructs of: • Instructional strategies • Classroom management • Collaboration • Professional and ethical practice
Jenkins & Ornelles (2009)	QN: survey (forced response)	827 public school teachers in Hawaii (557 general education, 270 special education, 14 other [e.g., PE])	1. How do general education and special education teachers in Hawai'i compare in their overall confidence to teach students with disabilities? 2. How do general education teachers by years of experience compare in their confidence to teach students with disabilities?	High confidence responses were related to: • Cultural, ethnic, gender, and linguistic differences being misinterpreted as disability • Multiple ways for students with disabilities to participate • Disability perceptions vary across families, communities, and cultures • Students with disabilities need accommodations, modifications, and/or adaptations to general curriculum, or may need expanded curriculum Low confidence responses were related to: • Affective strategies / motivation • Theories of learning and how to use them

				• Characteristics of disabilities • IEPs, IDEA, 504, ADA • Roles, responsibilities, and collaboration of support staff • Communication strategies and assistive technology • Monitoring progress
Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad (2003)	QL: survey (forced response and open-ended)	71 elementary general education teachers who were supervising student teachers	What information do you feel you need to more effectively teach children with special needs?	• How to identify children with specific disabilities • Specific information about the developmental history of the individual child • Adaptations and accommodations • Meeting the academic and affective needs of all students
Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover (1997)	QL: semi structured interview analyzed by way of a thematic content analysis	10 general education elementary and secondary teachers who had been identified by principals and special education teacher colleagues as skilled at including students with disabilities in their classrooms	To explore why certain teachers are seen as successful when others are not, whether themes of attitude tie these individuals together, and what similarities and differences emerge when the personal attributes of elementary and secondary personnel are examined.	Themes identified by researchers using interview data: • Tolerant, reflective, and flexible personalities • Responsibility for all students • Positive relationship with special education • Adjusting expectations • Demonstration of interpersonal warmth and acceptance • Concerns about administrative arrangements • Inclusion not always appropriate

Appendix B

Introductory Email to School Principals

Dissertation Research at XXX High School

Hello [School Principal Name]!

My name is Amanda Stefanski, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park, working on my dissertation in Teacher Education and Professional Development. Before heading back to school, however, I taught special education at Providence High School. I was hoping to speak with you about potentially using [school name] as a site for conducting my dissertation research. I'm including a very brief description below, and I am more than willing to come in and speak with you in person, as well.

The premise behind my research is that general education teachers typically express discomfort and/or ill-preparedness to teach students with disabilities, despite the fact that with the push toward inclusion, the chances that they have these students in their classrooms has increased exponentially over the last couple decades. I've completed a literature review that details what it is that general educators should be able to know and do, so now I'm interested in seeing how this is actually enacted in classrooms. More specifically, I intend to start first with one or more focus group interviews with general educators (as many as are willing to participate) to establish what they already know about professional standards that address their instruction of students with disabilities, how they interpret those standards, how they were (or weren't) prepared, and how teachers could better be prepared in regards to the topics included in the standards. Then I will solicit volunteers from those focus groups to allow me to conduct and record observations in their classrooms to document what it looks like when those standards are being addressed. I will also have follow up interviews with each of the teachers I observe to allow them to provide their own input about what they see and how they interpret specific events in the classroom. My intent is to make this as non-intrusive as possible, and I don't plan to weigh your teachers down with additional work.

I am in the process of completing the proposal for my committee, finalizing consent forms, and getting approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Maryland so that I can submit an application through CMS. The CMS website makes it very clear that I should have a letter of support from schools that are willing to participate, so if this is something you feel comfortable with, it would be fantastic if you could write something to that effect for me.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this and am looking forward to speaking more with you. Thank you so much!

Amanda Stefanski, M.S.Ed., NBCT
Doctoral Candidate: Teacher Education & Professional Development
University of Maryland, College Park

Appendix C

Methods of Recruiting General Educator Participation

Verbal Introduction at Staff Meeting:

