

A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY PRINCIPAL PRACTICES SUPPORTING CO-  
TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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## **Abstract**

Educational leadership is challenged with meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. The focus on accessibility and accountability is resulting in an increase in the number of students with disabilities receiving specialized instruction within the least restrictive environment (LRE) of the general education classroom. To support students in the LRE, many schools are implementing the service delivery model of co-teaching, or pairing a special educator with a general educator, to provide core instruction with appropriate special education services to students with special needs.

The purpose of this case study was to investigate what practices of principals are deemed most supportive to teachers engaged in a co-teaching service delivery model. The qualitative, multi-case study was designed to analyze perceptions of district level general education administrators, district level special education administrators, building principals, co-teaching coaches, and co-teaching partners who participated in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. Data were obtained primarily through interviews of the participants. Demographic surveys, building schedules and field notes served as additional information for analysis and the interpretation of the data.

The over-arching research question for this study was: “What practices of principals provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the least restrictive environment?” Sheard and Kakabadse’s nine Key Elements of Effective Teams (2002, 2004) formed the framework for the study. These key elements also guided the research sub-questions.

Data collected through the study revealed sixty patterns across the key elements of effective teams. When analyzed, the patterns yielded three themes: 1) principals arranged and protected time during the daily schedule for collaboration between co-teaching partners, 2) principals paired co-teachers together with careful consideration for compatibility, and 3) principals established and maintained a culture of professional growth.

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the educational system in America has been challenged to overcome adversity in the quest to provide equal opportunities for all students in the classroom. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) reported that, “historically [children with disabilities were] guaranteed only the right to attend school rather than the right to learn” (p. 15); however, public schools are now mandated to provide individualized education programs for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Teachers across the nation serve a diverse population of students including those who are at-risk, have limited English proficiency, a wide range of disabilities, as well as those who are gifted and talented. In addition, public scrutiny seeks accountability, and high stakes testing strains the educational system. Other challenges stem from continual cuts to both fiscal and human resources that limit the viability of some options to meet the needs of all learners. In this climate, educational leaders must maximize existing resources and implement efficient, innovative solutions that will help schools overcome all of these challenges.

### **Legislative History of Special Education**

Minority groups in America have long experienced a culture different from their peers; however, legislation passed over the last 60 years has dramatically influenced the treatment of individuals with disabilities and other protected groups in American society. The ruling for desegregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954, sparked a series of legislative actions that not only improved the rights and treatment of persons of color, but also of individuals with disabilities. This landmark case was followed by enactment of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975. The fundamental mandates of EAHCA are a free appropriate public education and placement in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities (Kavale, 2002).

LRE is a legal principle within EAHCA requiring that students with disabilities be educated in an environment as close as possible to the regular education environment of their non-disabled peers (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). The law prohibits the practice of segregating special education students by placing them in special facilities or in classes located in isolated areas of the school building (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). The current reauthorization of the

EAHCA is known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, or IDEIA, and shall be referred to as such throughout this document. Through its many revisions, the requirement to provide education in the LRE for students with disabilities remains a cornerstone of this law (Smith, 2005b).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) originated in 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson. It was most recently reauthorized in 2002 by President George W. Bush, and has since become known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB has “focused attention on students with increasingly diverse learning characteristics achieving high academic performance in general education” (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2013, p. 12). The stated purpose of NCLB is “to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (NCLB, 2002). NCLB proposes to meet this purpose through an array of strategies aimed at “closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children” so that no child will be left behind (2002). An NCLB strategy that supports the goal of high achievement for everyone is the requirement that all K-12 students have teachers with subject matter knowledge and the teaching skills necessary to help all students achieve high academic standards regardless of their individual learning styles or needs. All public elementary or secondary teachers employed to teach core academic subjects should be designated as “highly qualified”.

NCLB was due for reauthorization in 2007; however in 2014 it has yet to be reauthorized. A 2012 Information Brief from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) written by Barbara Michelman reported that few supporters stand behind all the original tenets of the act. The Brief also stated that little progress has been made toward reauthorizing the law as, “everyone, it seems, agrees on the provisions that need to be fixed, but no one can agree on the exact solutions” (Michelman, p. 2). States can apply for relief from some of the provisions of NCLB through a flexibility waiver. In exchange for the flexibility waiver, states are required to adopt common core standards for college and career readiness, focus improvement efforts on the lowest 15 percent of their most troubled schools, create guidelines for teacher evaluations based in part on student performance, continue efforts to close achievement gaps and promote rigorous accountability (Michelman, 2012). The waiver does not provide any adjustments to the requirement that teachers be highly qualified.



Whether still operating under NCLB or transitioning to a flexibility waiver, states remain accountable for continued school improvement efforts. The NCLB requirement that all students be instructed by highly qualified core content teachers holds firm as does the IDEIA regulation ensuring that students with disabilities be supported through specialized education services to meet individual needs. As educators seek ways to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities while adhering to the premises of NCLB and IDEIA, the demand for a variety of service delivery options (Friend, 2008) continues. One option that has been developed is co-teaching (Walsh & Jones, 2004).

### **Co-Teaching**

Historically, teaching has been accepted as a fairly isolated profession. The method of co-teaching challenges this paradigm and the very definition of teaching. According to Dieker and Murawski (2003), co-teaching is two or more teachers who are equal in status working together in the classroom to provide instruction. Cook and Friend (1995) define co-teaching as “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space” (p. 2). Co-teaching, as defined in this study, is comprised of a special educator partnering with a general education teacher to co-teach in the general education classroom as a means of providing services to students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. In co-taught classrooms, students with disabilities are educated alongside their general education peers. This setting is considered to be the LRE for instruction.

Co-teaching connects highly qualified general educators who have demonstrated subject area expertise with special educators who have complementary skills in specialized content and strategies for adjusting curriculum, instruction, and the learning environment (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2013). This partnership increases the probability of the implementation of the research-based curricular and instructional approaches required by NCLB and the general education response to intervention (RTI) approaches forwarded by IDEIA (Villa & Thousand, 2011). IDEIA, NCLB and LRE reinforce the notion that teachers and other school personnel can no longer be most effective as isolated professionals. Co-teaching is essential for educators across the nation. These partnerships not only allow teachers to implement new curriculum standards, but they also enable teachers to differentiate instruction to provide students with

learning and language differences an opportunity to meet the rigorous college- and career-ready standards.

There are multiple benefits when including special education pupils in an inclusive learning environment such as improvement in self-confidence, academic performance, social skills and peer relationships (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Walsh (1992) documented the preference of students for instruction in co-taught classrooms asserting that students felt better about themselves.

Murawski and Swanson (2001) documented positive academic outcomes in student achievement for all students served in less restrictive settings. Walsh and Conner (2004) found teachers in co-taught classrooms were much more likely to provide instruction reflecting the general education curriculum than were teachers in self-contained classrooms. Likewise, teachers in co-taught classrooms were more likely to provide instruction that involved students in the higher dimensions of learning than were teachers in self-contained classrooms.

A complete analysis of the benefits of co-teaching as a less-restrictive instructional model for students with disabilities concluded, “co-teaching is a moderately effective procedure for influencing student outcomes [that] can have a positive impact on student achievement” (Murawski & Swanson, 2001, pp. 264-265). Murawski and Swanson demonstrated that less-restrictive service options could result in positive outcomes for all students served by the collaborative efforts of a general and special education teacher in a co-taught classroom. The academic outcome results complemented earlier survey research by Walsh (1992) documenting that students with disabilities in a study preferred co-taught classrooms to self-contained classroom placements, indicating that they enjoyed school more, learned more, and felt better about themselves in the general education classroom setting. Walsh’s research served to reinforce the rationale for increased co-teaching implementation efforts and resulted in support for this instructional model. Communication, relationships, and personal compatibility between co-teachers can be decisive factors in the eventual outcomes of students with disabilities in a co-taught classroom (Mastropieri et al., 2005).

Benefits of a co-teaching model have been reported for both students and teachers (Austin, 2001; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Walsh, 1992; Walsh & Conner, 2004; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Teachers participating in a co-teaching model of instruction reported, “increased professional satisfaction, opportunities for professional growth, personal support, and increased opportunities for collaboration” (Walther-Thomas, 1997, p. 401). According to Austin’s (2001) research involving collaborative teachers, “Data from semi-structured interviews

revealed that most of the co-teachers found the experience to be positive” (p. 250). The same teachers also expressed that a benefit of co-teaching was a reduction in the student-teacher ratio, which allowed for intimate instructional practices to take place.

Research shows co-teaching is often challenging for teachers, because simply placing a special educator and a general educator in the same classroom does not signify a co-teaching environment (Cook & Friend, 1995). Co-teaching does not always come naturally (Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007). Teachers must be properly trained in how to teach together in a way that is effective and realistic. The challenge of successfully implementing collaborative teaching models prevails across the nation, as schools are being held accountable for the academic progress of each and every student. Many of the important needs identified by co-teachers are linked to administrative support (Scruggs, et al., 2007). Couple this with the limited resources schools are operating with, and it is imperative that teams implement co-teaching models effectively and efficiently. The leadership of the building principal is crucial in this endeavor as, “a supportive administrator can ensure that teachers have the resources needed to make co-teaching a success (Scruggs et al., 2007).

### **Leadership of the Building Principal**

Legislation concerning special education has redefined the role of the school principal in creating an atmosphere of access and inclusion for students with disabilities (Croser, 2002). Pre 1975 and the passage of the original EAHCA/IDEIA, principals were charged with ensuring appropriate education only for the general population of students. Now, however, the IDEIA requirement for FAPE in the LRE has increased the responsibilities of principals to include *all* students. This legislation and the resulting mandated services to students with disabilities have intensified the role of the principal in the areas of access and inclusion (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Principals are now held accountable for ensuring that students with disabilities are indeed receiving access to the general education curriculum as well as receiving instruction in the LRE as required by NCLB and IDEIA. The principal must be creative to ensure that classroom teachers and special educators are provided the support and resources necessary for this to happen.

A review of the literature identifies many issues related to the leadership of co-teaching. The tasks and functions of implementing a co-teaching model present challenges to educators

that are reviewed in chapter two. In establishing efforts in a school committed to collaborative co-teaching the principal is the most important element (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Principals set the tone for acceptance of co-teaching as a service delivery model in their schools. School administrators are responsible for developing a model of co-teaching that is supported by quality research and practice (Friend & Cook, 1996).

This study investigated the role of the principal in one type of setting, namely where a co-teaching model of service delivery is implemented. Principal practices that support the implementation and sustainability of a collaborative co-teaching model were the focus of this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The intent of IDEIA is to provide the opportunity for students with disabilities to be integrated with their general education peers where they can receive rigorous instruction in core content areas. Change is often a slow process and for decades, many students with disabilities remained segregated through the use of pullout programs and categorical placements (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996). Finally, in 2010, data reported by the United States (U.S.) Department of Education indicated that in 2006, the proportion of students with disabilities with primary placements in general education settings had risen to 53.65%, up eight percentage points from 45.73% in 1992. Primary placement in general education is defined as spending 80% or more of the school day in a general education setting (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The same definition is used at the state level. Data reported by the U.S. Department of Education is derived from data reported annually by individual states in their State Performance Plan Reports.

In the state of Kansas, where this study was conducted, 2006 data indicated that 60.84% of students with disabilities were primarily placed in general education settings as compared to 53.65% nationally as reported above (Kansas State Department of Education, 2008). The most recent data available for Kansas indicates that the number of students with disabilities primarily placed in general education settings has risen to 67.17% as of Fiscal Year 2012 (Kansas State Department of Education, 2014), an increase of over six percentage points.

Villa and colleagues (2013) predict “ these proportions [will continue] to increase given national trends over the past three decades and IDEIA’s requirement to include students with disabilities as full participants in rigorous academic and general education curriculum and

assessment” (p. 12). The data indicate significant improvement in educating students in the LRE with the anticipation that the proportions of students receiving the majority of their instruction in the general education setting will continue to grow, as educators are legally and ethically responsible for ensuring compliance with federal legislation so that *all* students receive an adequate education. To this end, it is essential to understand how local school leaders can best support the provision of special education services in the LRE of the general classroom.

As early as the 1980s, researchers reported that federal and state laws and geographical regions influence practices and procedures for students with disabilities (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1984) lending to variances between states and regions. Later research indicated that educational systems such as school districts could control the curriculum, philosophy, and methodical approach of their daily education (Cooner, Tochtermann, & Garrison-Wade, 2005) allowing for variances between school districts in each state. Given the flexibility for local control, differences in the educational opportunities for students with disabilities exist sometimes even between schools in the same district (Cooner et al., 2005; Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The rationale for these differences is the presence of the leadership of the school principal. Literature going back to the 1980s has documented the influence of the principal, thus establishing a long history of this understanding. A review of the leadership literature lays out more recent information regarding the presumed links in the causal chain between administrative action and the achievement of students (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). The practices of each individual school principal greatly influence those of the entire school staff and student body within their own building (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

The above research supports the notion that the practices of principals have a huge impact on the success, or lack of success, of any initiative within a building. Therefore, the implementation and support of a co-teaching model of service delivery in the LRE for students with disabilities can be greatly influenced by the daily practices of the building principal. It is well documented that co-teaching is fraught with many challenges. Numerous studies identify concerns and challenges related to the establishment, implementation, and sustainability of co-teaching. From the standpoint of teachers and administrators in various studies, leadership challenges around the implementation of co-teaching include:

- a) Regular co-planning time (Austin, 2001; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Friend, 2007; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005; Ploessl, Rock, Schoenfeld, & Blanks, 2010; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Trent, 1998; Walsh, 2012; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Welsh, 2000).
- b) Student composition/skill level/gap with peers (Austin, 2001; Schumaker & Deshler, 1988; Scruggs et al., 2007; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).
- c) Relationships among co-teachers (Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Trent, 1998).
- d) Knowledge of content and access skills to be taught (Friend, 2007; Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005).
- e) Scheduling (Friend, 2007; Friend et al., 2010; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).
- f) Use of differentiated instruction (Mastropieri et al., 2005; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2007; Walsh & Conner, 2004; Welsh, 2000).
- g) Staff preparation (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Ploessl et al. 2010; Schumaker & Deshler, 1998; Scruggs et al., 2007; Walsh, 2000; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).

The need to comprehend how to best overcome these challenges is clear. In deference to any school initiative, administrative support, particularly that of the building principal, has long been recognized as highly influential (Bossert, et al., 1982; Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1992; Cooner et al., 2005; Fullan 2001; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001; Sage & Burrello, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1984); however a review of the literature points to significant gaps in the research pertaining to the principal's role as it specifically relates to collaborative co-teaching. In 2001, Austin stated that, "schools should strive to be responsive to the express needs of their co-teachers with respect to logistical and administrative support" (pp. 252-253); however, it is not yet known which specific practices of principals are most meaningful to the support of this type of service delivery model. Villa and Thousand (2003) iterate, "The degree of administrative support and vision was the most powerful predictor of general educators' attitudes toward inclusion" (p. 22). Done well, [co-teaching] can be compared to a strong marriage – partners

sharing and planning, reflecting and changing. Done poorly, it can be described as a blind date – co-teachers just waiting for the year to end” (Wilson, 2008, p. 240).

To acquire an understanding of how best to meet the needs of co-teaching teams, it is necessary to investigate the specific leadership practices related to supporting this collaborative model of service delivery. It is essential to understand how principals function as a supportive member of a co-teaching team in daily practice. This study addressed the lack of research regarding leadership practices as they relate specifically to the support of a collaborative co-teaching model of service delivery in the LRE.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the types of principal practices perceived by teachers, coaches, administrators and principals themselves to be most meaningful in the support of a collaborative co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the LRE. Participants in the study first defined “meaningful practices,” and then the study investigated how principals provide support for the education of students with disabilities in the context of the LRE where co-teaching is being used as a service delivery model. Specifically, this study aimed to examine the practices of principals who participated as part of a team in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

Co-teaching teams to be considered for participation in this study was limited to district teams that participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. To participate in the initiative, districts were required to send a team of at least six people that included: at least one district level general education administrator, at least one district level special education administrator, a designated co-teaching coach, at least one pair of co-teaching partners consisting of a general educator and a special educator, and their building principal. The Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative is unique in that it stretches beyond simply providing training to people in co-teaching. Participants are also trained in how to observe, coach, and facilitate co-teaching. Coaches are instructed in how to use an observational tool and how to provide quality supportive feedback to help people move from acquisition to mastery. The project is designed to equip co-teachers with the tools necessary to implement educational best practices. Participants are provided the opportunity to receive additional training in effective instruction, quick cooperative structures, instructional technology, and differentiation of instruction. The goal is not just to get two



teachers into a classroom together, but to impact student outcomes in a positive way. Through the initiative, districts develop plans for long-term sustainability. The project is multi-faceted and spans multiple years, adding new districts across the state each year.

Districts were prioritized for selection based on recommendation from leaders of the Kansas Co-teaching Initiative. For inclusion in this study, all six team members from the same district had to consent to participate. Members from each of three teams to be selected included: one general education teacher, his or her special education co-teaching partner, their building principal, their designated co-teaching coach, one district level general education administrator and one district level special education administrator.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study drew on the conceptual framework of teaming. It was grounded in the foundational works of Bruce Tuckman's 1965 team development model. A wide review of the literature revealed that Tuckman's model continues to serve as a strong foundation in the theory of team development across disciplines. The concept of teaming was expanded by Bennett and Gadlin's 2012 work in which characteristics of effective teams were uncovered. Bennett and Gadlin's study employed Tuckman's original team development model as a framework. The concept of teaming was further extended by the 2002 work of Sheard and Kakabadse in which they employed Tuckman's model of team development and identified key elements of effective teams.

Scarnati defined teamwork "as a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results" (2001, p. 5). Harris and Harris (1996) also explain that a team has a common goal or purpose where team members can develop effective, mutual relationships to achieve team goals. Teamwork relies upon individuals working together in a cooperative environment to achieve common team goals through sharing knowledge and skills. The literature consistently highlights that one of the essential elements of a team is its focus toward a common goal and a clear purpose (Fisher, Hunter, & Macrosson, 1997; Harris & Harris, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Parker 1990). Teamwork has boundaries. It has rules. Every player has a role aligned with the group's definition of success. The boundaries and rules are often created and modified as the 'game' unfolds, roles are unclear and objectives often opposing. Teamwork includes awareness that for a team to perform optimally, every

member must portray an attitude of cooperation. Andrew Campbell of Harvard Business Review (2011) explains that, “teams are created when managers need to work closely together to achieve a joint outcome. Their actions are interdependent, but they are fully committed to a single result. They need to reach joint decisions about many aspects of their work, and they will be cautious about taking unilateral action without checking with each other to insure there are no negative side effects.” So long as a team has someone with authority to resolve disputes, ensure coordinated action and remove disruptive or incompetent members, teams work well. Team members may dislike each other. They may disagree about important issues. They may argue disruptively. But with a good leader they can still perform.

### ***Tuckman’s Model of Team Development***

First developed in 1965, Tuckman’s model is widely known as a basis for effective team building. This model is significant because it recognizes the fact that groups do not launch fully formed and functioning. Tuckman suggests that teams grow through clearly defined stages, from their creation as groups of individuals, to cohesive, task-focused teams. First an orientation, testing phase which often leads to a second period characterized by a degree of conflict. This then generally resolves itself, leading to a third more socially cohesive phase. Finally, groups settle to a functional phase, during which they focus on role-relatedness. To summarize these four phases, Tuckman coined the oft-quoted terms: “forming,” “storming,” “norming,” and “performing”. His theory may have gained popularity due to the catchy labels for each of his stages; however, it also provides a useful and simple way to think about how humans interact in team situations.

Tuckman and Jensen (1977) conducted a subsequent review of team development and concluded that the literature generally supported Tuckman’s original model, to which they added a fifth stage, “adjourning”. Today the stages are recognized to be idealized (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997), but are also regarded as having “considerable face validity as a general sequence” (Rickards & Moger, 2000, p. 276). Rickards and Moger (2000) simplified, but extended, Tuckman and Jensen’s 1977 model of team development and replaced the stages with two barriers, “whose characteristics are in need of further study” (p. 281). In 2005, Choudrie reported:

Research has progressed from the days of the original Tuckman's (1965) development model to amalgamating the dynamics expressed in the model, to investigating some of the behaviors observed in organisations and providing a better understanding of team development.

In their brief explanation of the development of a co-teaching partnership, Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2013) reflect Tuckman's model. They refer to four stages of team development as; "forming," "functioning," "formulating," and "fermenting"; different terminology, but the basic concepts remain the same. Bennett and Gadlin (2012) explicitly describe Tuckman's description of "four regularly occurring stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, and performing" (p. 4). They utilize the characteristics and key points of Tuckman's framework to describe the formation and management of collaborative teams. In 2004, Sheard and Kakabadse employed Tuckman's seminal work on team development in a study of their own. They uncovered a framework for effective team development that is founded in the original stages of team development described by Tuckman. Sheard and Kakabadse's work were used to guide this study.

### ***Sheard and Kakabadse: Nine Key Factors of Team Landscape***

Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) employed the Tuckman model as a foundation in their study of an organization in the manufacturing engineering sector. Through their study, they developed and validated an integrated team development framework for transforming a loose group into an effective team. Sheard and Kakabadse define an effective team as, "one in which development of a supportive social structure has occurred, with each individual adapting his behavior to optimize his personal contribution to the team" (p. 133). They identified issues that limit the speed with which an effective team forms and in turn established specific recommendations that will help effective teams to form in the minimum time. Their work uncovered "nine key factors that collectively differentiate a loose group from an effective team" (p. 138). These key factors: clearly defined goals, priorities, roles and responsibilities, self-awareness, leadership, group dynamics, communication, context, and infrastructure guided this study.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the types of principal practices that are perceived as meaningful in the support of collaborative, co-teaching service delivery models in the context of the LRE. By completing the study, the researcher hoped to better understand how principals provide meaningful support to co-teaching teams. The overarching research question for this study was:

What practices of principals provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the LRE?

The following sub-questions guided the study:

How do principals support team functioning in key elements of effective teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through:

1. Clearly defined goals?
2. Priorities?
3. Roles and responsibilities?
4. Self-awareness?
5. Leadership?
6. Group dynamics?
7. Communication?
8. Context?
9. Infrastructure?

This main question and subsequent answer interests school leaders and should spark discussions among advocates for students with disabilities, parents, and stakeholders of the school and students. The potential influence on the teaching and learning of students with disabilities is tremendous. Knowing and understanding what K-12 public school principals do to provide meaningful support to co-teaching partners in the LRE contributes to the knowledge base of leadership for special education. Learning what practices of principals are most meaningful in supporting the collaborative co-teaching service delivery model from the perspective of those involved in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative will contribute valuable knowledge to the field of education that will promote the development and sustainability of co-teaching practices.

## **Background for the Study**

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) recognizes the benefits of utilizing co-teaching as a collaborative service delivery model for the provision of special education services to students with disabilities in the LRE. Kansas also recognizes the critical component of leadership to the success and sustainability of a co-teaching model. This is evidenced by KSDE's five-year State Professional Development Grant (SPDG) funded partnership with Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) Project Success at the University of Kansas Beach Center and Keystone Learning Services. The TASN Co-Teaching series is designed to create and train new co-teaching teams in participating districts, build principal capacity to provide support to those teams, and establish district level capacity to provide ongoing training to additional teams for sustainability of the co-teaching model. As stated in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative 2013 report:

The Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was created in response to requests from teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. Through co-teaching, special education and general education teachers work together to provide evidence-based instructional practices that meet the needs of all students. True co-teaching involves teamwork throughout the entire instructional process. This level of collaboration requires a substantial support system including ongoing professional development and coaching to build capacity and support sustainability. (Gaumer, Brussow, & Anderson, 2011, p. 2)

The Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative utilizes the Rich Villa, Jacqueline Thousand, and Ann Nevin model of co-teaching. TASN Project Success coordinates co-teaching activities and training events across the state of Kansas. In addition to working with co-teaching teams within multiple districts in the state, Project Success coordinates the training of a TASN team of recognized co-teaching professional development providers. Dr. Richard Villa, a national expert on instructional practices that support students in the LRE, serves as a professional development provider and collaborates with project staff to build statewide training capacity through the TASN team. Through regional trainings and ongoing coaching, it is expected that educators in more than 80 districts across all regions of the state will be implementing evidence-based instructional practices within the co-taught classroom by 2017.