Hello! My name is Amanda Stefanski, and I am currently working on my Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, College Park. Before this, however, I was teaching special education at Providence High School, here in Charlotte. A big part of the reason I went back to school was so that I could help better prepare general education teachers for students with disabilities, which is what my research has to do with. The premise behind this study is that general education teachers typically express discomfort and/or ill-preparedness to teach students with disabilities, despite the fact that with the push toward inclusion, the chances that they have these students in their classrooms has increased exponentially over the last couple decades. I've completed a literature review that details what it is that general educators should be able to know and do, so now I'm interested in seeing how this is actually enacted in classrooms. More specifically, I intend to start first with one or more focus group interviews with general educators (as many of you as are willing to participate) to establish what you already know about professional standards that address their instruction of students with disabilities, how you interpret those standards, how you were (or weren't) prepared, and how teachers could better be prepared in regards to the topics included in the standards. I also hope that some of you will be willing to let me conduct observations in your classrooms to document what it looks like when those standards are being addressed. I will also have follow up interviews with each of the teachers I observe to allow you to provide input about what you see and how you interpret specific events in the classroom. My intent is to make this as non-intrusive as possible, so I don't plan to weigh you down with additional work. If you are interested in participating in either the focus group, the observations, or both, or if you just have some questions you would like answered, I am available after this meeting or all day tomorrow (I will be in the teachers' lounge to answer talk and answer questions during your planning periods), or by email: stefanski.amanda@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration!

Email to Teachers Suggested by Principal and/or Special Education Coordinator:

Hello!

My name is Amanda Stefanski – I am the doctoral candidate from the University of Maryland who spoke at your staff meeting recently about a research project involving the ways that professional standards for general education teachers of students with disabilities are enacted in inclusive classrooms. [Specific person] mentioned that I should speak with you about participating. Do you have some time to get together? We can talk more about the research and any questions you may have. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you,

Amanda Stefanski

Flyer for Bulletin Boards and Teacher Newsletters:

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM RESEARCH STUDY

You are invited to participate in a study examining whether
and how professional standards for general education teachers of students with
disabilities are demonstrated in inclusive classrooms. This study is being conducted as
part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of Maryland, College Park.

Your participation could be as minimal as attending a focus group interview or as
extensive as participating in focus groups and allowing me to observe in your classroom.
The level of your participation will be based entirely on your willingness and interest.

If you are a general education teacher, and would like more information about
participating, please contact: Amanda Stefanski at stefanski.amanda@gmail.com

Appendix D

Focus Group Template

Session One:

Thank you for participating in today's focus group session. I would like to begin with introductions. Let's go around the room and start by sharing our names and the subject area we teach. For example, my name is Amanda Stefanski and I taught special education, which means I taught in a variety of content areas. I mostly taught in biology and English classes. [Teachers share]

The main purpose of today's session is to talk about how you interpret your roles and responsibilities in regards to students with disabilities. Before we go any further, let's talk about what I mean by "roles and responsibilities" in general. [Allow teachers to define the terms before clarifying – roles related to who does what (e.g., general education versus special education); responsibilities – actual actions].

[Group discussion guided by questions: What is the role of the general education teacher related to students with disabilities? Does it change? When / how? What responsibilities do you have? Think about the things you actually do in your classrooms.

Next I would like to talk about professional standards. [Group discussion guided by questions: What does this term mean to you? Why do you think standards are developed? Do you think there should be separate standards for general and special education teachers? Do you think there should be standards for general education teachers related to students with disabilities? Are you aware of any standards with this purpose?]

Using the information you all provided me in terms of your roles and responsibilities, let's try to create a list of items that might be included in a list of professional standards aimed at general education teachers of students with disabilities.

As I mentioned earlier and prior to today's focus group, the next part of my research involves conducting observations in some of your classrooms. My plan is to conduct several observations over the next couple of months, so that I can see how these roles and responsibilities actually look. If you are willing to be observed, or would just like more information about it, please stay after to speak with me, or email me at stefanski.amanda@gmail.com

Session Two:

As you now know, I have been in several of your classrooms gathering data about how teachers work with students with disabilities. Last time we met as a group, we briefly

discussed whether or not there were professional standards for general education teachers of students with disabilities, and we created a list of items that should be included in those standards. It may or may not surprise you to know that several organizations actually *have* created professional standards that are specific to general education teachers and students with disabilities. [Pass out standards checklist]

I would like to find out more from you about how you interpret these standards. You will see that there are three columns next to the list of standards, and a key at the top explaining everything I'm about to ask you to fill in.

1) In the first column, I want you to mark whether this is something you think you do in your classroom. Please remember that I am not looking at your responses in order to judge you or make any comments about your teaching ability. I am simply trying to determine how much of this is already being done, what you think is important, which are more challenging, and how to better prepare teachers to do these things.

2) In the second column, please rate the difficulty of implementing that specific standard. You can do this by using an E for Easy to Implement, S for Sometimes Easy/Hard to Implement, or H for Hard to Implement.

3) In the last column, I want you to mark down whether you have received any type of instruction related to how you should be meeting each standard. You can put a T for Teacher Preparation Program, T+ for Advanced Coursework (like a Master's program), PD for Professional Development, or O for Other. Use the space provided at the bottom to describe Other answers.