Districts in the state of Kansas were invited by the KSDE to participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. Invited districts were selected based on whether or not the district had met

the State Annual Performance Plan (SPP) State-wide Target for Indicators three and five according to the most current fiscal year's data (Kansas State Department of Education, 2010). Indicator three is divided into two subcategories, the first subcategory addresses reading proficiency and the second addresses math proficiency. Indicator 3CR measures the percentage of students with disabilities who score proficient on the State Assessments for Reading. The SPP target for indicator 3CR is 73.22%. Indicator 3CM measures the percentage of students with disabilities who score proficient on the State Assessments for Math with a target of 68%.

Indicator five focuses on LRE by measuring the percentage of children aged 6-21 who are removed from the regular education classroom for special education services. It is most relevant to this study and therefore of particular interest. Indicator 5A measures the percentage of students with disabilities placed in the general education setting for 80% or more of the school day with a target of at least 62.82%. Indicator 5B measures the percentage of students with disabilities placed in the general education setting for less than 40% of the school day with a target of no greater than 7.39%. Indicator 5C measures the percentage of students with disabilities placed in separate, hospital, homebound or alternative placements with a target of no greater than 2%. If SPP targets are not met, it is considered to be a demonstration of the district's need for targeted technical assistance.

Districts demonstrating need for targeted assistance based on failure to meet statewide targets on Indicator three and in particular Indicator five were invited to participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. District level teams trained under this initiative must include at a minimum: a district level general education administrator, a district level special education administrator, a building principal, a designated co-teaching coach, and at least one co-teaching pair consisting of a general educator and a special educator.

Co-teaching Training is a mechanism for educators to develop the knowledge and skills essential to providing effective instruction in the LRE. Through co-teaching, special education and general education teachers work together to provide evidence-based instructional practices that meet the needs of all students. True co-teaching involves teamwork throughout the entire instructional process. This level of collaboration requires a substantial support system including ongoing professional development and coaching to build capacity and support sustainability. Co-teaching training is a mechanism for educators to develop the knowledge and skills essential to providing effective instruction in the LRE.

This case study focused on three districts (that began participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative in the 2012-2013 school year) to explore the practices of principals that most meaningfully support a collaborative co-teaching service delivery model of instruction for students with disabilities in the LRE. The researcher sought to understand the practices of principals perceived to be most meaningful as defined by members of co-teaching teams. The researcher also examined how these practices support the collaborative model of co-teaching. Designated team members included a district level general education administrator, a district level special education administrator, a building level administrator, a coach, a general education teacher and a special educator.

### **Overview of Methods**

A qualitative case study approach was used in this research, because it allowed for the exploration of administrative practices in support of co-teaching utilized in one mid-western state, Kansas. The topic of principal practices that meaningfully support co-teaching service delivery models in the LRE has not been carefully examined; therefore there was a need to explore the topic first to better understand the issues associated with the model. Qualitative inquiry allowed the voices in the field to be heard and promoted a better understanding of the leadership practices that most effectively support the co-teaching initiative from their perspectives. It facilitated an understanding of the process of teaming in collaboration in which participants addressed the issues related to co-teaching (Creswell, 2007). The study primarily focused on one key team member, the building principal.

The primary data source for this study was interviews from the six participants from each of three selected sites. Additional information was collected including demographics, supporting documents, and field notes to assist with interpretation and analysis of the data.

### **Limitations**

This case study was limited to three public schools in Kansas that began participating in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative in the 2012-2013 school year. The lead facilitator for the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative nominated, in rank order, districts demonstrating successful implementation and sustainment of the co-teaching model. The selection process rested on the nominator's judgment and the willingness of designated co-teaching team members to participate in the study. The findings resulted from self-reported data from districts that volunteered to

participate and may reflect limited perspectives. Those less supportive of collaborative co-teaching may have chosen not to participate. Participants may have reported what is ideal rather than what was actually occurring in their environments.

At their request, co-teaching partners (general education teachers and special education teachers) were interviewed together in one session rather than individually at all three sites. This could have either enhanced or limited the results of the research. Teachers may have been inhibited in their responses due to the presence of their partner. It was the impression of the researcher that teams felt very comfortable and safe in their responses during interviews. The opportunity to respond to questions with their partners may have actually enhanced responses due to the synergy of the partnership.

Findings are not to be generalized to other settings, but could be applied to other schools or partnership conditions. The reader should be aware that transferability might be influenced by difference in settings and contexts. Therefore, detailed descriptions that characterize the districts and school settings and that describe the participants engaging in leadership practices related to collaborative co-teaching were provided in Chapters 3 and 4. Results of this study were limited to the perceptions of its participants.

## **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of the dissertation includes an introduction to the topic that includes a brief legislative history of special education in the U.S., an overview of collaboration, co-teaching, and leadership considerations. The introduction is followed by the need for the study, a statement of purpose, the framework on which the study is built, research questions, limitations of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature related to the legislative background of special education, collaboration, co-teaching in the LRE and the principal's role in leadership of special education. It also describes the need for this research in its current context, and proposes further research needed. Chapter 3 describes the methods to be used in the present study, including an explanation of the study's design, the research questions, sampling procedures, the data collection, management, and analysis procedures, and discussion of validation procedures. Chapter 4 provides a thorough description of each site involved in the study. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study along with the



profiles of each school used in the case and Chapter 6 discusses conclusions, implications, recommendations for practice, and possibilities for future research.

## **Chapter Summary**

The education of students with disabilities has changed dramatically since 1975. The mandates of IDEIA require that students be granted access to the general education curriculum in the LRE and receive the specialized instruction they need to be successful. NCLB has mandated that all students will receive instruction from teachers who are highly qualified in their content areas. NCLB also mandates that all students, including those with disabilities, must demonstrate improved academic achievement on standardized assessments. Schools are challenged to comply with these requirements in the face of continual reductions in resources. Given these challenges, the importance of the principals' leadership is at an all time high. The purpose of this study is to address the gap in the literature regarding meaningful practices of the principals in support of co-teaching partnerships in the LRE. This study examines the practices of principals that are perceived by district level administrators, building principals, co-teaching partners, designated coaches, and principals themselves to be meaningful to the support of co-teaching in the LRE.

## **Chapter 2 - Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

The literature review for this study is organized into five major sections. The first section examines the historical background of the education of students with disabilities and the legislative mandates that have drastically changed the rigor and delivery of instruction to students with disabilities during the last sixty years. The second section provides a discussion of both teaming and collaboration leading into the theoretical/conceptual frameworks for the study. The third section explores the literature on co-teaching. The fourth section focuses on the evolving role of the school principal and the impact principals have on the education of all students within their buildings, including those who receive special education services. The fifth, and final, section examines the current discourse about the principal's role in supporting a co-teaching service delivery model of instruction in the LRE for students with disabilities and ends with a summary of the needs for future research on this topic.

### **Legislative History of Special Education**

Children with disabilities represent an especially vulnerable class of citizens. At the turn of the twentieth century, having a disability resulted in a student's separation from his or her same-aged non-disabled peers in the educational settings (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997). Historically, a student with a disability was removed from the general educational setting and treated as a patient rather than a student. Many children with disabilities were institutionalized, treated, and taught basic functional skills. The goal of institutionalization, treatment, and instruction was to limit the burden on society and hopefully produce a person that could exist in society and be economically productive (Croser, 2002; Stainback & Stainback, 1995).

Beginning in 1954 with the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case for desegregation, legislation has intensely influenced the treatment of individuals with disabilities in American society. As a result, the quality of education of individuals with disabilities has improved significantly (Heward & Lloyd-Smith, 1990).

#### ***1954 Brown v. Board of Education***

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ordered desegregation of schools in its ruling that separate education was not equal education in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The

*Brown* decision not only had a tremendous impact on societal rights for minorities, but also affected many aspects of educational law and procedure (Turnbull, 1993). While this case pursued the issue of race, parents of children with disabilities took the logic used and applied it to their own circumstances. They inquired whether the isolation of their children represented an education equal to that of other children. Parents began bringing their complaints to court. Three issues emerged: 1) the fairness of intelligence tests and the legitimacy of placing students in special education classes on the basis of these tests; 2) the cultural bias of the tests and the language in which the tests were administered; and 3) the arguments that schools could not afford to educate special students (Heward & Cavanaugh, 2001). Although it took time, the precedents set in *Brown* resulted in sweeping changes in the schools' policies and approaches to students with disabilities (Yell, Rogers & Rogers, 1998).

The *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling for desegregation sparked a series of legislative actions that not only improved the rights and treatment of minorities, but also of individuals with disabilities in the public arena. It initiated the beginning of the removal of students from institutions to placement in their home schools. This landmark case was followed several years later by the enactment of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

### ***1973 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act***

In 1973, the first major effort to protect persons with disabilities against discrimination based on those disabilities occurred when Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Yell, Rogers & Rogers, 1998). Section 504 states:

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States . . . solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any activity receiving federal financial assistance.

(Section 504, 29 U.S.C. § 794(a) as cited in Yell et al., 1998, p. 224)

Section 504 said that an individual could not be discriminated against solely by reason of his or her handicap. The Rehabilitation Act was primarily concerned with the public sector, but helped provide rights for special needs children. Just two years later, Congress passed the first piece of legislation dealing specifically with the education of students with disabilities in the U.S., the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

## ***1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***

In 1975, federal legislation conjoined the various pieces of federal and state legislation into one comprehensive law regarding the education of students with disabilities when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, EAHCA (Public Law 94-142). This Act was reauthorized in 1990 and became commonly known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The EAHCA, or IDEA, is directed primarily at the states, which are responsible for providing education to their citizens, and it has become the cornerstone for special education. The IDEA provided federal funding to states to assist them in educating students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). In the years prior to IDEA, preconceived notions of what a student should or should not be able to accomplish based on stereotypical prejudices had negative consequences on individuals' lives and their families' lives. As a result of IDEA, the U.S. is now providing individuals with disabilities an appropriate education and equipping them to be productive, happy, healthy, citizens who live as independently as they possibly can.

The majority of the many rules and regulations defining how IDEA operates fall under six major principles (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000):

1) Zero Reject

Schools must educate all children with disabilities. This principle applies regardless of the nature or severity of the disability; no child with disabilities may be excluded from a public education. Every state is required to locate, identify, and evaluate all children in the state ages birth through 21 who had or were suspected to have disabilities. This *child find* system is intended to ensure that each child has an appropriate education.

2) Nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation

Children must be assessed and evaluated fairly. Schools must use nonbiased, multi-factored methods of evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability and, if so, whether special education is needed. Testing and evaluation procedures must not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, or native language. All tests must be administered in the child's first language. Because most tests are somewhat biased in nature, identification and placement decisions cannot be made on the basis of a single

test score. These provisions of IDEA are known as protection in evaluation procedures.

3) Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

All children with disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of their disability, shall receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). This education must be provided at public expense - that is, without cost to the child's parents. A team of educators collaborates with parents to write an individualized education plan (IEP) for each student based on his or her needs.

4) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated alongside children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual. Students with disabilities should be removed to separate classes or schools only when the nature or severity of their disabilities is such that they cannot receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and services. The range of settings for students with special needs is wide (Heward & Cavanaugh, 2001):

- a. Private, specialized facilities.
- b. Special schools within the public school system.
- c. Full-time special classes.
- d. Regular classrooms and resource rooms.
- e. Regular classrooms with supplementary instruction and services.
- f. Regular classrooms with a consultant.
- g. Prescribed program under the direction of the regular classroom teacher.

While the IDEA emphasizes that LRE is a set of services and supports and not a particular place, the emphasis by special education advocates on gaining access to general education has resulted in a focus on setting (Kavale, 2002). Advocates maintain that LRE is a legal principle requiring students with disabilities to be educated in an environment as close as possible to the regular education environment provided to their non-disabled peers (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). It was included in the law to prohibit the practice of segregating special education students by placing them in special facilities or in classes that were located in isolated areas of the school building (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

5) Due Process Safeguards

Schools must provide due process safeguards to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents; providing students with legal rights and empowers their parents.

6) Parents and Student Participation and Shared Decision Making

Schools must collaborate with parents and students with disabilities in the design and implementation of special education services. The parents' (and, whenever appropriate, the student's) input and wishes must be considered in IEP goals and objectives, related-service needs, and placement decisions. The due process safeguards above mean that parents and students are important participants in the process, and that the most important education decisions are to be shared.

The passage of EAHCA addressed major educational issues raised by parents of children with disabilities following the 1954 *Brown* case. The first principle, Zero Reject, eliminated the argument that schools could not afford to educate special students. The second principle, nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation, addressed the concern regarding fairness of intelligence tests and the legitimacy of placing students in special education classes on the basis of these tests. This principle also addressed the concern regarding cultural bias of the tests and the language in which the tests were administered. The third and fourth principles, concerning FAPE and LRE respectively, are fundamental mandates of the Act (Kavale, 2002). LRE is particularly relevant to this study.

***2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB)***

In 2001, congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, Publ. L. No. 107-110) commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB played a significant role in the education of all children. The stated goal of NCLB is “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). It required minimal standards be set for student achievement as a measure of a school’s effectiveness. It was also an accountability measure for teachers and schools that improved schools and student achievement (Reder, 2007).

As part of NCLB’s intention to improve teacher quality and, thus, educational outcomes for children, it required local educational agencies to ensure that all teachers hired to teach core

academic subjects in Title 1 programs are highly qualified. In general, a highly qualified teacher is one with: full certification, a bachelor's degree, and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching.

NCLB led to improved accountability of our nation's educational system. Schools increased the rigor of instruction and raised expectations for all students. Students, including those with disabilities, have risen to meet the challenge. Educational leaders, in turn, are challenged by the growing demands for increased levels of academic achievement for all students (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012). This legislation, while not primarily considered a special education landmark, contained important implications for students with disabilities (Reder, 2007).

### ***2004 IDEA Reauthorization – IDEIA***

In order to align with the NCLB requirement that teachers promote success for all students, Congress reauthorized IDEA, formerly known as EAHCA, in 2004, and renamed it the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). The six major principles of the original EAHCA went unchanged. IDEIA continues to mandate that educators provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the LRE where they can access the general education curriculum and programs with age appropriate peers (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012). Through its many revisions, the requirement to provide education in the LRE for students with disabilities remains a cornerstone of this law (Smith, 2005b).

### ***Impact of Legislation***

Disability legislation of the last 25 years has been significant and progressive. U.S. laws have been reflective of a maturing society that has grown to be more accepting and open to people with disabilities. Since the enactment of EAHCA in 1975, school systems have been required to make a full range of alternative learning environments available to respond to the severity of individual students' needs. Later legislation such as NCLB furthered the mandates established in EAHCA. Reder (2007) posited, "Many administrators, teachers and advocates believe that NCLB has had a more profound impact on students with disabilities than IDEA because of its emphasis on including these students in the general education curriculum and in the accountability system" (p. 6). Increasing opportunities for students with disabilities to be included in the educational settings of their non-disabled peers has resulted in the restructuring of

services delivery models in many schools (Thousand & Villa, 1989). From the most restrictive categorical placement in private specialized facilities to total integration within the regular education classroom, the discussion of the most effective means to educate children with disabilities continues (Zigmond, 2003). Inclusive schools base their placement decisions “on the concept of student-centered appropriate education, not system-centered, convenience-based placements” (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000, p. 247).

The educational community has experienced a growing trend to create inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities. Placing students with disabilities into separate programs solely based on the child having learning and/or behavioral disabilities has never been acceptable. A large percentage of students with disabilities who might have been misplaced in special education settings in years past are now receiving special education services in the general education classroom. Although current research is equivocal regarding the educational outcomes of inclusion for all students with disabilities, proponents of inclusive practices assert valuable academic and social learning opportunities for all students. Students with and without disabilities can succeed in general education classrooms when supportive teachers, peers, administrators, specialists, and others work as a team to ensure that every child receives a meaningful and appropriate learning experience. Students with disabilities may receive benefit from the additional human and material resources that inclusive environments can provide (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Professionals, too, report that they have gained from working in inclusive classrooms by claiming to have grown professionally as they collaborated with colleagues to meet the needs of their learning communities (Austin, 2001; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996).

The prevailing culture in many schools encourages the individual nature of teaching, where general education and special education teachers are accustomed to working alone (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995). However, Janney et al. (1995) and her colleagues stated inclusive education requires teachers to look at their work in new ways that redefine its purpose, how it can be accomplished, and how the work they do connects with other professionals. Inclusive education can provide positive outcomes for students with or without disabilities, but it requires significant changes in how classrooms are structured, new understandings of professional roles, and an ongoing need for collaborative teaming (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003). Reinforced by legal trends, “the notion that teachers and other school personnel



(e.g., special educators, related services personnel such as speech and language therapists, teachers of students learning English, gifted and talented educators) can no longer be most effective as isolated professionals” (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008, pp. 13-14) is being acknowledged. Mandates that suggest a need for collaboration and co-teaching such as NCLB and IDEIA, along with numerous court cases related to provision of special education services in public schools, encourage collaborative partnerships between general and special education professionals (Arthaud, Aram, Breck, Doelling, & Bushrow, 2007; Conderman, Johnston-Rodrigues, & Hartman, 2009; Friend et al., 2010; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010).

It is imperative that schools discover innovative ways of closing the achievement gap between various groups of students, especially for those presenting the largest disparity in achievement. “At the heart of IDEIA and NCLB is the goal of increasing the achievement for all students – students with and without disabilities, students learning English as a second language, students who are considered disadvantaged” (Villa et al., 2008, p. 14). School leaders are vigorously searching for best practices, programs, and strategies to assist in closing the gap in order to meet state and federal standards. Schools have sought appropriate strategies and techniques to promote the education of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, which is generally considered the least restrictive placement for most learners. It is critical that educators pool their expertise and skills, and work together to meet the needs of all students by providing appropriate accommodations and modifications in general education classrooms (Friend et al., 2010).

While the requirements of IDEIA persevere, the nation continues to anxiously await the next reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB that was due in 2007. NCLB has given the country transparency about the progress of at-risk students, but its inflexible accountability provisions have become an obstacle to progress and have focused schools too much on a single test score. Now seven years past the due date for an update, and nearly all agree that it should be replaced with a law that gives systems and educators greater freedom, while continuing to fulfill the law’s original promise (Duncan, 2013). Secretary Arne Duncan (2013) said that NCLB has become a well intended, but overly-prescriptive law that created incentives to lower standards, encouraged teaching to the test, mislabeled many schools as failures, and prescribed a one-size-fits-all accountability system that failed to support local solutions and innovations.

In late 2011, states were offered the opportunity to seek waivers from some of the requirements of NCLB. The waivers were intended as a means to improve academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction for all students through state and local reforms. According to the Kansas ESEA Flexibility Waiver Fact Sheet (Kansas State Department of Education, 2015), Kansas sought a waiver in order to move away from the narrowly defined accountability system in NCLB that gave a limited and often misleading view of the success of schools in improving student achievement. Kansas' waiver application was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in July 2012 and granted a one-year extension in August 2014. Under the Waiver, states must address four principles:

- 1) College and career ready expectations for all students.
- 2) State developed differentiated recognition accountability and support.
- 3) Supporting effective instruction and leadership.
- 4) Reducing duplication and unnecessary burden.

The first principle requires that the state set new Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for schools in English language arts and math that are ambitious, but achievable. Kansas wanted to move away from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability system of NCLB which set a single, arbitrary target for performance for all schools and required that 100 percent of students be proficient in reading and math by 2014. Under the State Performance Plan (SPP) discussed earlier in this document, Kansas was measured on student performance in this area under Indicators 3B and 3C. This was one of the two data points from the SPP used in selecting districts for invitation to participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. While the Waiver moves Kansas away from the SPP requirement for one more year, the requirements to meet Indicator five benchmarks for LRE continue to be applicable. In sum, regardless of the uncertainty surrounding the reauthorization of NCLB and the approval of a Flexibility Waiver for Kansas, the most significant standard for pursuing a service delivery model that maximizes the potential for the greatest number of students to be educated in the LRE with highly qualified teachers while receiving the appropriate special education supports remains intact.

In addition to the requirement that each eligible student with a disability be provided with FAPE in the LRE, IDEIA also requires they be “taught by trained teachers who use research-based practices” (Crockett, 2002, p. 158). Cook and Friend (1995) asserted, “Although minor or major modifications in the level and amount of content, as well as modifications in the methods

of instruction, probably will be required, the basic content of the general curriculum should be determined to be appropriate for the student” (p. 6). Efforts to educate students in the LRE in which they are instructed by highly qualified core content teachers, while also receiving specialized services, has brought about the need for a variety of service delivery options (Friend, 2008). The FAPE and LRE mandates have played a formative role in the inception of collaborative co-teaching in public schools (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Walsh & Jones, 2004).

Creating co-teaching partnerships between highly qualified general educators, who have demonstrated subject area expertise, and special educators, who have complementary expertise in specialized content and strategies for adjusting curriculum, instruction, and the learning environment, also increases the probability of implementing the research-based curricular and instructional approaches required by NCLB and the general education early intervention approaches forwarded by IDEIA (Villa & Thousand, 2011). Co-teaching partnerships are particularly important for educators across the nation to both implement new curriculum standards and differentiate instruction, in order to provide students with learning and language differences access to these rigorous standards.

In summary, “Federal legislative changes, such as those required by IDEIA of 2004 (Publ. L. No. 108-446) and the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; Pub. L. No. 107-110) commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) have focused attention on students with increasingly diverse learning characteristics achieving high academic performance in general education” (Villa et al., 2013, p. 12). Co-teaching teams and partnerships are being created in many districts across the nation to facilitate an appropriate service delivery model to ensure that students receive the specialized education services to which they are entitled while in the LRE possible. The principal’s role in the implementation and sustainability of a collaborative co-teaching model is the focus of this study.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks**

Andrew Carnegie, an American industrialist who amassed a fortune in the steel industry before becoming a major philanthropist, once said, “teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results” (Unknown Author, n.d.). Teamwork is a crucial part of the education profession. Teamwork means that

educators will work cooperatively with their colleagues, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between persons. Teams are created when members need to work closely together to achieve a joint outcome. Their actions are interdependent, but they are fully committed to a single result. Strong leaders guide and support the team, ensure coordinated action, assist with the resolution of disputes and remove disruptive or incompetent members.

Relatedly, collaboration in schools is a concept with wide-ranging and exciting implications for the education of all children and the effectiveness of all educators. The essence of collaboration involves sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus. Originally termed “collaborative consultation,” the emphasis was upon the special educator and the classroom teacher sharing information about a child so as to better plan an appropriate educational program (Powell, 2014). The process involves joint ownership of decisions and collective responsibility for outcomes. In 1987, Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb and Nevins defined consultation as an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems. The operant definition was later expanded to refer to the participants as co-equal partners (Friend & Cook, 1992) and as having a shared vision (Wiig, 1992). The expanding definition reflected a broadening of the concept of collaboration in common professional practice. Collaboration has become the contemporary model of school practice for professional interactions (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

Collaboration takes place when members of an inclusive learning community work together as equals to assist students to succeed in the classroom. Friend and Cook (1992, pp. 6-28) listed the characteristics of successful collaboration as follows:

- 1) Collaboration is voluntary.
- 2) Collaboration requires parity among participants.
- 3) Collaboration is based on mutual goals.
- 4) Collaboration depends on shared responsibility for participation and decision making.
- 5) Individuals who collaborate share their resources.
- 6) Individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes.