[Have chart paper for teachers to list easy / hard standards. Facilitate conversation about checklists using questions to guide: what are the barriers to these standards? how they could be overcome?]

You have all done a really fantastic job providing me with some very important information about how general education teachers interpret these standards. Remember that the third column on the checklist asked about whether you had been prepared to meet these standards. How many of you answered yes to all of them? Three-quarters of them? Half of them? None of them? As you can see, there is a wide representation of preparation in this room alone, which lets me know that you learned how to do these things from a variety of sources.

Around the room there are giant post-its with different standards on them. Let's start with the ones that you marked as sometimes / hard to implement. Using each other as resources, let's try and figure out how these standards can best be taught to other general education teachers? Think about things like preservice and/or in-service, lecture and/or activities, etc. Be as specific as possible. You don't have to all agree in order to write

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something down – if all of you come up with something different, include each of your suggestions. [Facilitate discussion using teachers' responses]

This has been a really helpful discussion, and I feel like I have gotten a better perspective about these standards by hearing about them through your words and examples. Do you feel like there is anything we missed or anything else that needs to be said before we finish? […]

(Focus Group Document – Checklist with three columns – on next page)

Category (derived from literature review and focus groups [FG]) • **including specifics where possible** • *italicized if not observable and/or can only be gleaned through conversation*	Do you do this? **Y**: Yes, Always **S**: Sometimes **N**: No	How easy / hard is this? **E**: Easy **S**: Sometimes Easy/Hard to Implement **H**: Hard to Implement	Have you been prepared to do this? **T**: Teacher Prep **T+**: Advanced Coursework **PD**: Professional Development **O**: Other
Instructional • Designing and adapting instruction for individual learners' strengths, needs, learning styles • Strategies (differentiation - of activities, assessments, etc.; grouping; chunking; pacing) • Multi-modal instruction (visual, kinesthetic, etc.) and assessment that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of products and performances			
Professional • Collaborating with various specialists (EC department / teacher; related service specialists; paraprofessionals; families) • Accessing and utilizing resources that address students strengths and weaknesses • *Attending professional development and/or seeking out learning opportunities related to students with disabilities*			
Legislative and Associated Responsibilities • Providing accommodations as mandated by IEP • *Disability characteristics* • *Knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements*			
Dispositions (recognized by researcher as inherently subjective) • Flexibility (e.g., allowing student to complete only 5 out of 10 problems) • Approachability (e.g., students ask questions related to their IEP accommodations) • Respect for all students (e.g., no sarcasm; no eye-rolling; showed equal attention to students with and without IEPs, regardless of whether a co-teacher was present)			

Appendix E

Observation Checklist

Category (derived from literature review and focus groups) • including specifics where possible • *italicized if not observable and/or can only be gleaned through conversation*	Supporting Professional Standards*	Observed? Was it via observation, document review, or post-obs interview?	Notes
Instructional • Designing and adapting instruction for individual learners' strengths, needs, learning styles • Strategies (differentiation - of activities, assessments, etc.; grouping; chunking; pacing) • Multi-modal instruction (visual, kinesthetic, etc.) and assessment that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of products and performances	InTASC NBPTS NJCLD NCCTQ NCATE TEAC NC Evaluation + PT Lit Focus Groups		
Professional • Collaborating with various specialists (special education department / coordinator / teacher; related service specialists; paraprofessionals; families) • Accessing and utilizing resources that address students strengths and weaknesses • *Attending professional development and/or seeking out learning opportunities related to students with disabilities*	InTASC NBPTS NJCLD NCCTQ NCATE NC Teacher Evaluation + PT Lit Focus Groups		
Legislative and Associated Responsibilities • Providing accommodations as mandated by IEP • *Disability characteristics* • *Knowledge of special education policies, procedures, and legal requirements*	InTASC NJCLD NCCTQ + PT Lit Focus Groups		
Dispositions (recognized by researcher as inherently subjective) • Flexibility (e.g., allowing student to complete only 5 out of 10 problems) • Approachability (e.g., students ask questions related to their IEP accommodations) • Respect for all students (e.g., never used sarcasm; never rolled eyes; used polite tone; showed equal attention to students with and without IEPs, regardless of whether a co-teacher was present)	PT Lit		

Appendix F

Post-Observation Topics

I.   Go over notes / observation video

II.   Agree / disagree with observer notes? Elaborate.

III.   Documents? Describe.

Appendix G

Individual Interview Questions

1) How long have you been teaching?

2) In what settings (i.e. public, private, big school, small, urban, suburban, rural, etc.)?