Teamwork and collaboration are related concepts that are foundational to the practice of co-teaching. This study proposes to examine selected district teams in Kansas who are participating in the State’s Co-Teaching Initiative. Kansas’ co-teaching teams work together

toward the common goal of providing special education services to students with disabilities in the LRE of the general classroom. They accomplish this through the collaborative service delivery model of co-teaching between a general education teacher and a special educator. A designated co-teaching coach is a member of each team and assists with the collaborative efforts of the co-teaching partners. While this study examined the perspectives of all designated team members, it focuses on the supportive practices of one team member in particular – the building principal.

### ***Teaming – Tuckman’s Model***

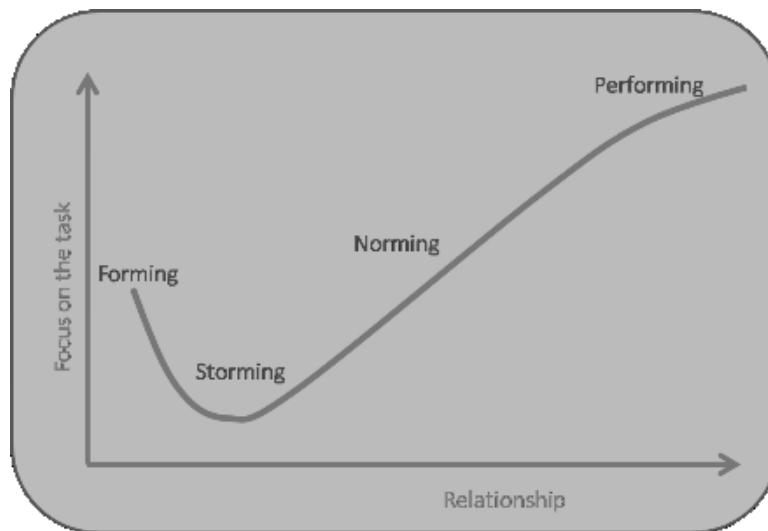
The most well-known teamwork theory is Bruce Tuckman’s team stages model (Unknown Author, n.d.) Tuckman (1965) described working with a team of social psychologists on behalf of the U.S. Navy. The team studied small group behavior from several perspectives. In doing so, Tuckman reviewed 50 articles on group development and noticed that there were two features common to these small groups: the interpersonal or group structure and the task activity. From this he identified that groups evolved into teams via four common stages. Tuckman’s model is significant, because it recognizes the fact that groups do not start fully formed and functioning. He suggests that teams grow through clearly defined stages, from their creation as groups of individuals, to cohesive, task-focused teams. Rickards and Moger (2000) report, “our own inspection of contemporary texts of project team dynamics revealed a general reluctance to incorporate such models from the literature of team development, with the exception of the Tuckman and Jensen model” (p. 281). Tuckman’s team development model forms the basis of the theoretical framework for this study.

According to Tuckman, team development begins with an orientation, testing phase that often leads to a second phase characterized by a degree of conflict. The conflict phase generally resolves itself, leading to a third more socially cohesive phase. Finally, groups settle to a functional phase, during which they focus on role-relatedness. To summarize these four phases, Tuckman coined the oft-quoted terms: “forming,” “storming,” “norming,” and “performing”. Tuckman later added a fifth stage, which he calls “adjourning,” after he and Jensen reviewed his stages of team development theory in 1977. More recently, the stages of team development have been described as “assemble, order, perform, and transform” (Bailey & Koney, 2000). The first

four phases are applicable to the purposes of this study for which Tuckman’s original terminology was used.

Tuckman’s teamwork theory is best illustrated on a graph that shows the link between group relationships (the horizontal axis) and task focus (the vertical axis). See Figure 2.1. The optimal “performing” position is reached when relationships have developed within the group and it has started delivering with a clear focus on the task. Tuckman’s ideas clearly indicate that it takes time to reach the “performing” stage and it is typical for teams to go through ups and downs as they develop relationships.

**Figure 2.1 The 4 Phases of Tuckman’s Teamwork Theory**



In the first stage, “forming,” the team comes together and begins to prepare for their future work. Team members are first introduced to their purpose and the goals they are to accomplish (Fulk, Bell, & Bodie, 2011). Individuals wonder what is expected of them and need roles and responsibilities with clear objectives. The content of team interaction is one of becoming oriented to the task (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). Team members are motivated and enthusiastic about working to achieve the desired results (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977); however, they experience uncertainty about their purposes, feelings of anxiety, low trust of one another, and reluctance to share ideas and opinions (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Despite this uncertainty, team members typically avoid conflict in this stage (Tuckman 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Indicators of this stage might include unclear objectives, un-involvement, uncommitted members, confusion, low morale, hidden feelings, and poor listening (Galbraith & Webb, 2013).

The second stage, “storming,” is a time of conflict and disagreement for team members (Tuckman, 1965). At this point the differences among team members in terms of ideas, priorities, and ways of working become apparent (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). In the storming phase, people begin to see themselves as part of a team; however, at this stage they may challenge each other, and the team leader, about such things as what the team is doing and how things should be done (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). During this stage there is conflict inside and outside the team. Team members are resistant to interpersonal development (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). Rather than being united, team members become polarized around the aforementioned issues, competing to exercise influence over direction of the team (Fulk et al., 2011). There is resistance to group influence and task requirements as emotional responses to demands surface (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). Interpersonal conflicts arise with arguments about roles and responsibilities or differing views or standards. This may result in some loss of performance or focus on the task, as Figure 2.1 illustrates. Activities that mark this phase include lack of cohesion, subjectivity, hidden agendas, conflicts, confrontations, volatility, resentment, anger, inconsistency, and failure (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). Though painful for some team members, this conflict is necessary for the team members to develop their understanding of their roles and for the team to acquire the rules that will guide interactions and task-related work (Weaver & Farrell, 1997). Afterwards, teams that develop, as posited by Tuckman and Jensen, move on to the third stage (Fulk et al., 2011).

During the third stage, known as “norming,” the team attains cohesion (Bonebright, 2010). Team members start to come together, developing processes, establishing ground rules, and clarifying roles. Cohesiveness develops, new standards evolve and new roles are adopted. Members successfully resolve conflict, build trust and begin to cooperate. There is open exchange of relevant interpretations and intimate, personal opinions are expressed. This phase is characterized by a growing sense of togetherness. The team moves from relating to one another toward making decisions about the team’s goals, how to accomplish the team’s goals, attempting to resolve difference, negotiating with one another, avoiding conflicts over tasks, and refocusing on the team members’ common goals (Bonebright, 2010). In addition, role ambiguity experienced by members earlier is replaced by work to clarify roles and responsibilities of team

members (Bonebright, 2010). Feeling committed to the team, team members seek to maintain the team (Tuckman, 1965). Indicators of the norming phase include questioning performance, reviewing/clarifying objectives, changing/confirming roles, open risky issues, assertiveness, listening, testing new ground, and identifying strengths and weaknesses (Galbraith & Webb, 2013). These changes clear the way for the team to move to the next stage in its development, the performing stage (Fulk et al., 2011).

Comprised of interdependent members, the team is committed to, and becomes effective at problem solving during the performing stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Performing is where increased focus on both the task, and on team relationships, combine to provide synergy. The team members have reached a consensus about how they should work together and begin to channel their energies towards achieving their goals with an intensive focus (Bonebright, 2010; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Roles become flexible and functional. Structural issues have been resolved and structure can support task performance. The team is productive and adapts quickly to compensate for strengths and weaknesses. The interaction of team members involves self-evaluation. Indicators of the performing stage include creativity, initiative, flexibility, open relationships, pride, concern for people, learning, confidence, high morale, and success. Though conflicts experienced in earlier stages may still occur, they are addressed in a productive manner (Fulk et al., 2011).

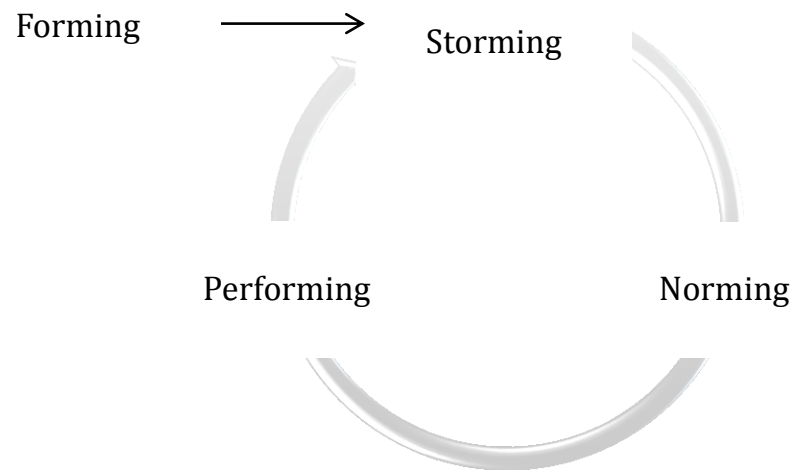
The value of Tuckman's model is that it helps us understand that teams of varying sizes evolve through a series of stages. Participants may recognize these stages in some way; however, there might only be a limited consciousness of the changes in their implications (Smith, 2005a). Knowledge of team development stages also helps when considering how teams may encounter different problems at different stages of their development. It also gives us a useful understanding of different team requirements at different times. Knowing whether a team is forming, storming, norming, or performing allows for better understanding of the team's interactions and behaviors, enabling quicker conflict resolution, appropriate leadership styles and ultimately increased productivity. The obvious implication is that if principals develop an appreciation of the processes surrounding team development, it would be possible to enhance team effectiveness and functioning (Smith, 2005a).

The stages of team development are considered by some (Rickards & Moger, 2000) to be somewhat idealistic, but it is a generally accepted principle that groups will pass through



predictable stages prior to arriving at effective performance. One limitation of the model is that it projects team building as linear and sequential. Although it is a useful analytical tool, it must be remembered that some teams may “loop” around in their development. (Refer to Figure 2.2 in this regard.) For example, not all teams evolve smoothly through Tuckman’s stages, but may oscillate between norming and storming until they either begin to function, or are disbanded. Regardless of limitations, well-conceived models can be useful in helping to understand and better manage our circumstances.

**Figure 2.2 Nonlinear Team Development**



A few researchers, such as Rickards and Moger (2000), have modified Tuckman’s model. Rickards and Moger developed their model in a manner that “simplifies and yet extends” (p. 281) the classic model presented by Tuckman. They developed their model to address “teams that never seemed to achieve a satisfactory level of coherence” (p. 277) and “to explain what [they] regarded as outstanding creative performance” (p. 277) in other teams. The questions asked by Rickards and Moger in their study “implied that teams had to deal with barriers of some kind” (p. 277). The team development framework proposed by Rickards and Moger reworked the original Tuckman model to illustrate this point (p. 277).

In their model, Rickards and Moger (2000) replace the four stages with two potential barriers that they posit can be breached through creative leadership interventions. The first barrier is described as a relatively weak barrier representing “interpersonal and intra-personal

forces that have to be overcome prior to norm formation” (p. 277). Most teams overcome this barrier. Those that are unable to breach the weak barrier “exhibit dysfunctional behaviour” (p. 278). In contrast, Rickards and Moger (2000) stated that, “fewer teams pass through the strong barrier [those that do] display exceptional creative performance that is easy to recognize” (p. 278). In the review of literature, this researcher did not uncover later studies that utilized Rickards’ and Moger’s proposed framework. Based on their own confession, the barriers proposed in their model are “barriers whose characteristics are in need of further study” (p. 281). Rickards and Moger (2000) also acknowledge that, “more extensive studies will be required to test the proposal” (p. 281). For these reasons this particular model was not selected to guide this study.

### ***Teaming – Sheard and Kakabadse’s Model***

In 2002, Sheard and Kakabadse published an article that developed and validated a new framework for team development. Their framework “links the concept of [Tuckman’s] team-development process, group transition and [Adair’s (1986) extended] group areas of need into a single model” (p. 135). Adair postulated that groups share certain common needs that can be categorized into three basic elements of task, group and individual. A fourth element, environment, was added to Adair’s three elements. Sheard and Kakabadse utilized Tuckman’s forming, storming, norming, and performing as an underlying base to which Adair’s extended group areas of need were overlaid to form a grid. Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) “proposed that before the transition from a loose group to an effective team may be regarded as complete, all four basic elements must be aligned” (p. 135). To this integrated team-development framework, Adair’s “areas of need were broken down into lower levels of granularity, generating nine key factors that collectively differentiate a loose group from an effective team” (p. 138). The nine key factors delineated by Sheard and Kakadabse are:

- 1) Clearly defined goals – “without a task to perform a group of individuals has no reason to transform into a team” (2002, p. 138); “It is considered essential that the task be articulated to the team in terms of clearly defined goals...The process of defining a team’s goal is a strategic process, in which that which the team is to achieve is clearly defined, but the process by which it is achieved is left to the team” (2004, p. 60).

- 2) Priorities – “due to practical constraints of time, money and available resources, an organization must choose a small number of options from those available, make them the organizational priority and pursue only those” (2002, p. 138).
- 3) Roles and responsibilities – “capture the essence of what it is that is important” (2002, p. 138); “each individual team member must have complementary roles and responsibilities covering all that are relevant to delivering the team’s goal” (2004, p. 60).
- 4) Self-awareness – “associated with the impact of an individual’s behaviour on their surroundings. The ability to foresee the consequences of one’s actions and behaviour is particularly important in a team context.” (2002, p. 138); “behaviour, both conscious and unconscious, of individuals, can have a profound impact on other team members, which in turn can either positively or negatively impact on a team’s performance” (2004, p. 60).
- 5) Leadership – “encompassing all aspects ... as they relate to the performance of the team” (2002, p. 139).
- 6) Group dynamics – “a team is more than simply a collection of individuals working towards a common goal, it is also a social system” (2002, p. 139); “a team is more than simply a collection of individuals working towards a common goal; it is also a social system...effective teams are clearly well ordered, supportive social systems in which each member has a place which he is comfortable with” (2004, p. 61).
- 7) Communication – “the regular flow of information about the job, the task and how it is being undertaken by the team...The effective communication between individuals, up and down the organizational hierarchy, is a key factor in mobilizing a team around the organizational problem it is intended to address” (2004, p. 61).
- 8) Infrastructure – “includes all macro organization issues” (p. 139); “includes all macro organization issues from IT systems and human resources support to the ability of the senior management team to translate its strategy into a series of goals suitable for a series of teams to tackle” (2004, p. 61).
- 9) Context - “significant differences in culture [do] exist within organizations both horizontally in different parts of the organization and vertically at different levels within it” (2004, p. 61).

In 2004, Sheard and Kakabadse published another article on the creation of an effective and high performing team that applied the framework developed in their 2002 work. Their theory is that Tuckman's model can be "extended and expanded into an integrated team development process (ITDP) to provide a deeper level of insight into the nature of the transformation process" (p. 45). In their report, Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) defined the nine key factors addressed in their previous work and listed above. These factors are relevant to a team at each stage of the transformation process. In their model, Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) aligned the nine key factors with the appropriate stages of Tuckman's team development model to form a landscape for team development. The concepts in Sheard and Kakabadse's model were used to guide this study.

Bennett and Gadlin (2012) researched interdisciplinary collaboration in the realm of team science. When discussing "highly integrated and interactive collaborative teams" (p. 2), they refer to a group "that is led by one or more scientists and is composed of researchers with diverse backgrounds and different areas of expertise" (p. 2). In their study, they analyzed in-depth interviews with members of highly successful research teams as well as teams that were unsuccessful in meeting their goals or ended in conflicts. Through this process, Bennett and Gadlin identified ten key elements that appear critical for collaborative team success and effectiveness:

- 1) Effective leadership and management skills.
- 2) Self- and other-awareness.
- 3) Trust is established among team members.
- 4) Strategies developed for communicating openly.
- 5) Effective building of a team, including setting shared expectations and defining roles and responsibilities.
- 6) Creating, sharing, and revisiting a shared vision.
- 7) Making provisions for appropriate recognition and credit.
- 8) Promoting disagreement while containing conflict.
- 9) Learning each other's languages.
- 10) Enjoying the science and the work together.

Bennett and Gadlin (2012) conclude that there are many factors that contribute to successful collaboration; however, "Trust is among the most critical elements" (p. 12). Without

established trust, it is very difficult for a team to continue working together toward a common goal.

Over half of the key elements to team success and effectiveness outlined by Bennett and Gadlin are also recognized in the previously discussed elements of effective teams identified by Sheard and Kakabadse. The similarities validate the use of Sheard and Kakabadse's elements as a conceptual framework for this study. It is noteworthy that the composition of teams studied in Bennett's and Gadlin's work run parallel to the type of collaborative teams at the heart of this research project, co-teaching teams.

### ***Collaboration***

Collaboration has been embraced as a vital method of problem solving in the business world for nearly 60 years (Elliott, 2001). While there has been a wealth of discourse on the topic during that time, there is substantively less consensus regarding a definition of collaboration or description of the collaborative process (Jenni & Mauriel, 2004; Montiel-Overall, 2005). Van Benschoten (2008) summarized that "Lieberman (1986) identified collaborative work as a complex process, encompassing various attributes and skills including affirmation (John-Steiner, Weber, & Minnis, 1998), information sharing (Drucker, 1999), interdependency (Riordan & da Costa, 1996), reciprocity (Crow, 1998), and shared power (Johnson & Thomas, 1997)" (p. 51). A definition of collaboration posited by Schrage (1990) "is a process of *shared creation*: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own" (p. 40).

From the scientific field, Bennett and Gadlin (2012) discuss a continuum of collaboration from minimal levels to significant levels of interaction and team science. They describe collaborations as, "identifiable by a number of characteristics that reveal the ability of the group to achieve a high level of integration and interaction" (p. 2). Although their work is situated in the discipline of scientific research and inquiry, the ten characteristics of collaborative teams described by Bennett and Gadlin are applicable to collaborative teams in other disciplines.

According to Dr. Marilyn Friend (2008), collaboration has become a defining characteristic of society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Major fields such as business, health, social services, and technology are adopting the concept of collaboration as a tool for success and praising the results of this process. Collaboration has become the primary contemporary strategy to foster

innovation, create effective programs, and sustain them over time. Since schools reflect the society in which they exist, it has become essential that they, too, embrace collaboration (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

In education, collaboration is intended to “promote the most effective teaching possible for the greatest number of students” (Pugach & Johnson 1995, p. 178). Collaborative team members provide help to each other, often at significant levels. Collaborators face different challenges than team members. They will share goals, but they will often have competing goals as well. In addition, the collaborators’ shared goals are typically only a small piece of their respective responsibilities, unlike team members. Collaborators cannot rely on a leader to resolve differences. Collaboration has become the contemporary model of school practice for professional interactions (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

In 1982, Little described four types of collaborative activities that appear crucial for continuous professional development: 1) teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice; 2) teachers are frequently observed and provided with useful critiques of their teaching; 3) teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together; and 4) teachers teach each other the practice of teaching. Schools are thereby distinguished on the basis of specific support for discussion of classroom practice, mutual observation and critique, shared efforts to design and prepare curriculum, and shared participation in the business of instructional improvement. Little argues that these four types of practices clearly distinguish the more successful from the less successful schools (1982).

Brinkman and Twiford stated that, “researchers reported a strong need for collaboration ... in today’s schools” (2012, p. 3). One reason for this comes from the legislative and legal impetus of IDEIA and NCLB as previously discussed. The expectation concerning LRE and the assumption that the general education classroom is that environment for most students leads almost inevitably to increased attention to collaboration (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Many writers argue that the ability of professionals from different disciplines to work together productively and harmoniously may be the single most important factor influencing inclusion (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; McCormick, Noonan, Ogata, & Heck, 2001). Embedded within the education mandate of the IDEIA is an acknowledgment that educational personnel must collaborate with one another and with families of children eligible for special education services

if they are to meet the unique and diverse needs of these children and youth (Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996). Schools are working with increasingly diverse student populations; all school personnel are under tremendous pressure to ensure that all students achieve higher academic standards. In this context, collaboration is not a luxury; it is a necessity (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

Another reason educators need to collaborate is that the collective knowledge of our society has become so extensive that it would be impossible for any educator to know all there is to know about a given topic. Schmoker, 1999, states that the “evidence for the benefits of collaboration, rightly conducted, are overwhelming” (p. 12). The nature of the complex work of teaching “cannot be accomplished by even the most knowledgeable individuals working alone” (Little 1990a, p. 520). When considering experts in the school, core content area experts come to mind immediately; however, upon further analysis, it is realized that there is also a need for experts in other areas including instructional strategies, cooperative learning strategies, responding to troubling behavior, assessment practices, and social skills. Expert educators are needed in a plethora of contexts. When colleagues work together, they can draw on each other’s knowledge and skills and collectively create more effective schools for our students (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). In such a working relationship, the expertise of teachers is viewed as complementary (Gerber & Popp, 2000). Little (1990a) identified a strong relationship between the right kind of collegiality and improvements for both teachers and students:

- Remarkable gains in achievement.
- Higher-quality solutions to problems.
- Increased confidence among all school community members.
- Teachers’ ability to support on another’s strengths and to accommodate weaknesses.
- The ability to examine and test new ideas, methods, and materials.
- More systematic assistance to beginning teachers.
- An expanded pool of ideas, materials, and methods.

Lortie (as cited in Little, 1987, pp. 501-502) makes the point that the prevailing isolation in which teachers work does little to “add to the intellectual capital of the profession”. In the business of teaching and school improvement, intellectual capital – ideas, fresh solutions, and effective teaching methods – is the most precious commodity (Schmoker, 1999).

Teachers will need to learn and practice specific skills, especially communication skills (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). “Clear, open and continuous communication is vital to successful planning and to implementing a shared curriculum” (Ploessl et al., 2010). In addition to appropriate communication skills, educators need to learn how to work together. Experienced teachers need to understand how to work effectively with new teachers and with new partners who may have less experience in collaboration. Effective collaboration is always about lifelong learning. Successful collaborators believe that there is still more to know, and they are respectful of their colleagues’ levels of understanding and comfort in working together (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Most importantly, they need skills for engaging in a problem-solving process with others to reach a shared goal. Collaboration is not about working with friends, or even necessarily with like-minded people. Collaboration is about trust and respect. It is about working together to create better outcomes for all students. Collaboration is not a personal preference; it is a strategy to do what is best for students (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Walther-Thomas reported benefits of collaboration such as teacher satisfaction, professional and personal growth, and improved academic performance and peer relationships (1997).

There are many challenges inherent in working in a collaborative model. Principals and teachers must first address pragmatic barriers in order to make collaboration work (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Walther-Thomas (1997) identified a number of challenges and barriers that impact the success of collaborative teaching in schools, including planning time, scheduling, caseloads, administrative support, and staff development. By far, the biggest of these barrier is time, not just time to work together, but time for constructive communication (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Time is a precious resource in a school environment. Some principals are hesitant to support adults working together when it appears that such time is taken away from instruction. They mistakenly see collaboration as less important than direct teaching, forgetting that teaching could be significantly more effective as the result of the collaboration. Administrative support is needed to find time for collaboration and access it on a regular basis. Not much time is available for collaborating with colleagues, unless collaboration is expected as a priority (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

For collaborative practices to be implemented and sustained in a school system, we need to raise teachers’ and administrators’ understanding of and commitment to collaboration as a critical part of school functioning, and then to extend that understanding to the general



community (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). After a general notion of commitment to collaboration, the most important factor in making collaboration a reality in schools is the principal. A district level expectation for collaboration is helpful; however, for a collaborative environment to flourish, the principal must not only desire a collaborative culture, but also be willing to express that expectation and devote resources to reaching it.

Administrators sometimes do not understand the complexities of collaboration, and consequently, they are not sure how to nurture it, assess it and determine the type of professional development needed to make it happen. They are uncertain of the most effective practices to support such a model. Principals need to know how to create a vision for collaboration as well as how to create structures and processes for collaboration. Principals can help their faculty members develop technical skills involved in collaboration. They need to know what the skills are, model them appropriately, and provide professional development opportunities that will enable people to develop new skills and enhance existing ones. It is also important for school leaders to stay involved in collaboration efforts (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Acknowledgement of the role of the administrator, especially the principal, in establishing a collaborative climate also is consistent with previous research in both the special education and the general education literature (Walther-Thomas, 1997). The principals' leadership shapes decisions that impact the schools' instruction management, climate, and ultimately the work of the staff (Bossert et al., 1982; Sergiovanni, 1984).