3) How were you prepared (college of education / alt cert / lateral entry)?

4) How did your teacher preparation program prepare you to teach students with disabilities?

    1) Describe any coursework, field experiences, etc.

    2) Describe specific things you do as a result of these

    3) Do you feel as though it was adequate preparation?

5) Have you attended any professional development sessions aimed at teaching students with disabilities?

    1) Describe the(se) session(s): content, activities, etc.

    2) Describe specific things you do as a result of these

    3) Do you feel like it was adequate preparation?

6) Describe any other experiences (informal or formal) which have contributed to the way you teach students with disabilities?

7) How do you define inclusion?

8) On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you have had no preparation and 5 meaning you could be dual certified as a special educator, where would you rank your preparation for teaching students with disabilities?

9) On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 meaning you panic as soon as you see a student with a disability on your class roster and 5 meaning you barely notice because you plan every lesson to meet each student's individual needs, where would you rank your confidence in your ability to teach students with disabilities?

Appendix H

Observation Matrix

	Instructional: Differentiating for Individual Learners	Instructional: Strategies	Instructional: Multi-Modal	Professional: Collaboration	Professional: Resources	Professional: Professional Development	Legal: Accommodations	Legal: Disability Characteristics	Legal: Special Ed Policies	Dispositions: Flexibility	Dispositions: Approachability	Dispositions: Respect
AN	C	O / C	O / C	C		C	O / C			O	O	O
ES		O / C	o / C	C	c	C	o / c			O	O	O
LL		o / c / m		C		c	c / M			O	o	o
ER		O / C	o	C		FG	O / C			O	O	O
HT		O / C	o	O / C		FG	O / C			O	O	O
MY	O / C	O / C	C	O / C	c	c / FG	O / C		C	O	O	O

O: Observed

C: Documented through Conversation / Post-Observation Interview

M: Documented by T via Member Checking (only marked if minimal / no mention in C)

FG: Came out during Focus Group

(lower-case letters indicates that standard is minimally addressed)

Observation Matrix after Recoding Data with Sensemaking Properties

	Instructional: Differentiating for Individual Learners	Instructional: Strategies	Instructional: Multi-Modal	Professional: Collaboration	Professional: Resources	Professional: Professional Development	Legal: Accommodations	Legal: Disability Characteristics	Legal: Special Ed Policies	Dispositions: Flexibility	Dispositions: Approachability	Dispositions: Respect
AN	C	O / C	O / C	C	sO	C	O / C		sO	O	O	O
ES		O / C	o / C	C	c / sO	C	o / c			O	O	O
LL		o / c / m		C	sO	c	c / M			O	o	o
ER	sO	O / C	o	C	sO	FG	O / C		sO	O	O	O
HT	sO	O / C	o	O / C	sO	FG	O / C		sO	O	O	O
MY	O / C	O / C	C	O / C	c / sO	c / FG	O / C		C	sO	O	O

C: Documented through Conversation / Post-Observation Interview

M: Documented by T via Member Checking (only marked if minimal / no mention in C)

FG: Came out during Focus Group

sO: Recoded with Sensemaking lens

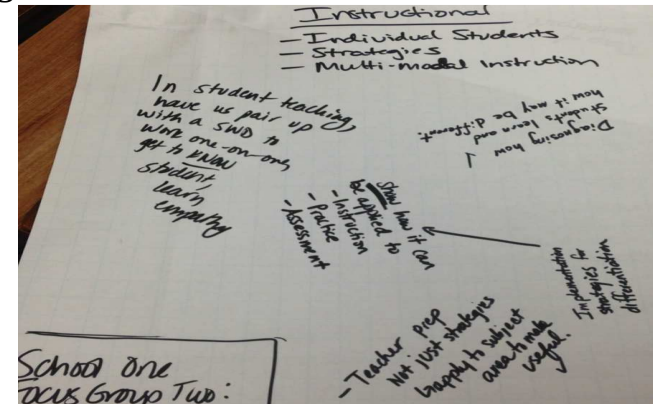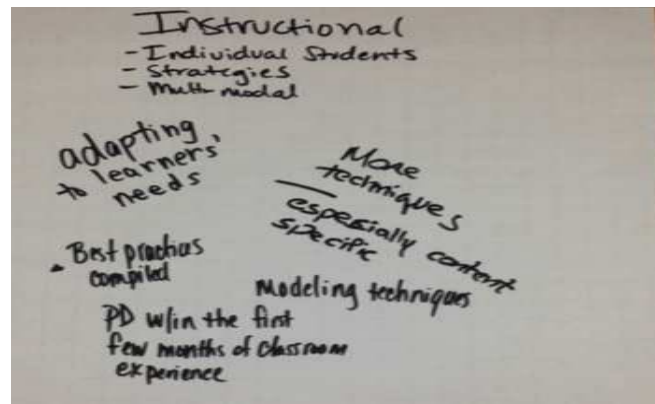Yellow circles indicate change due to sensemaking coding. Blue circles indicate no change in a category where most other teachers' enactment data changed.