The education community, experiencing pressures of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with its commitment to inclusive education, testing and accountability, a diverse student population, and diminishing resources has turned to the collaborative approach. Collaboration is a means to accomplish the complex goals of schools, a way to build community while responding to the many pressures of the contemporary education system. Many education stakeholders believe that the expansion of collaboration as a technique holds promise for providing a quality-learning environment for all children. The adoption of the concept of collaboration in the context of providing appropriate education to students with disabilities in the LRE has led to the development of various co-teaching models. One co-teaching model was the focus of this study.

Although there has been much discussion about collaboration on a theoretical level, not all researchers of collaboration have supported the concept of collaboration models or theory (Van Benschoten, 2008). A review of the literature on collaboration theory by this researcher

did not uncover a solid theoretical framework on collaboration, nor did it uncover a more recent version of Little's collaborative activities. Rather, the literature review revealed that Little's work continues to be referenced in studies on collaboration (Benson, 2011; Ertesvag, 2011; Little, 1990a; McCafferty, 1994). Therefore, Little's collaborative activities aided in shaping this study as the researcher examined the perspectives of six co-teaching team members for each of the three co-teaching teams to be studied. The objective was to explore the practices of the building level administrator that were most supportive of the collaborative co-teaching service delivery model of instruction for students with disabilities in the LRE.

### ***Collegiality and Collaborative Activities***

Merriam-Webster Online defines collegiality as “the cooperative relationship of colleagues” and collaboration as, “to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In other words, the term collegial is used to describe the working relationship between peers while collaboration is used as a verb to describe the actual work done by collegial partners. Collegial relationships are important in collaborative schools (Peterson, 1994). They exist when teachers discuss problems and difficulties, share ideas and knowledge, exchange techniques and approaches, observe one another's work, and collaborate on instructional projects (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989; Smylie, 1988). Strong collegial relationships enhance productivity, staff development, and school improvement efforts. Collegiality increases the capacity for change and improvement, because collegial relationships provide powerful sources of stimulation, motivation, and new ideas (Rosenholtz, 1989). Several researchers have found that collegial systems generate greater productivity in school improvement efforts (Oja & Pine, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989; Smylie, 1988).

### ***Collegiality***

Little (1982) and Rosenholtz (1989) discovered key behaviors in schools with strong collegial orientations. In these schools, teachers value professional relationships, share ideas, and readily exchange new techniques. Teachers and administrators spend time observing each other, and they instruct each other in the craft of teaching through formal and informal demonstrations. These interactions can build a powerful and shared technical language about teaching and learning that is precise and concrete. Collegial environments favor in-depth

problem solving and planning. Interactions among staff and administrators foster more successful staff development, ongoing refinement of instruction, and improved teaching.

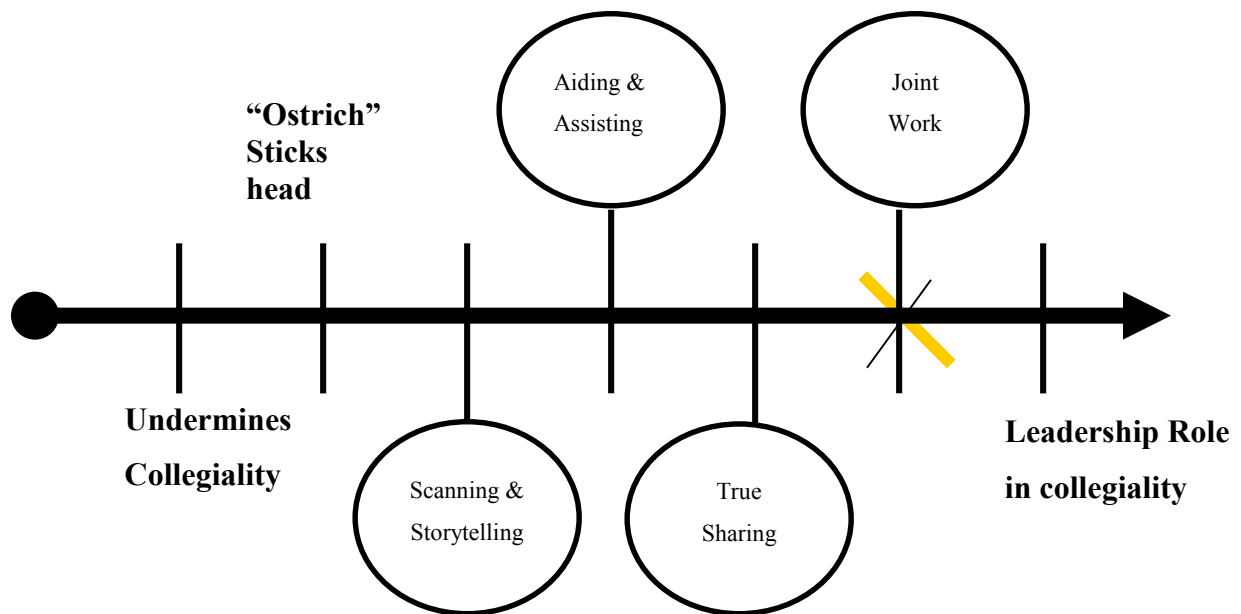
Looking at the form that collaboration between teachers may take, Little (1990a) distinguishes four different forms of collegial relations that reflect differences in the strength of the relationships involved and that can be situated on a continuum from independence (weakest) to interdependence (strongest) as shown in figure 2.3:

- 1) Storytelling and scanning for ideas - Teachers exchange experiences, gather information, nourish their friendships, but keep the talk far from the actual practice in their classrooms. Learning flows in one direction communicated as anecdotes not directly connected to the hearer's experience. Teachers share incomplete anecdotes about practice, complain, and gripe. Interchange is neither deep nor focused on problem solving.
- 2) Aid and assistance - Again, learning flows in one direction. Teachers provide aid and assistance to colleagues, but only when asked for advice and even then, they offer little evaluation and do not interfere with the other teacher's work. The explicit asking is an important condition and it is seen as a request for help. Asking for help may be considered acceptable for a beginning colleague, but not for an experienced one. Deep relationships of exchange are seldom established.
- 3) Sharing - Learning flows in two directions, but is not applied and adapted into new learning. Experiences are mutually exchanged. Teachers share much about themselves, use an expanded pool of resources and knowledge, and frequently share ideas and suggestions that can lead to change in the other teacher's practice. Other than sharing information, teachers undertake little or no actual work together. The form and consequence of sharing can differ, depending for example on the professional beliefs and norms in the school culture (e.g. traditional norms of no-interference versus shared norms of experimentation and mutual support).
- 4) Joint work - True collaboration in the form of teaming, co-teaching, planning, observation, action research, sustained peer coaching, mentoring, etc. A relationship that induces a sense of mutual obligation, exposes each participant's thoughts and behavior to the scrutiny and evaluation of the other participant, and promotes an interdependence that previously was not part of the relationship. In contrast to the

first three types of collegiality, joint work provides the opportunity for teachers to develop deeper and richer ties to fellow staff and to build more productive working relationships. Joint work is the highest and most extended form of collegiality. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991, p. 47) note that joint work “implies and creates stronger interdependence, shared responsibility, collective commitment and improvement, and greater readiness to participate in the difficult business of review and critique” of their colleagues’ work. Finally, joint work, refers to “encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers’ initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work” (Little 1990a, p. 519). Joint work provides ample support and complex connections to improve staff relationships and collaboration.

**Figure 2.3 Continuum of Collegiality**

(Derived from Judith Warren-Little)



In her widely cited literature review, Judith Warren-Little argues, “A lot of what passes for collegiality does not add up to much” (1990b, p. 180). The first three types of collegial relationships illustrated in Figure 2.3 are weak in shaping deeper, more productive professional relationships, although they involve some interaction. Only the fourth type, joint work, is “strong enough to contribute to a collaborative culture of enduring benefit”.

### ***Collaborative Activities – Judith Warren-Little***

According to Judith Warren-Little (1982), schools are distinguished from one another by the interactions that are encouraged, discouraged, or met with some degree of indifference. Little conducted a focused ethnography study of the school as a workplace utilizing semi-structured interviews and observations. She specifically examined “organizational characteristics conducive to continued ‘learning on the job’” (p.325). Little determined that from the large array of interactions that can be called collegial in character, four types of activities appear crucial:

- 1) Teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice.
- 2) Teachers are frequently observed and provided with useful critiques of their teaching.
- 3) Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together.
- 4) Teachers teach each other the practice of teaching.

In the first activity Little names, teacher talk about teaching practices, teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice (as distinct from teacher characteristics and failing, the social lives of teachers, the foibles and failures of students and their families, and the unfortunate demands of society on the school). By such talk, teachers build up a shared language adequate to the complexity of teaching, capable of distinguishing one practice and its virtues from another, and capable of integrating large bodies of practice into distinct and sensible perspectives on the business of teaching. Other things being equal, the utility of collegial work and the rigor of experimentation with teaching are direct functions of the concreteness, precision, and coherence of the shared language.

The second activity described by Little in the abovementioned list is frequent observations and critiques of instructional practices. Teachers and administrators frequently *observe* each other teaching, and provide each other with useful (if potentially frightening) evaluations of their teaching. Only such observation and feedback can provide shared referents

for the shared language of teaching, and both demand and provide the precision and concreteness, which makes the talk about teaching useful.

The third activity Little describes is teacher collaborative planning. Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together. The most astute observations remain academic (“just theory”) without the machinery to act on them. By joint work on materials, teachers share the considerable burden of developmental required by long-term improvement, confirming their emerging understanding of their approach, and make rising standards for their work attainable by them and by their students.

Finally, the fourth activity Little discusses is “*teachers and administrators teach each other the practice of teaching*” (pp. 12-13, emphasis in original). In the most adaptable schools, at one time or another most staff on some topic or task are permitted and encouraged to play the role of instructor for others. In this way, the school makes maximum use of its own resources.

Little posits, “these four types of practices so clearly distinguish the more successful from the less successful schools, the more adaptable from the less adaptable schools, that we have termed them the ‘critical practices of adaptability’” (1982, p. 332). Little concludes her review of the literature by challenging teachers to work together as colleagues, often and fruitfully, toward a compelling goal. She further notes that, “the accomplishments of individuals and groups must be recognized and celebrated” (Little, 1990b, p. 188).

Recent researchers have explicitly utilized Little’s 1982 collaborative activities as a theoretical framework for their studies. Such researchers include: Dr. Sigrun Ertesvag in his 2011 work on the role of classroom characteristics and individual factors on teachers’ collaboration, Karen Benson in her 2011 doctoral dissertation on teacher collaboration, and Stephen McCafferty in his 1994 study of collegial teaming. The literature review conducted by this researcher revealed that Little’s collaborative activities continue to be used as a framework for academic studies and Little’s activities form a foundation for the art of co-teaching in the general education classroom. Therefore, Little’s work contributes to the framework of this study.

## **Co-Teaching**

As a result of federal legislation and related policy changes, co-teaching has evolved rapidly as a strategy for ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the same

curriculum as other students while receiving the specialized instruction to which they are entitled (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012). Marilyn Friend stated, “When No Child Left Behind requirements intersect with the traditional principles on which IDEIA is based, a strong component of a rationale for co-teaching can be established” (2008, p. 37). Teachers and other professionals have a need to combine their expertise by working collaboratively to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education with access to the general education curriculum in the LRE. In 2008, Kloo and Zigmond commented that, “co-teaching has been preferred as one way of ensuring that students with disabilities benefit from core content instruction taught by content specialists in general education classrooms” (p. 13). In this model, the special educator’s role is that of access expert who provides the supportive expertise to ensure that all students are able to access the general education curriculum successfully (Villa et al., 2013).

In 2007, Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook established co-teaching as a specific service delivery option based on collaboration between two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a group of students (Villa et al., 2013). They identify co-teaching as an option designed to meet the educational needs of students with diverse learning styles. Co-teaching increases instructional options, improves educational programs, reduces stigmatization for students, and provides support to professionals involved. Students at all academic levels benefit from alternative assignments and greater teacher attention in small-group activities that co-teaching makes possible. The model is an appropriate service delivery approach for students with disabilities who can benefit from general education curriculum, if given appropriate supports. Co-teaching allows for more intense and individualized instruction in the general education setting and increases access to the general education curriculum, while decreasing stigma for students with special needs. Typically, developing peers have an opportunity to increase their understanding and respect for students with disabilities. Students with special needs have a greater opportunity for continuity of instruction as the teachers benefit from the professional support and exchange of teaching practices as they work collaboratively.

Similarly, Villa et al. (2013) define co-teaching as “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching all of the students assigned to a classroom” (p. 4). They further clarify that co-teaching, “involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, differentiating instruction, and monitoring progress for a classroom of students” (p. 4). The definition provided by Villa and colleagues represents an assimilation of firsthand involvement

with other school-based teams that actively support learners in heterogeneous learning environments (Villa & Thousand, 2004) and their review of the literature on cooperative group learning (Johnson & Johnson 1999, Johnson & Johnson, 2009), collaboration and consultation (Fishbaugh 1997, 2000; Friend & Cook, 2009; Hourcade & Bauwens 2002; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcome, 2000), and cooperation (Brandt, 1987). Villa and colleagues, 2013, strengthen their leading definition by adding that co-teaching teams acquiesce to:

- 1) Coordinate their efforts to achieve at least one common goal.
- 2) Share a belief system that supports the notion that each co-teaching team member has unique and necessary expertise.
- 3) Demonstrate parity by alternatively engaging in the dual roles of expert and novice.
- 4) Use a distributed functions theory of leadership in which the task and relationship functions of a traditional lone teacher are distributed among all co-teaching team members.
- 5) Use a cooperative process that includes face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, interpersonal skills, monitoring co-teacher progress, and individual accountability.

Co-teaching draws on the strength of the general education teacher who is the expert with curriculum and the special education teacher who is the expert in providing the intensive, specific, and remedial instruction – the access expert (Villa et al., 2013). Co-teaching involves shared responsibility and joint ownership for collaborative teaching by educators with different domains of expertise. In the co-teaching model elucidated by Villa and colleagues, special educators provide instruction, discipline, and support for students in the general education classroom. Ideally co-teaching teams share responsibility for direct instruction, curriculum development and/or modification, communication with families, and student evaluation.

Co-teaching partnerships have been likened to a marriage (Kohler-Evans, 2006; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). Sometimes it is a marriage of choice. Other times it is an arranged marriage, as is common in some cultures. As with all marriages, partners must establish trust, communicate, share the chores, celebrate the successes, work together creatively to overcome the inevitable challenges and problems, and anticipate conflict and handle it in a constructive way. Matropieri and colleagues noted “the relationship between the co-teachers is a major critical



component influencing the success or failure of the inclusion of students with disabilities” (2005, p. 268).

While Friend and Cook discussed five variations of co-teaching (1996), Villa and colleagues built their co-teaching model upon the results of a national survey where, “teachers experienced in meeting the needs of students in a diverse classroom reported that they used four predominant approaches to co-teaching” (2013, pp. 4-5). Teachers may adopt any of these four variations of co-teaching throughout the year as a way to meet both the needs of students and the instructional objectives. These four variations include: (a) supportive; (b) parallel; (c) complimentary; and (d) team-teaching. This study focused on the co-teaching model promoted by Villa and colleagues using these four variations. This is the model promoted by the Kansas State-Wide Co-Teaching Initiative and therefore used by the teams in this study.

### ***Supportive Co-Teaching***

In supportive co-teaching, one teacher takes the lead instructional role and assumes primary responsibility for designing and delivering a lesson. The other co-teacher rotates among the students to provide support to some or all of them. The supportive co-teacher watches and listens as students work together, stepping in to provide one-to-one tutorial assistance when necessary, while the other co-teacher continues to direct the lesson. Teachers new to co-teaching often favor this approach. It allows the co-teacher who is not the classroom teacher to observe the classroom routines, get to know the classroom teacher and students, and learn the preferred instructional strategies of the classroom teacher. Supportive co-teaching is also used when one of the members of the co-teaching team does not have curriculum content mastery and new content is being introduced. Teams with little to no planning time typically use the supportive co-teaching model. While it is the most commonly utilized model of co-teaching, Villa and colleagues state, “supportive co-teaching should be the least utilized approach” (p. 6, 2013).

### ***Parallel Co-Teaching***

In parallel co-teaching, two or more educators work with different groups of students in different sections of the classroom. Both instructors teach, monitor, or facilitate learning usually in the same room at the same time. Co-teachers rotate among the groups, and sometimes there may be one group of students that works without a co-teacher for at least part of the time. A benefit of parallel co-teaching is that it decreases the student-to-teacher ratio, allowing for

increased individualization, differentiation, and data collection to meet students' needs. Parallel co-teaching provides an opportunity for less teacher talk and greater student-to-student interaction with partners, in stations, or in groups, as co-teachers monitor or facilitate the work of different groups. Teachers new to co-teaching often choose to “start with supportive and parallel co-teaching because these two approaches involve less structured coordination with members of the co-teaching team” (Villa et al., p. 6, 2013).

### ***Complementary Co-Teaching***

In complementary co-teaching, one co-teacher often takes primary responsibility for presenting new academic content while the other supplements the instruction with analogies, different examples, or slowing down the pace of instruction. For example, one co-teacher might paraphrase the other's statements or model note-taking skills with a document projector. Sometimes, one of the complementary teaching partners pre-teaches the small-group social skill roles required for successful cooperative group learning and then monitors as students practice the roles during the lesson taught by the other co-teacher. At other times, one co-teacher may pre-teach vocabulary, idioms, or figurative language to be used in an upcoming lesson. A complementary co-teacher can ask questions to check understanding of content, principles, or facts or task directions.

### ***Team Co-Teaching***

Team co-teaching is when two or more people do what the traditional teacher has always done – plan, teach, assess, and assume responsibility for all of the students in the classroom. Team teachers share the leadership and the responsibilities. Co-teachers who utilize team co-teach divide the lesson in ways that allow the students to experience each teacher's strengths and expertise. For example, for a lesson in inventions in science, one co-teacher whose interest is history will explain the impact on society. The other co-teacher, whose strengths are more focused on the mechanisms involved, explains how the particular inventions work. The key to successful team co-teaching is that co-teachers simultaneously deliver the lesson. The bottom line and the test of a successful team-teaching partnership is that the students view each teacher as knowledgeable and credible (Villa et al., 2013). As co-teachers gain confidence and experience, they add complementary teaching and team teaching approaches, which require more time, coordination, and trust to their repertoire (Villa et al., 2013).

## *Challenges of Co-Teaching*

For the majority of students with disabilities, a general education classroom is considered to be the LRE. Many schools are using the co-teaching service delivery model as a way to educate students with disabilities in least restrictive general education classrooms. As a special education service delivery model with the potential to meet both FAPE and LRE requirements, co-teaching provides promise as well as challenges to those who are committed to the education of students with disabilities. It involves the cooperation of general and special educators and allows for instruction of core content in an environment with age appropriate peers while also ensuring delivery of individually specialized services. As with any method of instruction, co-teaching is met with varying levels of success and has its own unique set of challenges.

From the standpoint of teachers and administrators in various studies, challenges around the implementation of co-teaching include:

- a) Regular co-planning time (Austin, 2001; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Friend, 2007; Friend, et al., 2010; Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Ploessl et al., 2010; Scruggs et al., 2007; Trent, 1998; Walsh, 2012; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Welsh, 2000).
- b) Student composition/skill level/gap with peers (Austin, 2001; Schumaker & Deshler, 1988; Scruggs et al., 2007; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).
- c) Relationships among co-teachers (Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Trent, 1998) - “The relationship between the co-teachers is a major critical component influencing the success or failure of the inclusion of students with disabilities” (Mastropieri et al., 2005).
- d) Knowledge of content and access skills to be taught (Dieker & Murwaski, 2003; Friend, 2007; Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005).
- e) Scheduling (Dieker & Murwaski, 2003; Friend 2007; Friend et al., 2010; Kloo & Zigmond, 2008; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).
- f) Caseload (Dieker & Murwaski, 2003; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

- g) Use of differentiated instruction (Dieker & Murwaski, 2003; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Thousand et al., 2007; Walsh & Conner, 2004; Welsh, 2012).
- h) Staff preparation (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Dieker & Murwaski, 2003; Friend et al., 2010; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Ploessl et al., 2010; Schumaker & Deshler, 1988; Scrugges et al., 2007; Walsh, 2012; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).
- i) Administrative support (Austin, 2001; Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Austin, 2001, urged that, “schools should strive to be responsible to the express needs [and challenges] of their co-teachers with respect to logistical and administrative support” (pp. 252-253). Building principals and central administration must understand how to help beginning and veteran teachers acquire the skill set needed for effective collaboration and co-teaching (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012). According to Kloo and Zigmond, 2008, “in a co-taught classroom the role of teacher quality has a more significant impact on student achievement than do other factors such as class make-up, background of students, class size, and class composition (p. 12).

Research regarding the implementation of collaborative co-teaching indicates that challenges inherent in this model might be best addressed from the leadership perspective (Villa, et al., 2013; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Walther-Thomas (1997) concluded that administrative input is vital to the success of a co-teaching model. Problems indicated a need for more supportive administrators in addressing the planning time, scheduling, caseload difficulties, and staff development. Support from school administrators is essential before and during the implementation of co-teaching programs (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989). Since co-teaching requires support and vision for transformation, “the principal strongly influences the likelihood of change” (Murata, 2002, p. 75). Thousand, Villa and Nevin (2006) add that “administrators need to create meaningful incentives for people to take the risk to embark on a co-teaching journey and plan for and take actions designed to get school personnel excited about implementing co-teaching approaches” (p. 3). Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of administrative support, research regarding specific principal practices related to supporting the co-teaching model is absent. It is therefore necessary to investigate the instructional leadership practices related to overcoming these challenges to support this service delivery model. As stated by Friend and colleagues in 2010, “The future of co-teaching may be dependent on

increasing the quantity and quality of research on it and placing co-teaching in the larger context of school reform and improvement” (p. 10).

## **Leadership of the Principal**

Leadership has been a long-standing topic of interest, theorizing, and research. Experts from a wide-variety of fields study the concept of leadership and have theories about what constitutes a leader. Although there are many well-known definitions of leadership, a classic definition by Tannebaum, Weschler, and Massarik (1961) encompasses many of its critical dimensions: “interpersonal influence directed through the communication process toward the attainment of a goal or goals” (p. 24). More recently, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) offered a definition of leadership that is distilled from the essence of their findings: “Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions” (p. 9-10). Howard Gardner defined a leader as a person, “who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals” (2011, p. xiii).

Sergiovanni (1995) described the leadership of the school principal and the importance of relationships between the principal and others in the school. Administrative support is essential for successful implementation of any program within the school. Trust and congruency between what the principal says and does is critical (Sergiovanni, 1995). Montiel-Overall (2005) broadly defined trust as “believing that when an individual mutually agrees to carry out a responsibility it will be carried out as promised” (p. 6). Linda Lambert (2003) posits that “learning and leading are deeply entwined ... indeed leadership can be understood as reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community ... as with co-learners we are also co-teachers, engaging each other throughout teaching and learning approaches” (p. 2).

Beyond defining leadership, contemporary researchers have found it more meaningful to study what leaders actually do than to focus on their personal traits. Bernard Bass (1981) listed behaviors that differentiate leaders from followers as:

Strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in the pursuit of goals, originality in problem-solving, willingness to accept the consequences of decisions

and action, the ability to influence others' behavior, and the capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand. (p. 81)

Educational leadership is ranked as the key variable associated with the effectiveness of schools (Goor, Schwenn, & Boyer, 1997). Virtually every study of effective schooling practices has noted the connection between effective schools and leadership (Marzano, 2003).

Researchers conducted a meta-analysis that focused on the relationship between school leadership and student achievement. They found that principal leadership is correlated with student achievement and that there were especially strong links between specific principal behaviors and student learning. Once such behavior was the extent to which the principal "is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems" (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 4).