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Appendix I
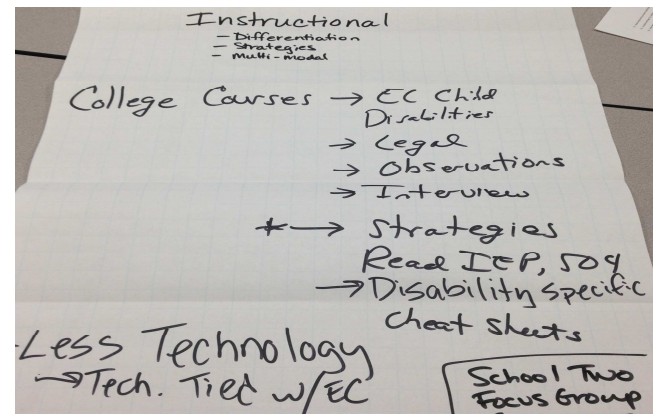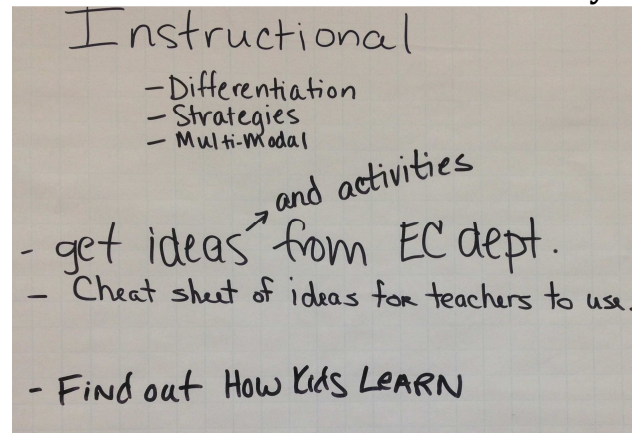
Teachers' Suggestions for Preparing General Educators

Category	
	Market High School
Instructional	
	Key High School

Category

Market High School

Professional

Key High School

Category

Market High School

Legal

Key High School

Category	
	Market High School
Dispositions	
	Key High School
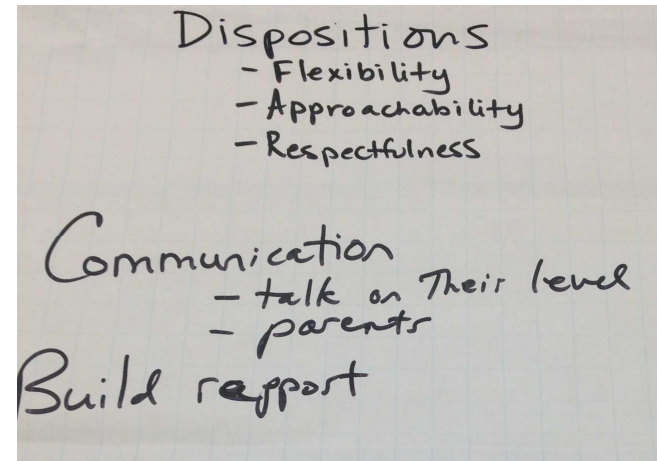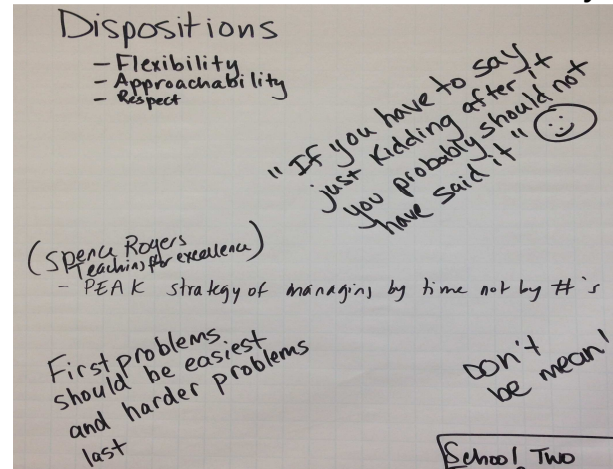
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