Leadership comes in many different shapes and styles and looks very different, depending on the circumstances or setting (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Pousner, 2003). Principals in charge of leading today's public schools have their knowledge and skills tested daily as they provide safe and orderly environments, become instructional leaders to a community of students and teachers, and manage the various programs and projects. The school principal is at the center of responsibility of all functions of the school (Cooner et al., 2005; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff & Harniss, 2001; Wong & Nicotera, 2007).

Leadership, however, is not a simple arena that principals navigate. The principalship is full of unique challenges that range from traditional responsibilities such as maintaining discipline and managing a budget to instructional, organizational, and ethical leadership. Today's principal must demonstrate leadership in all areas of the educational organization. The principal is responsible for the daily elements of school activity, such as: curriculum and instruction, planning and assessment, discipline, facilities management, community relations, safety and security, finance, and personnel issues. In response to the previously discussed legislative changes over the last 60 years, specialized skills such as leadership in special education programs also now fall within the principal's domain (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). In fact, one of the most challenging and most important leadership areas for school principals is the world of special education (Cooner et al., 2005; Gersten et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Nolet, 2004).

The responsibilities for assuring that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) is implemented are clearly spelled out to school administrators. In creating an atmosphere of access and inclusion for students with disabilities, the increased legislation and resulting services have intensified the responsibilities of the school principal (Croser, 2002; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Education leaders are directly responsible for monitoring and assuring compliance with all special education laws, policies and regulations at the federal, state, and county levels. Leaders must be competent and confident with their ability to effectively administrate special education procedures and programs at schools. Their tasks include complying with and monitoring: referral, evaluation, eligibility, individualized education programs, instructional placement, and procedural safeguards for special education. Leadership with all its responsibilities and tasks is essential to providing a quality education for all students.

Special education leadership is as complex, unique, and diverse as the students it intends to serve. The roles, duties, and responsibilities of special education leaders change as swiftly as the policies, budgets, best practices, and systems of accountability that govern their ability to meet the challenges of the students under their charge. Moreover, special education leadership is a multifaceted education enterprise that is predicated on the idea of social justice, in that it is based on the ideals that all children can learn, all children should have access to a quality education, and all children should be included in the educational system irrespective of their disabilities.

In 1992, Van Horn, Burrello, and DeClue asserted that leaders' attitudes toward special education and the needs of children with disabilities is a major determinant in the success of special programs. They elaborated that effective principals model positive attitudes toward acceptance of all children, visit special education classrooms, spend time with students with special needs, tour the building daily, and become involved with the concerns of all students and programs. To this end, leaders must be able to facilitate collaborative planning and problem solving between general and special educators, other specialists, students, and family members (Williams & Katsiyannis, 1998).

The practices of the school principal greatly influence those of the entire school, staff and students (Cooner et al., 2005; Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Principals' leadership in schools form and shape decisions that impact instruction, management, climate, and ultimately

the work of staff (Anderson, 2003; Bossert et al., 1982; Glickman et al., 2001; Sergiovanni, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1987). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), of the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning Association (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on the impact of leadership on student achievement. They found that the most important factor affecting the teacher and the learning process in a school is the designated leadership within the school. Katsyannis, Conderman, and Franks (1996) stress that school principals are instrumental in providing the leadership for implementing and monitoring inclusionary practices. They explain that inclusionary responsibilities of principals include “securing ongoing training, supervising and evaluating staff members, and fostering the collaboration of general and special education teachers by defining roles, responsibilities, and processes for program delivery” (p. 83). Principals who value diversity in the student population will provide opportunities for all teachers and students to learn valuable skills essential to living and working within a diverse world (Goor et al., 1997).

By virtue first of office and then of performance, principals are in a unique position to establish and maintain the important norms of collegiality and to promote and foster the critical practices of talk about practice, observation of practice, joint work on materials, and teaching each other about teaching. McLaughlin and Talbert (2001, p. 98) concluded, “For better or worse, principals set conditions for teacher community by the ways in which they manage school resources, relate to teachers and students, support or inhibit social interaction and leadership in the faculty, respond to the broader policy context, and bring resources into the school.”

Observations of Little (1981) indicate that principals can promote those norms and practices in four primary ways: by announcing, enacting, sanctioning, and defending expectations for precisely those practices as central features of the work. Generally effective tactics can be marshaled specifically in support of collegiality. To this end, for example, Little notes that teachers credit principals who clearly state their expectations for teachers’ performances; however, Little places less emphasis on the general worth of clearly stated expectations than on the degree to which those statements overtly favor work that is collegial. Little explained, “The greater the range of tactics by which the principal explicitly supports norms of collegiality ... the greater the prospects that those norms will prevail” (1981, p. 25). Principals appear to build norms of collegiality when their own behavior demonstrates or models those norms.



Educational inclusion of students with disabilities has been widely promoted in recent years, resulting in ever-increasing numbers of students with disabilities receiving all or nearly all of their services in general education classrooms (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). This means that both general and special education teachers who serve students with disabilities must work collaboratively to meet the educational and behavioral needs of those students. One model of collaboration that is gaining attention and practice is collaborative teaching or co-teaching (Zigmond & Magiera, 2001).

Co-teaching is only one of many models of inclusionary practices. Although inclusion has been a focus of school reform, many principals are still unfamiliar and uncomfortable with its concept and practice (Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, & Schertz, 2001). Anderson (1999) stated that resistance toward inclusive reforms by principals is often due to lack of training rather than negative perceptions or attitudes toward special education. Principals also lack the knowledge about how to evaluate the quality of programs for inclusion once they are implemented (Brotherson, Sheriff & Milburn, 2001). These understandings contributed to narrowing the focus of this study to co-teaching teams whose members, including the building principal, participated in the professional development activities concerning the implementation of a co-teaching model via the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative.

### **The Principal's Role**

The leadership of a school principal is built on many cornerstones. Knowledge and skills, district goals and priorities, school and community make-up, and personal experience are just a few of the factors that influence leadership among school principals (Sergiovanni, 1987). Additionally, principals' beliefs and attitudes concerning a particular subject greatly influence their leadership in that particular area. Furthermore, these beliefs and attitudes principals portray have a tremendous impact on those that they lead (Cooner et al., 2005, Sergiovanni, 1987).

In 1996 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) worked with the Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to designate six standards of principal leadership. The CCSSO is a group of non-profit educational leaders that work together to provide quality educational reform. The ISLLC is a program within CCSSO that developed standards of principal leadership. By 2005, 46 states had adopted or slightly adapted the standards, or had relied upon them to develop their own set of state standards (Murphy, Young, Crow & Ogawa,

2009; Sanders & Simpson, 2005). These standards, known as the ISLLC standards, have been used to guide quality school leadership and have a nationwide impact on qualifications required for issuing licenses to educational administrators (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). The ISLLC standards provide a framework for leadership that aims to improve principal leadership, create best teaching and learning practices, and develop positive learning environments (Wong & Nicotera, 2007). The ISLLC Standards are

Model leadership standards that outline what education leaders should know and be able to do to ensure that all students graduating from high school are prepared to enter college or the modern workforce. These standards outline foundational principles of education leadership, which cut across grade levels and help improve student achievement and engagement. (Council of Chief School Officers, 2014, p. 6)

Each of the six ISLLC standards is broken down into indicators. Each indicator describes specific leadership targets for principal leadership (Wong & Nicoteri, 2007). According to CCSSO and ISLLC principals should:

- 1) Set a widely shared vision for learning.
- 2) Develop a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- 3) Ensure collective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- 4) Collaborate with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- 5) Act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- 6) Understand, respond to, and influence the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts.

### ***Shared Vision***

According to the ISLLC standard number one, *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community* (CCSSO, 1996).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) define vision as “an uncommon ability to visualize a better future for an organization” (p. 32). The school leader develops a vision of learning from the culture of the organization and establishes a mission for the school community. The vision is the primary and major influence on both the mission and the culture. It is the dream of where the school will be in the future. If it is a shared vision, it exceeds what the principal wants; it is now what the staff, students, parents and community leaders want as well. Shared vision results in staff acceptance and support for the vision of the school and ultimately sustainability for the initiative (Wong & Nicotera, 2007). A study of principals in high-need districts found that principals categorized as transformers “had an explicit vision of what their school might be like and brought a ‘can-do’ attitude to their job ... [They] focused intently on creating a culture in which each child can learn. Giving up is not an option” (Johnson, Rochkind, & Doble, 2008, p. 3).

The vision is the foundation of the culture of the school. The culture reflects the vision and illuminates the way of life in a school. The principal is the key in determining the culture (Barth, 1990). Successful school cultures are focused on the learning of all students (Deal & Peterson, 1999) and everyone knows that learning comes first (Druian & Butler, 1987). When learning is the central purpose of schooling, and all work is focused on this purpose, a school is likely to be successful (Maehr & Parker, 1993).

Principals have the responsibility to provide a sound basic education for all students, including students with disabilities (Cooner et al., 2005; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Goor, Schween & Boyer, 1997). This responsibility according to the IDEIA includes the access of students with disabilities to the general education curriculum. Federal law mandates that students have access to the LRE (Croser, 2002; Stainback & Stainback, 1995). The successful infusion of students with disabilities into the general education program takes precise skill and knowledge from the principal. The principal needs to have a vision for the school and understand essential elements of leading that vision. The principal must be aware of challenging issues and understand that placing student achievement at the top of his or her efforts is a primary focus (Cooner et al., 2005). The success of any special education initiative relies heavily of the attitude of the principal and his or her ability to empower and build consensus among school staff (Bossert et al., 1982).

## ***School Culture and Instructional Leadership***

CCSSO (1996), in ISLLC standard number two, states *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.*

### ***Culture***

Hughes (2004) explains a school's culture. He states, "a school's culture is a representation of what its members collectively believe themselves to be: It is their self concept. It reflects what they value and what they express to others as being 'important around here'" (p. 65). Culture is a shared reality constructed over time; cultures may be cohesive or fragmented, strong or weak, and functional or dysfunctional depending on the degree to which organizational members share the same reality (Sergiovanni, 1990). Canole and Young iterate, "To construct a school culture requires knowledge of the importance of shared school vision, mission and goals for student success that is documented in the effective schools literature ... and subsequently in the school improvement literature" (2013, p. 22).

It is clear that schooling has reached a turning point and the need for cultivating creative cultures is at hand (Hughes, 2004).

The principal has emerged as the energizer and facilitator of this process. Purposeful direction depends on the leader's ability to inspire the creative contribution of all members of the organization. Leadership must become reciprocal as leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of moral consciousness and improvement of social order. Creative leaders recognize that excellence is facilitated through a bonding of purposes and values rather than through imposed structures designed to streamline, predict and quantify set objectives. A creative culture then is characterized by participants who examine current practices in relation to organizational needs. (p. 81)

### ***Instructional Leadership***

Principals have always been instructional leaders in a particular form or fashion (Glickman et al., 2001). Historically, principals have been responsible for scheduling students, purchasing textbooks and teaching materials, and providing a space for teachers to teach and students to learn. This reflects instructional leadership at its most basic level, and at some time

in our society's educational history was a sufficient form of leadership (Glickman et al., 2001). Instructional leadership is the cornerstone for the educational decisions made in a school building every day. Instructional leadership by school principals impacts every student in schools every day. From scheduling of classes, implementing goals and objectives, hiring teachers, purchasing supplies, writing plans and setting goals, the instructional leadership of the principal is unmistakable (Glickman et al., 2001).

As the educational landscape has changed through reauthorizations of IDEA during the 1980's and 1990's and the implementation of NCLB in 2001, instructional leadership has taken on a new identity and has become integrated into every decision, program and dollar spent. Instructional leadership is much more than just what is being taught, how it is being taught, and what is used to teach it. Instructional leadership is the foundational strategy on which a school is built (Glickman et al., 2001; Sage & Burrello, 1994). Nowhere is this leadership more evident than in the educational lives of students with disabilities.

The instructional leadership of the school principal can never be underestimated in the role of educating students with disabilities (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1992). Instructional leaders who empower their teachers, raise expectations for all children, provide high quality professional development, advocate for differentiated instruction; these leaders promote the instruction that changes the educational lives of students with disabilities. Notably, principals who have positive attitudes and outlooks on inclusionary practices for students with disabilities are much more successful than principals with a negative approach (Cooner et al., 2005). The schools where principals had positive attitudes, students with disabilities had greater access, found less resistance in inclusion and experienced a more positive educational experience. In a 1997 study, Goor suggested that a principal's beliefs were connected to his or her attitude. Since attitude is so connected to leadership involving students with disabilities, the beliefs of a principal have a great impact on the students with disabilities. Goor et al. (1997) also suggested that further research is needed to address the beliefs of principals. Research has also shown schools that lack instructional leadership have classrooms that do not meet the needs of diverse learners and the instruction in those classrooms is of lower quality (Burrello et al., 1992; Cooner et al., 2005; Glickman et al., 2001; Sage & Burrello, 1994).

### ***Safe, Efficient, and Effective Learning Environment***

ISLLC standard number three states, *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment* (CCSSO, 1996).

Research supporting the formation of this standard recognized the importance of knowledge of the nature of distributed leadership as essential (Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee, 2002). Louis et al. (2010) found that distribution of leadership to include teachers, parents, and district staff is needed in order to improve student achievement. Distributive leadership is based on the idea that there is a social distribution of tasks associated with leadership in a school, specifically that leadership tasks are spread over a group of people in schools beyond the singular administrator in charge. Distributed leadership approaches do not remove the need for an effective singular leader, nor do they necessarily reduce the work of the leader. Although there are many similarities with democratic leadership, distributed leadership is different from democratic leadership as it accepts power differentials in roles within the schools even as leadership tasks are dispersed (Woods, 2005).

Most states, if not all, have requirements that emphasize the importance of school safety and of creating a school climate that is conducive to learning (Arnette & Walsleben, 1998). School districts have created policies and procedures that help address issues of school safety through student conduct codes and behavior policies. Further, many school districts have adopted no tolerance policies on issues that threaten the safety of students and staff.

When referring to district policies concerning discipline and students with disabilities, the principal is faced with a different set of circumstances (Cooner et al., 2005). Principals must consider individual student circumstances and situations when faced with disciplining students with disabilities. A student's disability and how the disability affects behavior must be taken into account when considering the discipline of a special education student (Cooner et al., 2005). Principals must understand the implications of suspension on a student's special education placement and their ability to receive special education services (Cooner et al., 2005). In the past, courts have placed tremendous responsibility on the schools to determine if the behavior was caused by the disability and to the extent any discipline has on the student's access to educational services (Bartlett, 1989; Cooner et al., 2005). In a study of principals in Texas, Bravenec (1998) reported that over 70% of principals reported spending a quarter of their

workweek on issues related to special education. Another 20% of the principals estimated that they spent about half of their workweek on issues relating to special education (Bravenec, 1998). It is obvious the extreme importance school administrators must place on discipline and safety when special education is involved.

### ***Collaboration***

ISLLC standard number four states, *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources* (CCSSO, 1996).

Canole and Young, (2013) report that a building-level leader must have knowledge of strategies for collaboration with faculty and community members, understanding of diverse community interests and needs, and best practices for mobilizing community resources. In order to develop strategies for collaboration, principals must have knowledge about the collection and analysis of evidence pertinent to the school educational environment and knowledge of the needs of students, parents or caregivers.

Collaborative schools engage in positive partnerships and interactive team activities to achieve a shared goal of promoting effective instruction for all students (Goor, 1994). Shrybman and Matsoukas (1978) found in a study of principals, that the attitude, support, collaboration and willingness to work towards integration was shown to greatly increase the successful integration of students with disabilities into the established programs of that time. Similarly, a later study by Drake and Roe (1986) revealed that the principal was important in setting the tone for integration of students with disabilities. Researchers asked approximately 100 special education teachers to identify what principals needed to know about special education and special education teachers. The number one response was the need and importance of administrative support and how much that administrative support meant to the teachers (Bradley, 2000). The attitude and the role of the principal are critical in the building and acceptance of special education programs and initiatives in schools (Bradley, 2000). Bradley goes on to state that “principals need to realize they set the tone for the entire school ... what they say, how they act ... what is allowed in the school is powerful” (2000, p. 172). Actions, presence, words and comments from a principal that show support or lack of support for special education programs, students, and teachers are

powerful indicators of the success and quality of programs and services for students with disabilities (Bradley, 2000).

### ***Ethical Leadership***

ISLLC Standard number five states, *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner* (CCSSO, 1996).

Ethical practice refers to the concept that the implementation of leadership actions must not only conform to adherence to the laws of the state and regulations concerning fidelity to the spirit of such laws, but must also rest on moral principles of justice and fairness (Canole & Young, 2013). Education leaders engaging in ethical practice have knowledge of democratic values, equity, and diversity. They must also have knowledge about the relationship between social justice, school culture, and student achievement (Canole & Young, 2013).

The role of the school principal extends to include the role of the ethical leader. This form of ethical leadership allows or causes educational leaders to center their educational decisions on their personal beliefs and values (Burrello et al., 1992; Sage & Burrello, 1994). Ethical leadership is at the core of the role of the school principal and its relationship with special education (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1998).

Principals that believe in a medical model of disability are ethically inclined to view students as patients and attempt to deliver an educational program that fixes or cures the disability (Michalko, 2002). Conversely, there are school leaders who believe that a medical model of disability violates their ethical beliefs about students and education (Michalko, 2002). These principals view disability as social in origin and understand that disability is a part of life (Michalko, 2002; Anderson, 2003). The ethical decisions of these ‘social minded’ principals will differ from those more ‘medical minded’.

### ***Political, Social, Legal and Cultural Leadership***

The sixth ISLLC standard states *a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social economic, legal, and cultural context* (CCSSO, 1996).

Building leaders must have knowledge of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by state, local, and federal authorities; knowledge of how to improve the social opportunities of students,



particularly in contexts where issues of student marginalization demand proactive leadership; and knowledge of how culturally responsive education leadership can positively influence academic achievement and student engagement (Canole & Young, 2013). Canole and Young identified three important domains of knowledge and associated skills of leadership that must be developed by school and district leaders if they are to effectively address the socio-economic and political challenges of leading schools: a) skills in advocacy for children, families, and caregivers to improve social opportunities; b) skills in influencing local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning; and c) skills in the assessment, analysis, and anticipation of emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies. All three skill domains reflect a new focus on the importance of proactive leadership of schools and districts.

The role of the principal is forever changing. To be successful, a principal must be able to tackle what some would consider an impossible role. Principals must balance managerial roles with instructional leadership, must improve student achievement, while providing a safe school climate (Wong & Nicotera, 2007). This task can be complicated by pressures that occur from outside the classroom and school. Legislative reform, local initiatives and prevailing culture all impact the leadership of the school and student success.

In the 1950s, political pressure began to mount for the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education schools and classrooms (Croser, 2002). This political pressure yielded special education laws and policies that govern the education of students with disabilities. Public Law 94-142 was the landmark piece of legislation passed in 1975. Renamed and reauthorized, IDEA provides legislation for the education of students with disabilities (Croser, 2002). It is ultimately the responsibility of the principal to know and comprehend the law.

The legal and political realm of leadership is extremely challenging in light of many of the limitations facing principals. Out of the 50 states in the United States, only 12 require special education coursework for an administrative licensure. Forty-five percent of the states do not require a course in special education as part of the degree to become a principal (Nardone, 1999). Consequently, principals consistently report that they feel unprepared. Furthermore, they admit to having problems and issues when it comes to knowledge and implementation of special education laws (Cooner et al., 2005).

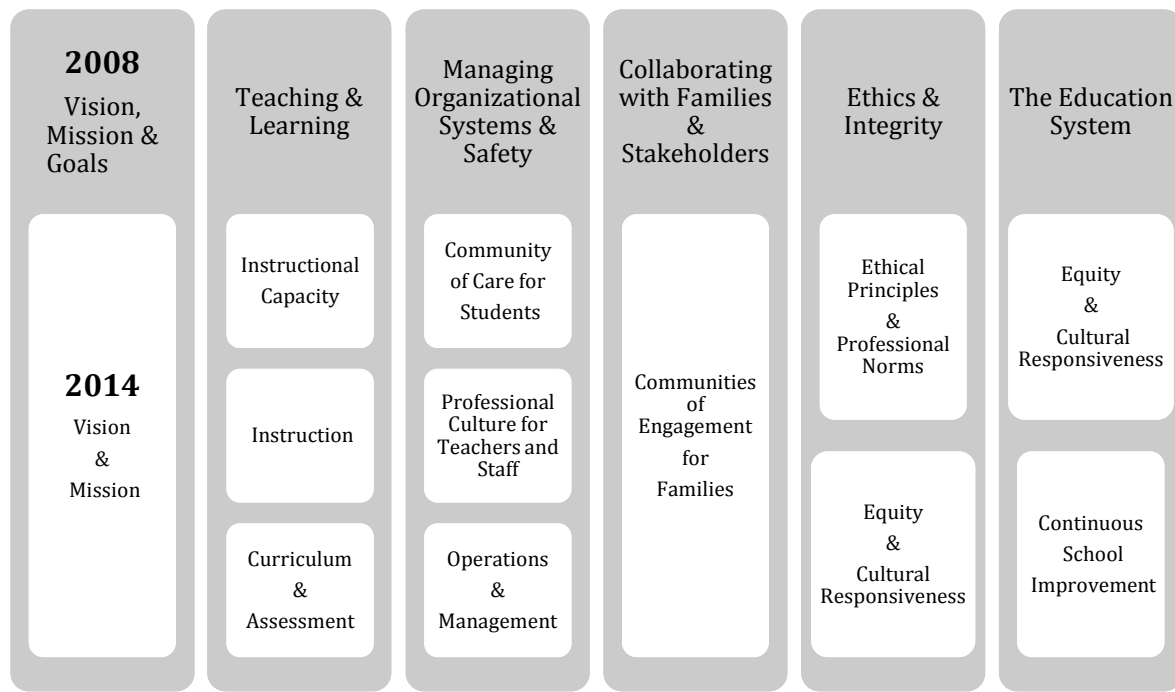
### *Updates to the Principal's Role*

The first version of the ISLLC Standards was developed in 1996. In 2008, the ISLLC standards were slightly revised and renamed the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (Young, 2008). The key rationale for updating the 1996 ISLLC standards was a significant increase in performance expectations for educational leaders. Canole and Young (2013) explain that the primary catalysts driving the changes our education leaders are experiencing include: The Common Core State Standards, Race to the Top, The March 2010 Blueprint for Reform, and ESEA Flexibility Program. Additionally, with the nation's implementation of the NCLB Act of 2001, the responsibilities of educational leadership shifted the overarching role of school leader from managing orderly environments to leading instruction. Canole and Young (2013) further clarify that the continued existence of management responsibilities necessitated more collective and distributive leadership models. School and district leaders have been expected to shape a collective vision of student success, to create a school culture that promised success for each and every student, and to purposefully distribute leadership roles and responsibilities to other administrators and teachers in their schools so that teaching and learning would improve and the highest levels of student achievement would be realized.

Researchers have learned a great deal about effective educational leadership over the last 20 years. As a result, proposed revisions to the 2008 ISLLC Standards went out for public comment during the fall of 2014. While the public comment period has closed, the updated standards have not yet been officially released. The proposed updates are driven by an increased sense of urgency that every student reaches high levels of achievement. Today's educators are being held to new levels of accountability for improved student outcomes. CCSSO explains that, "the primary goal of the [revised] Standards is to articulate what effective leadership looks like in a transformed public education system" (2014, p. 6). CCSSO further clarifies, "the 2014 ISLLC Standards are designed to be used by all education leaders, whether at the school or district level, and those in all leadership positions, career phases, and school contexts" (p. 6). The ISLLC Standards are broad policy standards that provide direction and guidance and contain knowledge, skills and dispositions expected in successful leaders (CCSSO, 2014). They provide guidance to states and school districts about the knowledge and skills required of education leaders to achieve the improved outcomes we want for students.

“The 2014 ISLLC Standards promote a new paradigm for leading education and call for a new infrastructure of support for professionals in leadership roles in that system. Expand the original six standards into 11 standards. Figure 2.4 depicts how the six 2008 ISLLC Standards and the eleven proposed 2014 ISLLC Standards align. Proposed revised standards are currently open for public comment.

**Figure 2.4 Alignment: 2008 v. 2014 ISLLC Standards**



### ***Principals’ Role in Special Education***

Many of the problems in supporting and enhancing the education of students with disabilities are associated with the separation of students who receive special education services from those that receive general school services (Villa & Thousand, 1995). Efforts to merge coexisting general and special education programs, known as inclusion, were led by Susan and William Stainback (1992). The Stainbacks are special education advocates who challenged the thought process and beliefs that rewarded a dual system. In their writings, the Stainbacks urged for a merger of general and special education programs that could meet the needs of all students (Stainback & Stainback, 1992).

This new focus on inclusion signified a change of thought among all educators and required educators to entertain the notion that the same educational setting could serve both regular and disabled students. Through the work of special education advocates and federal legislation, significant changes in the education of students with disabilities were made. These changes that merged general and special education processes included the beginning of inclusive schools, increased access for students with disabilities, and provided greater awareness of disability (Villa & Thousand, 1995).

This push for inclusion contended that effective instruction as practiced by teachers in regular classes can be appropriately implemented for all students and can accommodate the individual differences of regular education students as well as students with disabilities (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Semmel et al., 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). The researchers indicated that the dual system of educating students creates a division between students, teachers, instruction, and programs. Additionally, this work suggested that the separation between regular and special education allows for fragmented instruction and inconsistency in the implementation of educational programs. The divide causes teachers to lose track of their students and minimizes the much-needed communication between regular and special education (Semmel et al., 1991). In addition, the unification of regular and special education would continue to dispel the notion of a biological view of disability and encourage the inclusion of this oppressed minority (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994).

Educators continue to research and study the integration of general and special education. Recent state and federal legislation has imbedded in educators the importance of inclusion in general and special education. Schools must reevaluate service and scheduling options for students with disabilities (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003). In 1997, amendments to IDEA required school districts to continue to enhance the participation of students with disabilities in the general curriculum (Argan et al., 2002). This involvement would need to be recorded in the students IEP. In research conducted by Agran et al. in a study of Iowa special education teachers, administrative reluctance was listed as the third strongest barrier to inclusion for students with disabilities. With an average of 1.9 on a five-point Likert scale where one was very important barrier and five was not a barrier at all, administrative reluctance is seen as a strong deterrent in the access for students with disabilities.

IDEA speaks directly to the inclusion of students in the general education settings. The term used in IDEA legislation is LRE. The LRE guarantees students with disabilities the right to have educational services with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible. LRE requires that additional services and supplementary materials be provided to give the student with disability every opportunity to the range of education services (Heumann & Hehir, 1994).

Support from school administrators is essential before and during the implementation of co-teaching programs (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989). Hughes and Nierengarten emphasize, “the role that administrative support plays in the success of co-teaching cannot be overstated” (2010, p. 9). Co-teaching requires direction from administrators who must be willing to listen and learn, and to help overcome obstacles such as class size, scheduling and personnel allocation (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000). Administrators provide moral, monetary, and evaluative support throughout the extended time needed for these curriculum reforms to make a secure start (Jung, 1998). Since co-teaching requires support and vision for transformation, “the principal strongly influences the likelihood to change” (Murata, 2002, p. 75). Thousand, Villa and Nevin (2006) add that “administrators need to create meaningful incentives for people to take the risk to embark on a co-teaching journey and plan for and take actions designed to get school personnel excited about implementing co-teaching approaches” (p. 3).

The role of the school principal is difficult to define, and even more elusive to measure. School principal roles range from teacher and head master combinations at small rural schools to corporate executive officers in large urban school districts (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Regardless of the size or scope of the educational setting, the role of the principal in a school is undeniably important for the prolonged success of the school, its teachers, and ultimately the students, including those with disabilities (Cooner et al., 2005).

In summary, the school principal displays leadership in a variety of different ways that impact the integration and implementation of special education initiatives and programs. Research is clear that the principal’s leadership is integral to the education of students with disabilities (Cooner et al., 2005; Gersten et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Nolet, 2004).

### **Need for Future Research**

The review of literature conducted by this researcher clearly supports the legislative impetus for the inclusion of students with disabilities in the LRE (Heward & Lloyd-Smith, 1990;

Turnbull, 1993; Yell, Rogers & Rogers, 1998). Legislative mandates for inclusion have been in place since the original 1975 passage of the EAHCA and has since been emphasized in the most current reauthorization known as IDEIA (Kavale, 2002; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000). The rights of students with disabilities to receive appropriate specially designed instruction, supports and services and to access the general education curriculum in the LRE is well established (Heward & Cavanaugh, 2001; Kavale, 2002; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Reder, 2007; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Furthermore, regardless of delayed reauthorization of NCLB and Flexibility Waivers that have been granted to some states, there continues to be an emphasis on closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Crockett, 2002; Reder, 2007). The expectation that students receive core content instruction in the LRE by highly qualified teachers who are experts in their fields remains in full force.

Since the early history of the U.S. public school system, teachers have worked in isolation from each other; however, as the literature review demonstrates, educators now recognize the value and importance of teaming and collaboration (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Peterson, 1994; Schmoker, 1999; Smylie, 1988; Walther-Thomas, 1997). The positive effects on student learning as well as professional development and satisfaction of teachers have been recognized (Austin, 2001; Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996). Much is understood about the dynamics of teaming and collaboration frameworks within the public education system as is demonstrated by the review of literature (Friend, 2008; Little, 1982; Little, 1990a; Oja & Pine, 1984; Peterson, K., 1994; Schrage, 1990; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996).

Additionally, the literature review examined what is known about co-teaching. Particular attention was paid to co-teaching between a general education teacher and a special education teacher working together in the general education classroom to co-teach a group of students including those with disabilities. Educators understand a great deal about various models of co-teaching used in today's classrooms (Friend, 2008; Friend & Cook, 2007, 2009; Friend et al., 2010; Kloo & Zigmund, 2008; Matropieri et al., 2005; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Trent, 1998; Villa et al., 2013) such as the four forms that were recognized for the purposes of this study: supportive, parallel, complementary, and team teaching (Villa et al., 2013).

The current discourse is also rich with research regarding the influence of building principals on day-to-day operations of the school (Arnette & Walsleben, 1998; Bartlett, 1989; Bravenec, 1998; Cooner et al., 2005; Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002; Louis et al., 2010; Woods, 2005), staff attitudes (Canole & Young, 2013; Hughes, 2004; Morgan, 1986; Sergiovanni, 1990), implementing changes for school reform (Barth, 1990; Druian & Butler, 1987; Johnson, Rochkind, & Doyle, 2008; Maehr & Parker, 199; Wong & Nicotera, 2007), establishing new programs or initiatives (Barth, 1990; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Druian & Butler, 1987; Johnson, Rochkind, & Doyle, 2008; Maehr & Parker, 199; Wong & Nicotera, 2007), and collegiality among staff members (Bradley, 2000; Drake & Roe, 1986; Shrybman & Matsoukas, 1978). Numerous studies support the need for strong principal leadership in general (Bossert et al., 1982; Cooner et al., 2005, Murphy, Young, Crow & Ogawa, 2009; Sanders & Simpson, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1987; Wong & Nicotera, 2007) and for special populations in particular (Argan et al., 2002; Arguelles et al., 2000; Bauwens et al., 1989; Cooner et al., 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Fullan, 2001; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Gersten et al., 2001; Hughes & Nierengarten, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McLaughlin & Nolet, 2004; Murata, 2002; Semmel et al., 1991; Sharpe & Hawes, 2003; Stainback, 1992; Stainback & Stainback, 1984, Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2006; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Wright & Wright, 1998). The review of literature conducted by this researcher did not uncover any studies specifically about principal practices related to the support of co-teaching. It is not yet known what practices of principals are most meaningful to the support of collaborative co-teaching partnerships. More research is needed about principals' practices that are most meaningful to the support of implementation and sustainment of a co-teaching model of service delivery in the LRE.

## **Chapter 2 Summary**

This chapter examined four major threads of literature that support the purpose of this study. The first section of the chapter summarized the legislative history of special education. The impact of legislative mandates on the provision of special education services to students with disabilities was discussed. The second section reviewed the literature on the selected theoretical framework for this study, teaming. The third section reviewed the literature on co-teaching, recognized approaches to co-teaching, and the challenges of implementing and

sustaining a co-teaching model of service delivery in the LRE. The fourth section explored the literature on the role of the building principal. The fifth section of this chapter focused on the need for future research.

The following chapter describes the research methods to be used in the current study including an explanation of the design of the study, the research questions, sampling procedures, the data collection, management and analysis procedures, and the role of the researcher. It also addresses the data collection methods, the data analysis, and the validation strategies of the study including the role of the researcher.



## **Chapter 3 - Methods**

### **Introduction**

The number of students with disabilities attending public schools has grown exponentially since the passing of federal legislation protecting the rights of students with disabilities to a sound and basic public education (Croser, 2002). Schools continue to seek new and better methods of providing instruction to students in the same settings as their non-disabled peers. Educators recognize the benefits of teaming and collaborating across disciplines in order to provide appropriate services for all students. Co-teaching is a widely growing method of providing an education to students with disabilities in the general education setting and in a manner that meets both FAPE and LRE requirements with practical solutions.

Implementation of the co-teaching service delivery model does present challenges to those who are committed to the education of students with disabilities. The benefits of an educational environment where two professionals collaborate and co-teach are ideal for most students with disabilities; however, the literature uncovers challenges that cannot be ignored. Issues such as co-planning time, scheduling, teacher caseload, classroom composition, teacher and administrative attitude and knowledge of inclusive education, and administrative support can have an impact on co-teaching. If these concerns are not addressed, the educational community may witness a greater number of students with disabilities isolated from their non-disabled peers (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995).

Research on educational leadership suggests that the influential role of the building principal is a catalyst to meeting the challenges presented by the co-teaching model. As laws and policies continue to shape the educational landscape of these students, the role of the school principal becomes even more instrumental in the meeting of individual student's goals (Burrello et al., 1992; Glickman et al., 2001; Sergiovani, 1994). Yet, much is to be learned about the ways in which principals can provide meaningful support to co-teaching teams.

The purpose of this study was to examine what practices utilized by school principals were most meaningful to the support of a sustainable co-teaching service delivery model of instruction in the LRE. This study provided an in-depth understanding based on the perceptions of co-teaching team members that participated in professional development through the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative.

The major source of data for this study was interviews with all six participants at each of three sites. Each participant was asked to complete a demographic questionnaire prior to the interview. In addition, co-teaching partners were asked to complete a ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers. Coaches were asked to submit an ©Instructional Observation form previously completed for the participating co-teaching team. Principals were asked to submit a copy of the master building schedule. These documents aided the researcher in understanding the background and dynamics of each co-teaching team. In addition, field notes were collected and used to enhance data analysis and interpretation. This chapter describes the research methods, the site selection for the study, the process for participant selection, human subjects/ethical procedures, data collection, data analysis, and validation of the study including multiple data sources, rich thick description, peer review, member checking, clarifying researcher bias, and the role of the researcher.

## Methods

The intent of qualitative research is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempt to achieve a holistic understanding (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research has its emphasis on discovery and description; its objectives are focused on the extraction and interpretation of the meaning of experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Creswell (2007) defined qualitative case study as:

...research [that] involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system...in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports). And reports a case *description* and case-based themes. (p. 73)

As Merriam (1998) indicated, a qualitative case study is an ideal design to understand and interpret educational phenomena:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in the context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights

gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (Merriam, 1998, as cited in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008)

Given that the goal of this study is to gather in-depth information about practices of the principal perceived as most meaningful to the support of co-teaching in the context of the LRE, the case study approach makes sense when framed within Merriam's definition. Using a qualitative case study design allowed for the conduct of research within the context of real-life processes in order to describe perceptions.

This study focused particularly on the individual practices of principals perceived to be in support of co-teaching in their schools. Data gathered yielded a thorough description of each site and the experiences of participants. The intent was not to generalize to a particular population, but to thoroughly explore the support of co-teaching at three sites in Kansas. A site was defined as one public school in one district. The three sites were selected from three different districts that participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. The bounded system in this study consisted of those districts that participated in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. Each site involved six participants for a total of eighteen participants.

The process of building the case study involved three steps: gathering data about the organizations and their participants, organizing and editing the data into manageable files, and writing a narrative that tells the story about the organization (Patton, 2002). The information collected for this study included in-depth one-on-one interviews. Additional information assisted with analysis and interpretation of results and the documentation/description of each site (e.g., participant questionnaires, supporting documents and field notes). The following section describes the research questions for the study.

## **Research Questions**

The over arching research question that follows served as a guide for data collection and analysis. Sub-questions embody components of the theoretical framework guiding this study. The overarching research question for this study was:

What practices of principals provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the LRE?

The sub-questions were:

How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in key elements of effective teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004) through:

- 1) Clearly defined goals?
- 2) Priorities?
- 3) Roles and responsibilities?
- 4) Self-awareness?
- 5) Leadership?
- 6) Group dynamics?
- 7) Communication?
- 8) Context?
- 9) Infrastructure?

### **Site Selection**

Criterion-based sampling was used to select three schools from three different districts for this study. Districts were identified from those participating in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative based on attention to representativeness of the types of districts in the state using geographic location, and district size. Attention was given to geographic location of selected districts within the state as Kansas is widely diversified. The eastern portion of the state is much more densely populated and comprised of larger metropolitan areas located more closely in proximity to one another. Availability of resources is much higher in this portion of the state. The western portion of the state is considerably more rural. Districts in the western portion of the state cover much larger square mileage stretching existing resources very thin. Resources in this portion of the state are much more limited than those in the Eastern portion of Kansas. A delimiting timeframe of two years participation in the initiative was used for site selection. The intent of district identification was to ensure three districts representing the most diverse sites in terms of location and size.

Once districts were selected, the following criteria were used to determine the selection of one school from within each district: recommendation of the Project Coordinator for the Co-Teaching Grant as a school that closely approximated the ideal co-teaching process, willingness to participate - of all six required team members from each building - and representativeness of

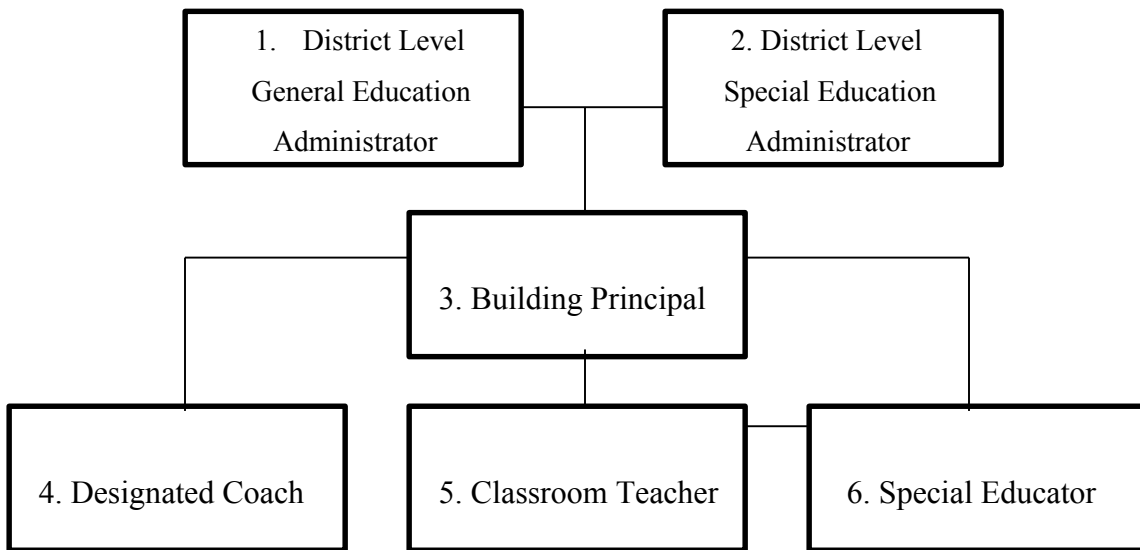
close approximation to the ideal co-teaching model. The researcher preferred to select three schools that represent the same level of education, and selected all secondary schools to allow for discovery of common patterns and portray the uniqueness of each site.

To maximize richness of information, as suggested by Patton (2002), sites were invited to participate based on recommendations made by the Project Coordinator for the Co-Teaching Initiative. This individual is the Project Coordinator of Project Success within the Beach Center on Disability and the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas. This individual works collaboratively with the Kansas State Department of Education Technical Assistance System Network in providing training, technical assistance and on-site support to schools and districts involved in improvement efforts of the Kansas State Special Education Performance Plan. The Project Coordinator is able to recommend sites that would have sufficient knowledge, experience, and expertise to enhance the quality of the information pertaining to the research focus.

### **Participant Selection**

One of the requirements districts had to meet in order to participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative, was that participating school teams had to consist of a minimum of: one district level general education administrator, one district level special education administrator, the building principal, a designated coach, one general education teacher and one special education teacher (see Figure 3.1). To participate in the initiative, all six team members were required to attend the professional development opportunities presented and to fulfill their designated roles in the implementation and sustainment of a co-teaching model of service delivery at their building site. To be selected for participation in this research study, all six required team members from each school had to be willing to be involved in the study. See Appendix B for sample Letter of Invitation.

**Figure 3.1 The 6 Required Co-Teaching Team Members Kansas Co-teaching Initiative**



### **Assurances of Confidentiality and Ethical Procedures**

Yin (2014) emphasizes that, because case study involves contemporary human affairs, it is imperative the researcher takes special care in and is sensitive to considerations of the protection of human subjects. Participants were informed that, while aspects of their professional collegial engagement will be considered throughout the study, their responses will in no way impact their standing as a professional in the school, nor will the information be used for evaluative means as individual responses will not be shared. The privacy and confidentiality of those who participate were protected so that, as a result of their participation, they were not unwittingly put in any undesirable position. Names of participants and site locations were changed to ensure confidentiality. Identifiable individual results were not shared.

All potential participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were granted the right to exit the study at any time should they so desire. Each participant signed a consent form prior to data collection. The consent form included the purpose of the study, a statement of voluntary participation, confidentiality information, permission to audio record interviews, and the option to withdraw from the study at any time. A copy of the consent form is included in Appendix A. To ensure protection of human subjects in this study, this proposal was submitted for approval through Kansas State University's Institutional Review Board. The next section describes the data collection techniques used in the study.

## **Data Collection**

Sources of data for this study included one-on-one participant interviews with each of the six team members from each of the three selected school sites. The researcher originally intended to conduct six individual interviews from each school to permit the collection of data from six different perspectives as each team member represents a different role on the co-teaching team. Upon arrival for interviews at School A, the researcher learned that the general education co-teacher and special education co-teacher wanted to be interviewed together as a team. As they felt strongly about this, the researcher granted their request. The same request was made from School B's general education and special education co-teachers and again the request was granted. When scheduling interviews at School C, the researcher deliberately scheduled the co-teachers to be interviewed together to maintain consistency across sites. This adjustment to the data collection process resulted in a total of 15 interviews being conducted rather than the originally planned 18 interviews. It also resulted in the perspectives of the general education co-teacher and the special education co-teachers being combined into one co-teacher perspective.

Prior to the interviews, each team member completed a brief demographic questionnaire. In addition, co-teaching partners were asked to complete the ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers form. Coaches were asked to submit a previously completed ©Instructional Observation form that includes an Instructional Post Conference element. Principals were asked to submit a copy of the building master schedule. These supporting documents were used to aid the researcher in understanding the context of each site and allowed the researcher to collect relevant data concerning the background of each participant and team. Field notes were constructed by the researcher and assisted with data analysis and interpretation.

### ***Demographic Questionnaires***

A demographic questionnaire was designed by the researcher and was electronically mailed to participants for their completion prior to scheduled interviews. Careful consideration went into the design of the questionnaire so as not to ask for information that could be obtained elsewhere. A sample questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

## *Interviews*

While one-on-one interviews are time-consuming, they are an effective way to conduct education research and are well suited for individuals who are comfortable sharing their ideas as well as those who are hesitant to speak (Creswell, 2007). Interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to see the world from another person's perspective (Patton, 2002). In this study, the researcher endeavored to gather rich, thick descriptions of day-to-day co-teaching functioning, the unique characteristics of each co-teaching partnership, the collaborative experiences of participants, and the principals' practices that were perceived to be most meaningful to the development and sustainability of a co-teaching model. The semi-structured interview method allowed the research to clarify statements and probe for additional information. It also allowed the researcher to be free to explore beyond the questions and to guide the conversation spontaneously with the focus on a particular predetermined subject (Patton, 2002). This interview style allowed the researcher to respond to participants' stories as they emerge during the interview (Merriam, 2001).

Interview guides for each of the required team members by role (district level general education administrator, district level special education administrator, building principal, coach, and co-teacher) included questions designed to allow people to respond in their own words and to minimize the opportunity for predetermined responses (Patton, 2002). The interview guides were open-ended to allow for emergence of topics. The conceptual frameworks of team development and collaboration were used to guide the development of the interview questions. The questions on the interview guide were a narrowing of the sub-questions regarding the stages of team development, the key elements of effective teams, the continuum of collegiality, and collaborative activities. A sample interview guide is included in Appendix F. Protocols for the use of the interview guides included the following:

- Conducting interviews in a quiet, private location preferred by the participant.
- Providing explanations of the nature of the research, use of consent form, amount of time needed to complete the interview, and plans for using the results.
- Offering a completed copy of the study to each participant.

Once interview guides were developed, they were piloted with two different co-teaching team members who participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative within the researchers own district. These individuals were selected based on their familiarity with the initiative and co-



teaching and based on their availability to the researcher. One pilot interview was done with an administrator and the second pilot interview was conducted with a special education teacher. After the pilot interviews were completed, the researcher requested feedback from participants regarding the ease of answering questions and accepted suggestions for improving the interview guides and process. The feedback was used along with the researcher's own insights to make adjustments to the interview guides prior to conducting actual interviews in the field for this study.

Data collected during the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder from which the data were transcribed verbatim. Field notes were taken during the interview process to facilitate data analysis (Patton, 2002).

### ***©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers?***

The ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers was designed by Villa et al., (2013) for use by co-teaching teams to highlight the “multiple dimensions of effective co-teaching” (p. 31) and was used in this study with permission. Villa and colleagues explain, “it is important for co-teachers to know what the desired co-teaching behaviors are so that they are able to self-assess and reflect on the degree or quality with which they engaged in these behaviors” (p. 169). Coaches and principals “can also use the form to provide constructive feedback, which can lead to professional reflection and team-member growth” (p. 172). The self-assessment was used to gather additional information about each co-teaching team-members' perception of their co-teaching relationship prior to the interview. It was mailed electronically to each participant. The ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers is located in Appendix E.

### ***Documents***

Documents that provided even more information than that yielded from other sources (Merriam, 1998) were reviewed and assisted the researcher with interpretation of findings. Documents for inclusion in this study included: demographic questionnaires, the master schedule for the building, an ©Instructional Observation form (See Appendix H) with Instructional Post Conference component recently completed by the designated coach, and a ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers (See Appendix E) completed by co-teaching partners.

### ***Field Notes***

The researcher's own field notes were a component of the data collected. The field notes were a result of the researcher's observations and reflections related to the process of interviewing. Field notes were maintained and reviewed at the end of each site visit. They were stored in such a manner that other persons can retrieve them efficiently. See Appendix G for sample field note format. Complete notes were organized and categorized according to the most logical themes as they emerged to provide detailed descriptions supporting conclusions and documenting the experiences in each case.

### **Data Analysis**

Consistent with qualitative research, data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. Merriam (1998) affirmed the interactive nature of data collection, analysis, and reporting. A qualitative design is emergent. The researcher usually does not know ahead of time every person which might be interviewed, all questions that might be asked, or where to look next unless data are analyzed as they are being collected (Merriam, 1998).

The primary source of data for this study was interviews. All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder. Each voice recording was downloaded onto a compact disc, checked for clarity, and transcribed verbatim. Selected participants were asked to electronically review emerging themes for reactions.

Data analysis for this study began with preparing and organizing the data. The researcher reviewed the data, developed main codes, and analyzed for sub-codes that yielded patterns (Creswell, 2007). Once patterns were established the researcher looked for themes emanating from the list of patterns. The findings of the research are presented in Chapter Five using tables and narrative descriptions.

### **Validation Strategies**

A case study is a singularity that is chosen for its interest to the researcher and readers of the project, and not because it is a typical example. Therefore, issues of external validity are not relevant. The study was validated using the selected strategies frequently used by qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2007). Validation strategies selected for this research project include: multiple data sources, rich thick description, peer review, member checking and clarifying researcher bias.

### ***Multiple Data Sources***

Creswell (2007) explains, “In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980; Patton, 1990)” (p. 208). In this study, interviews from six perspectives at each of three different sites in the state were conducted and analyzed. Multiple sources of data collection allowed for continual opportunities to verify the data from one source to another. For example, data from interviews with administrators were verified with data from interviews with co-teachers and coaches. Data from interviews were combined with data from documents reviewed to get a more holistic view of practices at each site. In addition to interviews, credibility of interpretation was enhanced with documents, questionnaires and field notes.

### ***Rich Thick Description***

When reporting the results of research, “rich thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998) because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 209). Transferability is critical in a qualitative study since it is the reader who determines whether the results can be applied to their situation by reflecting on the setting, participants, procedures, and analysis strategies. Rich thick descriptions allow readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants and/or setting. In this study, profiles of each site added to the richness of descriptions. Participant quotes further added context and understanding to the themes derived from the analysis. With such detailed descriptions, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred “because of shared characteristics” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 32). Readers of this study will be able to determine the extent to which findings can be applied to their context through detailed descriptions.

### ***Peer Review***

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2007) speak of peer review as a strategy to maintain quality. In order to garner an external check of this research project, peer review was utilized. A peer who is familiar with qualitative research and coding of interviews was selected

to review procedures for analysis through attaining for coder consensus and debriefing about the interpretation of the patterns and themes.

### ***Member Checking***

According to Creswell (2007), “in member checking, the researcher solicits participants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmertz, 1991; Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994)” (p. 208). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this technique to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). A small portion of participants reflecting various perspectives was selected and asked to review potential patterns and emerging themes and to comment on reactions in an email. This contributed to credibility of understandings gained through this research.

### ***Clarifying Researcher Bias***

Creswell (2007) stresses the importance of clarifying researcher bias in any qualitative study. In this clarification, Creswell explains that the researcher “comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (p. 208). He adds that it is “important so that the reader understands the researcher’s position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry (Merriam, 1988)” (p. 251).

Qualitative inquiry is influenced by the belief system from which a researcher approaches the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stainback & Stainback, 1988). The researcher for this study is a female doctoral student in educational leadership employed as an Executive Director of Special Education and Student Support Services in a Kansas public school district with approximately 6,000 students. Her position in this study is grounded in the belief system constructed during 23 years in public education; five years as a general education classroom teacher, 10 years as a special education teacher and consultant, and eight years as a district level special education administrator. Four philosophical beliefs have guided the construction of this study. First, the researcher believes that teachers are the most critical element when planning for student achievement. Second, the researcher believes that all teachers can be empowered to teach all students. Third, the researcher believes educators working together can increase student achievement more effectively than educators working in isolation. Finally, the researcher believes administrative support is critical to the initiation and sustainment of any school

initiative. This belief system aligned itself well with how information was gathered and interpreted by the researcher.

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the researcher brought her experience, training, and perspective into the study. Her personal experiences as a leader in the implementation of a co-teaching initiative in her current district of employment shaped the narrative. The researcher is privileged to lead her district in active participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. She fulfills the Initiative's requirement of participation by a district level special education administrator and as such has been through the professional development provided through the State's initiative. She has particular interest in learning what practices of building principals have been perceived to be most meaningful in the support of a co-teaching model of service delivery in the LRE for students with disabilities. This information was invaluable to supporting the sustainability of this model in her district. In designing and completing this research she was committed to letting the findings emerge and included her interpretation only when reflecting on the results of the study. The influence of the researcher was diminished by the use of validation strategies as noted earlier. It should be noted that the researcher's district was not included in this study.

### **Chapter 3 Summary**

This chapter describes methods that were used in this case study, followed by discussions of the site selection process, participant selection process, human subjects/ethical issues, data collection, data analysis, and validation. The case study method provided a means for understanding how the participants perceive the role of the principal in the support of implementing and sustaining a co-teaching model of service delivery in the context of the LRE. Through one-on-one interviews and supporting documents, rich data were gathered to meet the purpose of the study. Chapter Four presents case descriptions including detailed accounts of each school and each participant in the study.

## Chapter 4 - Case Descriptions

Case studies provide detailed descriptions to develop deeper understanding of the topic under investigation. This chapter contains narratives about each of the schools in the study to document the process of implementing the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative in that unique context. As noted in chapter three, schools were chosen due to their participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative and the recommendation of the lead facilitator.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the demographics at each school at the time the study was conducted in 2014 as reported by building principals. School A was the smallest school, but had the highest percentage of English language learners while conversely having the lowest percentage of students identified with disabilities. School B was the largest school with a student population considerably higher than either of the other two participating schools. School C had the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, the highest percentage of minority students, and the highest percentage of students identified with disabilities. It was also the school that was located in the largest district. Statewide data is also provided in the table as a reference point of comparison. The statewide data was obtained from the Kansas State Department of Education website and is reflective of 2013 as that was the most current data available.

Through visits to each of the schools, interviews with the administrators, teachers, and coaches, and reviewing documents, the researcher was able to learn about how principals support co-teaching in the context of the LRE. This chapter provides descriptions of each school in the study. Table 5.1 summarizes important demographic information for each site. The narratives following the table provide thick, rich descriptions of each school including the researcher's impressions of the school's culture and a summary of relevant experiences of each participant.

**Table 4.1 December 2014 Demographics of Participating Schools**

<b>School</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Coop Member</b>	<b>Special Education Teachers</b>	<b>General Education Teachers</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students</b>	<b>Percent of English Language Learners</b>	<b>Percent of Minority Students</b>	<b>Percent of Students with Disabilities</b>
<b>School A</b>	7-8	No	2	31	363	72%	65%	78%	5%
<b>School B</b>	9-12	No	23	78	1760	62%	4%	49%	17%
<b>School C</b>	6-8	No	5	41	503	77%	3.6%	60%	19%
<b>All Kansas Schools 2013</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	480,149	49.9%	8.3%	33.3%	13.7%

## School A

Located in a community of approximately 27,000 individuals, School A is one of two middle schools in the district and serves students in grades seven and eight. The district also includes eleven kindergarten through fourth grade elementary schools, two fifth and sixth grade intermediate schools, one high school, one alternative high school and one virtual academy. School A employs thirty-one general education teachers and two special education teachers. Table 4.2 provides a summary of School A's staff participants in this study and is followed by a descriptive narrative of each individual's background. The master schedule for School A is structured into three distinct pods. Due to the exceptionally high percentage of students who are English language learners in this school, two pods are designated to provide services to students who are learning English as a second language. One pod instructs seventh grade students while the second pod instructs eighth grade students. The third pod is designated for students with disabilities in both grades seven and eight. Students stay with the same group of instructors for both of their middle school years. In this pod, there are five core teachers, two English Language Arts teachers, one science teacher, one social studies teacher, and one math teacher who are dedicated to co-teaching. Both special education teachers are assigned to this pod as well as paraprofessional staff. Seventeen out of the 45 classes taught by this team are co-taught classes. School A functions on a nine period day.

Three hundred sixty-three students were enrolled in School A at the time of the study. Hispanic students comprised approximately 70% of the student body, while white students made up only 22%. Sixty-five percent of this school's students were English language learners. This was an exceptionally high percentage in comparison to the other two sites in this study and to the state average of 8.3%. Approximately 72% of students are from economically disadvantaged families, significantly above the state average of 49.9%. At five percent, School A had a considerably lower percentage of students identified with disabilities than either of the other two schools in the study, and lower than the state average of 13.7%.

The vision of school A is: All students can learn, no excuses. This vision was visible in the classrooms, hallways, and extra-curricular activities throughout the school. Principal A noted that the staff is creative and diverse in thinking when it comes to meeting the needs of all students. They work collaboratively to foster the best scenarios and problem-solve difficult



situations. Following discussions and decisions, “they have an uncanny ability to come together as a team to once again focus on student success” (Principal A). Principal A summarized staff collegiality, “Relationships come first. That makes the rigor and relevance easy!”

Special education and general education administration jointly drove this school’s participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. Specifically, the district level special education director and the building principal worked collaboratively to assemble teams of teachers to join the initiative. General education teachers report their participation as voluntary. Special education teachers voluntarily participated as well.

Upon entering School A, visitors are greeted by friendly office staff. The culture is a warm and welcoming environment that has a feeling of family about it. Each person encountered is eager to share and talk about their school. Employees are proud of their work not only in the realm of co-teaching but in other areas of the school as well. Golden-tickets help students link content across disciplines. A group known as conclave meets after school hours on a voluntary weekly basis to discuss transformation techniques. They are striving to take their school from “good to great, becoming that model school” (General Education Teacher A). Conclave is leading a district-wide initiative to adopt a collaborative calendar that would allow for early releases every Friday next year so that staff can collaborate. The camaraderie of shared leadership is evident. Principal A explained that she “doesn’t want one or two leaders, but rather a building of leaders”. As a result of her leadership, the sense of empowerment felt by staff is strong.

The strength of School A, as reported by the building principal, lies in the commitment of the teachers to student success. Many teachers voluntarily meet outside of contract time to focus on bringing a positive, collaborative culture that supports staff and students alike. Teachers implement self-created programs that promote cross-curricular activities. For example, participants from School A described their golden ticket program, “A golden ticket is cross-curricular. And each teacher has a golden ticket ... if they’re in math class and they do something that would apply in a social studies lesson, if the students recognize that, then the student gets the golden ticket. They take it to their social studies teacher and they have to sign off on it. That teacher then has a golden ticket to get rid of”.

**Table 4.2 Participants School A**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Years in education</b>	<b>Years in current position</b>	<b>Years Co-teaching with current partner</b>	<b>Reported Participation Status</b>
<b>A1</b>	District level general education administrator	25	7	N/A	Voluntary
<b>A2</b>	District level special education administrator	28	13	N/A	Voluntary
<b>A3</b>	Building principal	22	4	N/A	Voluntary
<b>A4</b>	General education co-teacher	6	2	1	Voluntary
<b>A5</b>	Special education co-teacher	4	4	3	Voluntary
<b>A6</b>	Co-teaching coach	4	2	N/A	Voluntary

***School A District Level General Education Administrator***

The district level general education administrator interviewed for School A had 25 years of experience in public education with 20 of those years in administration. He had been in his current position of Associate Superintendent of Learning Services for seven years. Prior to becoming an administrator, he was a secondary social studies and English teacher. He reported that even though he did have students with disabilities in his classroom, including students with autism, he had little contact with special education staff at that time. He reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was building driven. His participation in the initiative was voluntary.

***School A District Level Special Education Administrator***

The district level special education administrator interviewed for School A had 28 years of experience in public school systems. She had been in administration for 18 years with the last 13 years being in her current position of Director of Special Education. Prior to becoming an administrator, this individual taught in a variety of situations including: Sixth grade English as a second language teacher, fourth grade classroom teacher, fifth through eighth grade classroom teacher in a country school, and a self-contained special education teacher for students in third and fourth grades. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. Her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

### ***School A Principal***

The principal of School A is a seasoned educator with 33 years of experience in public school systems. During her tenure she spent 22 years as a special education teacher working with students at elementary, middle, and high school levels. Her students had a wide variety of disabilities. The programs she worked within included those currently considered to be adaptive programs for students with mild to moderate disabilities as well as functional programs for students with significant disabilities. She had been a school administrator for 10 years serving in a variety of roles including vice principal, assistant director of special education, special education coordinator, and building principal. This was her fourth year in her current position as principal of School A. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by both special education and general education. The decision for her building to participate was made at a staff meeting. Her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

### ***School A General Education Co-Teacher***

The general education teacher interviewed from School A had six years of experience in the public school system. At the time of the study, she was assigned as an eighth grade general education English language arts teacher and had been in this role for two years. This was her first year of partnering with her current special education co-teacher. Her only prior experience to working with students who have special needs was what she experienced in college. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. Her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

There are an average of 22 students in each of the classes this teacher was assigned to teach. Each class had approximately ten students who were English language learners. There were a total of three students with IEPs in her classes.

### ***School A Special Education Co-Teacher***

The special education co-teacher in School A had three and a half years of teaching experience in public education. He had been a special education teacher in School A during all of this time. At the time of the study he was co-teaching four sections of seventh and eighth grade science with his general education co-teaching partner. They had been co-teaching together for 2 ½ years. This teacher also had one period of resource each day where he served students on his caseload whose IEP deem a period of resource instruction necessary. The

remaining two sections of each day were designated as team plan time and individual plan time. He reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. His participation in the initiative was voluntary. Both this teacher and his general education partner served as co-teaching coaches in the building and district. For the purposes of this study, he was interviewed as a special education co-teacher.

### ***School A Coach***

The co-teaching coach in School A had four years of experience in public education and two years of experience as a co-teaching coach. He began his teaching career in School A. He coached six co-teaching teams in the building, all of whom teach seventh and eighth grade core content classes including English language arts, math, science, social studies. During the school year, each team coached received three structured observations followed by a feedback session after each observation. The coach used the ©Instructional Observation and Instructional Post Conference form included in Appendix H as developed by Rich Villa and colleagues. This teacher had no prior experience working with students with disabilities before this job assignment.

At the time of the study, this teacher was working as a seventh and eighth grade general education science teacher in School A. In addition to his role as a coach, he also co-taught four periods of every day with the special education co-teacher interviewed for this study. This teacher reported that he believed participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in order to increase inclusion. His participation in the initiative was voluntary.

### **School B**

School B is the only high school located in a community with a population of approximately 25,000 people. The school district is a countywide district, serving students from four communities. Many families in these communities are connected with the military leading to a high transient population of both students and staff. The district in which School B is located is comprised of 15 elementary schools and two middle schools in addition to this talent-development, academy structured high school. School B serves students in grades nine through twelve on two campuses. Freshman students are educated at the freshman academy located on the second campus. Students in grades ten through twelve are educated on the main campus in

one of three additional academies: the Fine Arts and Human Services Academy, the Business Information and Technology Academy, or the Science Engineering and Technology Academy. Each academy is comprised of a series of three to seven career clusters. School B functions on a ninety-minute block schedule. Seventy-eight general education teachers and twenty-three special education teachers provide instruction to School B students. Fifteen of these special education instructors are paired with a general education instructor to co-teach at least one core content class in the areas of math, English language arts, science, and social science. The school also employs support staff and paraprofessionals to assist with the implementation of special education services in the two buildings.

At the time of this study, approximately 1,760 students were enrolled in School B. Sixty-two percent of students came from economically disadvantaged homes. This was the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students of the three schools involved in the study. At 49%, the percentage of students from minority backgrounds in School B was the lowest for the study, but still considerably above the state average of 33.3% minority students. Four percent of School B students were identified as English language learners. This was comparable to the number of English language learners in School C, but dramatically lower than those in School A. Finally, 17% of students in School B were identified as having a disability. This is significantly higher than the number of identified students in School A and somewhat higher than the state average of 13.7%, but comparable to the number of students identified with disabilities in School C.

School B's mission is to provide students with the best education possible in a way that is engaging, authentic, student-centered, innovative, and which promotes an appreciation for life-long learning. They are an academic institute committed to excellence. This commitment requires not only respect for the differences in students and staff from widely diverse cultural, economic, social, intellectual, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, but also a sustained effort to use diversity to achieve this commitment. The teachers at School B are dedicated to providing each student with the necessary tools they will need to lead productive lives in today's ever-changing society. They feel it is their job to nurture and guide students to be the best they can be in and out of the classroom. With approximately 1750 students, and two separate campuses, their resources are ideal for students to receive the proper attention they deserve and also ensure a safe and orderly learning environment. The success of their students depends on active

involvement of the entire learning community as well as the involvement of their parents. All students are encouraged to enroll in a wide range of challenging courses that prepare them for their post-secondary goals. As an academy structured high school, they offer many elective courses that cater to the varied interests of their students. Outside of the classroom their students enjoy a plethora of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. School B boasts championship accolades in recent years in both their co-curricular and athletic programs. They take great pride in their school, what it has to offer, and its accomplishments.

School B became involved with the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative as a means of addressing the state requirement for all students to receive instruction from highly qualified core content teachers. In addition to increased accountability measures from the state regarding the emphasis on highly qualified teachers, Principal B explained that prior to the initiation of co-teaching in the building, local stakeholders questioned the rigor of the curriculum students with disabilities were getting even with appropriate support systems in place. When the invitation to participate in the co-teaching initiative came, School B accepted with goals to improve students with disabilities' access to rigorous curriculum. According to all administrators interviewed from this site, this is a district-wide initiative driven by both special education and general education. Individual Education Plans determine whether a student is placed in a co-taught class for instruction. Principal B explained, "Our IEP drives scheduling. Services that are on that paper dictate what services we provide".

Upon entering the building, visitors have a sense of the business-like culture of the environment. Courteous and efficient office personnel greet visitors and promptly notify contacts of arrival. All teachers in the building can expect to co-teach at any time. Principal B explained, "we just tell all core teachers, don't think you're going to not co-teach ... this is how we do business, it's our culture and when we need X amount of sections based off the IEPs and you teach that content area, you're probably going to co-teach." She further iterated, "every teacher in those core areas know, they know, it could be me this year and I should be ready for it".

**Table 4.3 Participants School B**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Years in education</b>	<b>Years in current position</b>	<b>Years Co-teaching with current partner</b>	<b>Reported Participation Status</b>
<b>B1</b>	District level general education administrator	27	21	N/A	Voluntary
<b>B2</b>	District level special education administrator	17	10	N/A	Assigned
<b>B3</b>	Building principal	24	15	N/A	No comment
<b>B4</b>	General education co-teacher	27	18	4	Voluntary
<b>B5</b>	Special education co-teacher	17	4	4	Expected
<b>B6</b>	Co-teaching coach	20	2	N/A	Voluntary

***School B District Level General Education Administrator***

The district level general education administrator for School B had 27 years of experience in the field of public education. She had been an administrator for 21 years with all 21 of those years in her current position as Director of Secondary Education. Prior to becoming an administrator, she was a general education classroom teacher at the elementary and middle school levels. She taught science and reading at the middle school level. While teaching middle school general education, she was a class-within-a-class team member. Her team had all of the special education students in that building assigned to them. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was a team effort between the exceptional student services department and general education. Her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

***School B District Level Special Education Administrator***

The district level special education administrator for School B has 17 years experience in the public school system. She had been an administrator for 10 years and in her current position as Director of Exceptional Student Services for four years. Prior to becoming an administrator, she taught general education at the elementary level, special education at the elementary level, served as a speech paraprofessional, and as a high school special education coordinator / department leader. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was a joint effort between general education and exceptional student services. Her participation in the initiative was not voluntary.

### ***School B Principal***

The principal of School B had 24 years of experience in public education all of which have been in her current district. Thirteen of these years had been in the field of administration where she worked for 10 years as an assistant principal prior to becoming the lead principal in School B. This administrator was in her fourth year as principal of School B for a total of 14 years in administration. Prior to entering the field of administration, this principal served ten years as a general education teacher and as an adaptive PE instructor. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by IEP service documents and was a district initiative. She did not comment on whether or not her participation in the initiative was voluntary or assigned.

### ***School B General Education Co-Teacher***

The general education co-teacher interviewed for this study had 27 years of experience in the field of public education as well as an additional five years teaching at a Christian school. He had been in his current position for 18 years and was assigned to teach tenth through twelfth grade mathematics courses. In addition, he taught a college level dual credit class at the high school. He had been co-teaching for several years having three other co-teaching partners prior to his current partner. He had been paired with his current partner for four years. They co-taught for three periods each day. In their first co-taught class they had 20 students, eight of who had individual education plans and none of who were English language learners. In their second co-taught class they had 25 students, four of who had individualized education plans and none of who were English language learners. In their third co-taught class they had 26 students, five of who had individualized education plans and two of who were English language learners. General Education Co-teacher B stated that his participation in co-teaching was voluntary. He reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in the district.

### ***School B Special Education Co-Teacher***

The special education co-teacher from School B had been in the field of public education for 17 years. She had served as a special education teacher all 17 of those years, the last four of which have been at School B. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. She had been assigned to co-teach



Algebra II with her current partner all four years. During her interview, this teacher expressed that “ESS (Exceptional Student Services) teachers should expect to” co-teach. She also expressed that, “Our ultimate goal for kids is dismissal from special education or full-inclusion!”

### ***School B Coach***

The coach interviewed from School B had 20 years of experience in the field of public education. Prior to her current assignment, Coach B, accumulated fifteen years experience working with special needs students as a special education teacher. At the time of the study, she was employed as an ESS Facilitator and a co-teaching coach. This was her second year in this position and her second year as a co-teaching coach. In her coaching role, she coached 32 co-teaching teams teaching ninth through twelfth grade core content classes of English language arts, math, history, and science. Each team received one or two observations and feedback sessions per school year. The number provided depends on the needs of the team. More experienced teams receive only one session per year, while teams who are newer and less developed receive two coaching sessions per year. This coach uses the ©Instructional Observation and Instruction Post Conference form shown in Appendix H. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. When asked if her participation in the co-teaching initiative was voluntary, this coach replied, “Yes, I guess.”

### **School C**

School C is located in a community with a population of approximately 128,000. This school is from the largest community and district involved in this study. There are 17 elementary schools and three high schools in the district. School C is one of six middle schools serving students in grades six, seven, and eight in the district and operates under the middle school philosophy. School C employs 41 general education teachers and five special education teachers. The building runs on ninety-minute block schedules. Six sections are designed as co-taught sections.

At the time of this study, there were 503 students enrolled in School C. Seventy-seven percent of students were from economically disadvantaged families. This was the highest rate for schools participating in the study. Sixty percent of the student body were from minority families which was higher than School B’s minority population and lower than School A’s

minority population. This school is a Newcomer Site for the district meaning that students new to American schools and new to developing English language attend this school. Despite being a Newcomer Site, only 3.6% of the students in School C are English language learners, the lowest percentage of all three schools involved in the study. School C's population of students identified with disabilities is 19%, the highest in the study and significantly above the state average.

The mission of School C is to prepare young people for the challenges of a changing world. School C offers many opportunities for students, academically, socially, athletically, in clubs, on teams and in the performing arts. They take great pride in the diversity and achievement of all their students. School C students and staff believe that students must actively participate in the development of their own education; students are accountable for their own successes; and parental support and involvement is necessary for optimum success in education. School C strives to prepare students to be personally and academically successful, to engage students in authentic learning opportunities, and to inspire life-long learners.

School C became involved with the initiative when the director of special education sent out an email to all building principals inquiring if anyone was interested in becoming involved in the co-teaching initiative. Principal C reported that he, "immediately just answered yes because I knew that I had some mediocre co-teachers, co-teaching pairs, and I had some good and we were just all over the gamete". He illustrated by adding, "We had co-teachers, we had wasted certified special ed teachers that were just acting as paraprofessionals. We had paraprofessionals who could do more too. So we're trying to get them to do more than just normal walk around the room kind of stuff." He desired to strengthen his existing co-teaching teams and grow the program in his building by engaging in the professional development opportunities offered through the initiative.

Upon entering the building, visitors are greeted by welcoming office staff that promptly assists them with the purpose of their visit. Teachers in School C are described as innovators by their principal who stated, "they are out of the box thinkers who search for innovative and engaging ways to hook kids into learning". He further described his staff as being student centered, progressive, and collaborative. School C strives toward a culture of responsibility and accountability for all students by all teachers by breaking down the silos of general education and special education and consolidating them into a cohesive philosophy that learners are not

“your students” or “my students”, but rather that they are all of our students. When describing co-teaching in School C, the principal articulated, “It’s not about, you know, bringing IEP kids along. It’s about trying to push all kids, gen ed and everything, and push them all and just being an environment that’s going to help push them.” When describing the goal of co-teaching, Principal C noted, “it’s really about closing that gap for every kid”. One way School C enacts this goal is with the expectation that “every teacher in my building teaches reading, every teacher teaches writing. Doesn’t matter what you teach. I think we’re just coming on board with they’re all of our kids and that’s kind of where we’re moving to”.

**Table 4.4 Participants School C**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Years in education</b>	<b>Years in current position</b>	<b>Years Co-teaching with current partner</b>	<b>Reported Participation Status</b>
<b>C1</b>	District level general education administrator	23	2	N/A	Voluntary
<b>C2</b>	District level special education administrator	20	2	N/A	Voluntary
<b>C3</b>	Building principal	21	5	N/A	Voluntary
<b>C4</b>	General education co-teacher	9	6	2	Assigned
<b>C5</b>	Special education co-teacher	9	4	2	Voluntary
<b>C6</b>	Co-teaching coach	11	2	N/A	Voluntary

***School C District Level General Education Administrator***

The district level general education administrator for School C had 23 years of experience in public schools. She had been an administrator for two years, both of which had been in her current position as Director of School Improvement. Prior to becoming an administrator, she gained experiences as: a general education teacher, a Title 1 liaison, and an English language arts teacher. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by both general education and special education. Her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

### ***School C District Level Special Education Administrator***

The district level special education administrator for School C had 20 years of experience in public schools. She had been an administrator for 11 years and was in her second year in her current position. Her background included seven years of experience as a school psychologist, two years experience as a consulting teacher in special education, one year experience as an elementary assistant principal, five years experience as a high school assistant principal, and three years experience as a middle/high school principal. Director C managed a special education staff of 170 individuals district-wide. She reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven collaboratively by special and general education at the present times; however prior to the current year, participation was driven by special education only. She reported that her participation in the initiative was voluntary.

### ***School C Principal***

Principal C had 21 years of experience in the field of public education. He had been an administrator for seven years, the last five of which had been in his current position as principal of this middle school. He also had experience as a Dean of Students and as a math coach. This principal reported that participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. His participation was voluntary.

### ***School C General Education Co-Teacher***

The general education co-teacher for School C had nine years of experience in public education. She currently teaches seventh and eighth grade math. This was her second year of teaching seventh grade math and her sixth year of teaching eighth grade math. She reported that she worked as a paraprofessional in a resource room while she attended college to earn her education degree to become a teacher. This teacher reported that her participation in co-teaching was assigned by her principal.

This teacher had been paired with her current co-teaching partner for two years. They co-taught one section of seventh grade math with 28 students in the class. Eleven of these students were identified with a disability and received special education services through the co-teaching service delivery model. None of the students in this class were English language learners. There were nineteen students enrolled in the eighth grade co-taught math class. Eight of these students

were identified with a disability and received services through this co-teaching delivery model. None of these students were English language learners.

This teacher reported that she did not know who drove the participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative for this district. She also reported that her participation in the initiative was not voluntary. General Education Teacher C reported being told by her principal that she would be participating in co-teaching.

### ***School C Special Education Co-Teacher***

The special education co-teacher from School C had nine years of experience in public school. This was her fourth year in her current position as special education department chair. She co-taught both seventh grade math and eighth grade math with the general education teacher interviewed for this study. She and her partner had been paired together for two years. In addition to co-teaching two sections of math, this special educator also had a section of sixth grade resource math in her daily schedule. This teacher reported that she believed participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was driven by special education in this district. She also reported that she was asked to participate in co-teaching and her participation was voluntary.

### ***School C Coach***

The co-teaching coach from School C had 11 years of experience in public education. Prior to his current position, he taught general education math for nine years. He reported that he instructed students with disabilities in his general education math classes. He was in his second year as a math coach at two middle schools in the district. In addition to coaching math, he was the co-teaching coach. He coaches two co-teaching teams in School C and four co-teaching teams at the second middle school to which he was assigned. The teams he coached taught seventh grade language arts, eighth grade math, seventh grade math, and sixth grade math. For each team coached, he annually conducted approximately three observations per co-teaching team with follow-up sessions after each observation. He used the ©Instructional Observation and Instructional Post Conference form shown in Appendix H with slight adaptations to meet the needs of his teams. This coach reported his participation in the co-teaching initiative was voluntary.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the unique characteristics of the three schools selected for this study. Each school had its own culture and strengths. The participants from each site came with a wide variety of prior experiences. The descriptions of each site were designed to provide the reader with a vivid description of each case to foster discernment of applicability of the findings of this study to other settings. Chapter Five presents the process of analysis and the patterns and themes emerging from the data. Chapter Six describes the results and conclusions for this study.

# Chapter 5 - Results

## Introduction

Chapter Five presents an analysis of the data collected pertaining to the research question: “What practices of principals provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the LRE?” and the sub-questions: “How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in key elements of effective teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through:

- 1) Clearly defined goals?
- 2) Priorities?
- 3) Roles and responsibilities?
- 4) Self-awareness?
- 5) Leadership?
- 6) Group dynamics?
- 7) Communication?
- 8) Context?
- 9) Infrastructure?”

The chapter begins with a description of the procedures for analyzing the data. It then provides tables and narrative explanations of the patterns emerging from the data. All patterns found across the key elements of effective teams are then analyzed to determine themes across the cases that explain the most meaningful practices of principals in support of a co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the LRE.

## Procedures for Analyzing the Data

The data for this study came primarily from the interview transcripts. Interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim, but edited in minor ways to maintain correct grammar. Punctuation was at the discretion of the researcher. Field notes, demographic questionnaires, and documents were also used during data analysis to clarify understanding and to verify findings. The demographic questionnaires and documents provided background information for constructing the site descriptions and participant profiles detailed in Chapter Four. Documents were consulted throughout the data analysis process to assist the researcher in finding patterns

and themes. Once transcripts were read in their entirety, the researcher identified meaningful units of data such as phrases, sentences, or paragraphs and assigned them to level one coding categories.

### **Level 1 Coding Categories - Key Elements**

The level one coding categories for this study were derived directly from Sheard and Kakabadse's nine key elements for effective teams. To the nine key elements, a tenth category of "other" was added to absorb emergent themes that did not fit within any of the nine elements. Initial coding of data was driven by interpretations for each code drawn from the literature. Clarification was added based on dictionary definitions of the key terms. Finally, the researcher added her own definitions and data samples for final clarification of level one coding (See Table 5.1).

Yin (2009) explained that using the theoretical propositions that guide a study is a preferred strategy when analyzing data. Interviews were first coded by identifying units of meaning and assigning them to one of the nine level one key elements of effective teams (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002) used as a framework for the study as described in chapter three. These nine key elements are referred to as level one codes in this study. Data contained in each level one code were then analyzed for secondary, or level two, codes and sorted.

The researcher began by creating an initial coding table after reviewing all sets of transcripts. One peer reviewer received a copy of the initial version of the coding table and one transcript that was already coded. He was asked to review the coded transcript and check for agreement of coding based on definitions in the coding table. After reviewing the coding table and transcript, the peer reviewer provided the researcher with feedback and revisions were made to the coding table. The peer reviewer was given a second un-coded transcript and the revised coding table and asked to code the transcript. The peer reviewer returned the transcript to the researcher. A comparison was made between the peer reviewer's coding with the researcher's coding of the second transcript. The researcher then calculated the percentage of agreement by counting the number of codes in agreement versus the number of codes that differed. Through this process coder agreement of 96% was reached. Table 5.1 is the final, evolved coding table that was used to code data, after coder consensus was reached.



**Table 5.1 Summary of Level 1 Codes (Key Elements and Emergent Code)**

Code	Level 1 Codes	*Literature Definitions	**Dictionary Definitions	***Researcher Definitions	Data Samples
G	Clearly Defined Goals	That which the team is to achieve, understood by all, task to perform.	Result or achievement toward which effort is directed; aim; end.	An explicit statement made regarding the presence or absence of district wide or building wide goals.	“I don’t know that the district has any goals for it. Nothing’s in writing.” (A2)
P	Priorities	Options chosen to pursue; focus of time, money and available resources; means to reaching goal.	Something given special attention.	Comments referencing some benefit of co-teaching to students, staff, or the program in general.  References to needs for successful implementation of co-teaching.	“My priority is to have principals see the benefit of it (co-teaching). Understand why it’s important.” (A2)
R	Roles and Responsibilities	Complementary roles and responsibilities; what is important about individual team members.	Role – usual or customary function.  Responsibility – the state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one’s power, control, or management.	Any reference to interventions, compliance with IEPs, or supervision.	“And so we made sure that everybody understood that when they were co-teaching and they were assigned to this classroom, they would be in this classroom, and they both have responsibility for the grades, they both have responsibility for the instruction and the preparation for that classroom.” (B2)

(Table continues)

Code	Level 1 Codes	*Literature Definitions	**Dictionary Definitions	***Researcher Definitions	Data Samples
SA	Self-awareness	Impact of individuals' behavior on immediate surrounding or on team; ability to foresee consequences of one's actions and behavior.	The state or condition of being aware; having knowledge; consciousness.	Any statement regarding one's own strengths/weaknesses, or quirks.	"We were the co-teaching pair that everybody looked up to." (B6)
L	Leadership	Encompassing all aspects of leadership subject as they relate to performance of a team; catalytic.	The position or function of a leader, a person who guides or directs a group.	Discussion of any strategies for supporting, encouraging, coordinating, or supervising co-teaching teams.	"maybe bring them in and let them know far enough in advance and say hey what do you guys think about co-teaching next year. But phrase it in a way so that they kind of know it's not really a yes or no question, it's going to happen, but try to prime that thinking and get them collaborating. Instead of forcing them on each other." (C6)

(Table continues)

Code	Level 1 Codes	*Literature Definitions	**Dictionary Definitions	***Researcher Definitions	Data Samples
GD	Group Dynamics	Social system, each member has a place which he is comfortable with.	Interactions that influence attitudes and behavior of people when they are grouped with others through either choice or accidental circumstances.	References to commitment of team members to co-teaching or comments regarding team member relationships.	“I feel like, and I’ve shared it with [my partner], and I feel that she ... she’s responsible for them, the students, to be learning and know what they need to do for the common core. She has to feel enough trust in me, that she can let me have a group and know that I can teach them well. And she does.” (A4,5)
C	Communication	Regular flow of information about the job, task and how it is being undertaken; open dialogue.	The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.	Comments regarding team member collaboration or the team’s influence on others within the school, in the district, or in other districts.	“...you talk about what’s our know and do today? What’s our unit? What’s our outcome? How are we going to differentiate? How are we going to modify? What kind of instructional technology are we going to use. How are we going to connect it to career pathway or post-secondary goals?” (B3)
X	Context	Culture both horizontally and vertically; micro issues; influenced, but not controlled, by the organization.	The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc.	Building or individual history; current building or team practices; the culture within the building; teacher licensure issues.	“...and the culture is positive in the classroom ... you see everybody working with everybody. You don’t know who the special ed kids are. You don’t know who the special ed teacher is.” (B2)

(Table continues)

Code	Level 1 Codes	*Literature Definitions	**Dictionary Definitions	***Researcher Definitions	Data Samples
I	Infrastructure	Macro organization issues.	The basic, underlying framework or features of a system or organization.	References to procedures or structures within the district, master scheduling issues, participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Grant, or other professional development activities.	“So it really works well that everything is under teaching and learning. Most of the ESS (special education) teachers ... I have focus meetings twice a year in English language arts and mathematics. It’s a professional development day during a regular school day
E	Emergent Code: Interactions and relationships			Interactions and relationships with students.	“We have the same philosophy that building those relationships with the students is a key piece to, to the kids’

\* Definitions drawn from Sheard & Kakabadse (2002, 2004), Key Elements of Effective Teams, \*\* Definitions from <http://www.dictionary.com>, \*\*\* Researcher definition to clarify coding for each key element (level one code)

A, B, C: Schools in the study.

Numbers 1-6: Perspectives in the study (1 = District level general education administrator; 2 = district level special education administrator; 3 = building principal; 4 = general education co-teacher; 5 = special education co-teacher; 6 = co-teaching coach).

In classifying the data, the researcher remained faithful to the exact words of the participants. Each transcript was thoroughly and carefully reviewed for meaningful phrases/sentences. Within the original transcripts, each meaningful phrase/sentence was underlined and coded for appropriate placement in a level one coding category. The marked passages were then organized by level one code and by participant site. Within each site's code tables, the data were organized by the participants interviewed. Notations were made regarding the page number of the transcript each data chunk was located for easy reference back to the original interview transcript.

Level one coded data were then analyzed to determine categories for level two and level three codes. Thereafter, the researcher used tallies to determine how many times level two and level three codes were discussed as well as how many participants discussed the topic (unit of meaning) (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Patterns for the level one codes emerged from level two and three codes. However, not every level two and three code yielded a pattern.

Tallies did not fully constitute establishing credible patterns, but helped organize the data and reveal common understandings (Creswell, 2007). Lack of a credible pattern does not mean that code was not important to the participants. The tallies should not be regarded as having any statistical significance because the focus of the data analysis process was finding patterns that had meaning as opposed to quantifying the tallies. Potential patterns based on tallies were reviewed for credibility and meaning using the transcripts and supporting documents. As part of the process of using tallies, tables were built (Appendix K – T).

Levels two and three codes are presented under the tables presenting data from each of the key elements (main codes). Eighteen participants were interviewed during a total of 15 interview sessions. Participants were comprised of nine administrators, six teachers (three teams of two, the special education and general education co-teachers), and three coaches. At all three schools, the general education co-teacher and the special education co-teacher were interviewed together as a team, thus the discrepancy between the number of participants and the number of interviews.

## **Patterns Associated with Clearly Defined Goals (G)**

Data coded under the level 1 code of Clearly Defined Goals (G) revealed five patterns noted as level 2 codes (see Table 5.2). Appendix K contains a table of Clearly Defined Goals (G) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in key elements of effective teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through clearly defined goals?

**Table 5.2 Patterns Associated with Clearly Defined Goals**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
Existence of goals	An explicit statement regarding the presence of district or building goals for co-teaching.	(G1) None of the participants were able to identify district-wide or building-wide goals for co-teaching (0/15). An explicit statement regarding lack of knowledge of goals for co-teaching was made in every interview at School A (5/5), one interview at School B (1/5) and one interview at School C (1/5).
Perceived goals	Statements made regarding an individual's perception of goal(s) for co-teaching; assumed goals.	(G2) Educating students in the LRE was a perceived goal (9/15)
		(G3) Participants identified responding to individual student needs as a perceived goal of co-teaching (10/15) with similar emphasis across sites (3/15, 4/15, 3/15 for Schools A, B and C respectively).
		(G4) Nearly half of all participants (7/15), primarily administrators (5/15), identified effective and efficient working relationships between co-teaching partners as a perceived goal of co-teaching.
Support of perceived goals	An individual's position of support for goals.	(G5) District level administrators voiced their support of perceived goals of co-teaching (3/6). No participant indicated not supporting perceived goals (0/15).
Meeting perceived goals	A personal assessment of meeting perceived goals.	(G6) Most participants (12/15) voiced a sense of meeting perceived program goals with equitable distribution across all three sites (4/15, 4/15, 4/15).
		(G7) Principals (3/3), co-teachers (2/3) and coaches (2/3) indicated that perceived student achievement goals were being met.
		(G8) Principals reported co-teaching goals for staff being met (2/3).
Enactment of goals	Descriptions of ways team members work toward accomplishing the perceived goals of co-teaching.	(G9) Administrative participants (5/9) related that collaboration among team members is an expectation toward meeting perceived goals of co-teaching.
		(G10) Participants from every site (4/5, 2/5, 2/5 Schools A, B and C respectively) offered examples of the instructional expectations on staff in regard to enacting perceived goals of co-teaching (8/15).

### *Existence of Goals*

Participants across sites and roles were unable neither to produce a written statement of goals nor to verbalize a known common goal for co-teaching in their schools. One administrator stated, “I haven’t seen anything written out” (A1) while another administrator said, “I don’t know that the district has any goals for it. Nothing’s in writing” (A2). Participants were also unable to articulate a stated goal for co-teaching. One pair of co-teachers elaborated, “I know kind of the overall goal of co-teaching, but as like a [School A] philosophy, I’ve never actually heard one” (A4 and A5).

The research used as a framework for this study explicitly identified clearly defined goals as a key element of effective teams (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). The absence of clearly defined and well-known common goals could be a barrier to sustainability and expansion of the co-teaching model of service delivery in the districts studied.

### *Perceived Goals*

Most participants were able to articulate perceived goals or personal goals of co-teaching in at least one of three areas:

#### 1) Educating students in the LRE

One district administrator stated, “All kids are gen ed kids first” (C1). The principal from the same district clarified, “we’re trying to give those kids access to, they’re getting access to grade level curriculum, but also just trying to ... bring them all up so we can put them into inclusion settings. I mean that’s the goal ... getting kids in the least restrictive environment” (C3). A special education director explained, “Our goal was to get more students into the general ed classroom” (B2). Another district administrator guessed, “I assume the goal is to be more responsive to the needs of kids and to do it in a way that keeps them as close to the regular curriculum, least restrictive environment as possible” (A1). The two interviews in which LRE was not noted as a perceived goal of co-teaching were with special education directors.

#### 2) Responding to the individual student needs

One principal stated, “Generally, in our co-teaching classes, those kids don’t have problems. Because they have full academic attention ... they have kids who [we] are accommodating for their behavior needs” (C3). This principal later added, “it keeps our



kids time on task in classrooms a lot higher. I mean it's just, kids are not sent out of class. They're not learning unless they're in there, so" (C3). Another principal emphasized, "We have an expectation to meet students' needs and to individualize" (A3). She explained, "The first line on our district vision is ... it's the success of all students, but then the last line says, no excuses. And that philosophy just permeates this district" (A3). She concluded this line of thought by expounding, "all students need to learn. End of discussion" (A3).

3) Efficient, effective working relationships between co-teaching partners

One participant stated, "the general education teacher and the special education teacher work as equals side by side in classrooms ... co-teaching, taking on the responsibilities of the classroom and not having any one teacher necessarily be considered, it be considered her classroom, so there's that equalization between partners ... which I think previous to the work that we've done with co-teaching ... it felt more like the special education teachers sometimes worked more as a function of a para. And so I think the idea of bringing the co-teaching in was really to create that equal partnership between general education and special education" (C1). A second participant echoed this concern, stating, "No, we don't [want teachers to assume the role of a para] because that would be a very highly paid para and we do not want that" (B2).

### ***Support for Perceived Goal***

Some administrators made generic statements of support for co-teaching such as, "I support it" (A2) while other administrators did not comment one way or the other. One director of special education responded to a query regarding her support of co-teaching by stating, "We kind of push them to try different roles [of co-teaching]" (B2). No participant made any statement to indicate they were not supportive of co-teaching in their districts, although one district level general education administrator did express some reservations about the efficiency of the co-teaching model, "I've got my doubts about it. I've got my reservations about it and [the special education director] and I have talked at some length about this. But I mean, I'm supporting what they're doing, but I'm also concerned about the level of staffing that has to be" (A1).

### *Meeting Perceived Goals*

Participants generally felt positive about their ability to meet perceived goals of co-teaching indicating their belief that they are indeed meeting two out of the three identified perceived goals discussed above, improved student performance and improved staff performance. When discussing accomplishments experienced since implementation of co-teaching, participants expressed meeting:

1) General program goals

When discussing student placement in the co-taught classrooms, Principal C explained, “they never get pulled out of any sort of whole group teaching or any new concepts or anything like that” (C3). Staff members are expected to keep students in the LRE rather than pull them out for special education services. Participants also made general references to improvements in classrooms such as improved classroom culture. “Maybe it’s not always tangible, maybe just the feel of the environment of the classroom. The way students feel when they’re in here; just the environment, the classroom environment” (A6).

2) Student improvement goals

One district level general education administrator shared, “It’s all about the student achievement. That’s what I’m looking at. The data. Are our students learning more in this co-taught class, or are they not” (B1). One principal shared her observation of students in a co-taught classroom:

“They’re just enthralled. I went in and observed one particular class period and they were supposed to take notes. It was a lab safety class. And it was so entertaining. It really was entertaining. They kind of take a little bit of that *Teach Like a Pirate* kind of philosophy. And then they intermingle it with co-teaching. And it’s a show. It’s just a show and I watch it and I had this student turn to me about halfway through and he went ... we’re suppose to be writing aren’t we? And he was just so enthralled. He was watching the whole time. And I don’t think he missed a lick, but ... I said, yeah, I think so. And he’s like, oh my gosh! I better start writing!” (A3)

### 3) Staff improvement goals

The principal from School A spoke to the improvements in instructional skills she has observed in her certified staff since they implemented co-teaching, “They’ve made so much progress. Just in co-teaching in general and teaching in general” (A3). Principal C has also observed improved teaching performance in his staff, “We were all over the gamete. We had co-teachers, we had wasted certified special ed teachers that were kind of just acting as paraprofessionals. We had paraprofessionals who could do more, too. So we’re trying to get them to do more than just normal walk around the room kind of stuff. So, we were just trying to strengthen if we have two adults in the room” (C3). Principal A reported that her classified paraprofessionals have also benefited greatly from the co-teaching model of service delivery, “[Paraprofessional] is one who has really grown with the program. She was really quite, really shy, and now I go in and if the teacher is gone, I have no doubt she could take over and actually teach the class. When I walk in and she’s with a teacher, they’re both talking and going back and forth on the topic. The teacher will usually lead, and then she’ll fill in and say; now we can do this, and this ... and clarify for the kids. And everybody benefits” (A3).

### *Enactment of Perceived Goals*

Participants spoke to two primary means of enacting perceived goals of co-teaching:

#### 1) Collaboration with colleagues

One principal shared an experience where her staff discovered that different teachers were presenting a skill commonly taught in all classes differently, “When we got to talking in PLCs we found out that this teacher doesn’t present it the same way as this teacher and we’re not seeing the transfer of skills the way we would like to. So now, we’re working on essentially practicing in front of each other so that we’re all presenting in the same way and then we can work on that transfer of skills. So that the expectations are the same...” (A3). This principal applies this philosophy in both co-taught and non co-taught classrooms.

#### 2) Expectations of staff

Participants noted that teachers, especially special education teachers, should expect to engage in co-teaching. A director of special education suggested that co-

teaching, “has to be something that is gently infused as an expectation. I think as we continue to hire people that are going into one of those buildings, that they need to understand what the job is and that it is a collaborative effort” (A2). Another director of special education echoed this philosophy regarding the expectation to co-teach, “Anybody new coming in knows that, as a special ed teacher, as a general ed teacher” (B2). Participants also noted that co-teachers should anticipate increased expectations as they become experienced at co-teaching. A special education director explained, “We have our initial teachers. The first year when you walk in you know who the special ed teacher is and that they are playing that supportive role in the classroom. But we expect it. We expect early on that that is the role you’re going to take, and we tell them that. What we’ll ask is second semester, we want to come in and see something different. Not just the supportive, we want you to invite us in when you’re going to do something different” (B2).

Participants offered a variety of examples illustrating the types of instructional expectations of teachers in co-taught classrooms. One district general education administrator expressed, “We’re preparing these kids for the real world. And they don’t have separate lines for you at Wal-Mart or Dillon’s or anywhere else if you’re a special needs kid. So, the more opportunities we give them for real world application, the better off they’ll be once they get out” (B1). In reference to special education teachers’ tendencies to over assist students, she further commented, “the handholding has to stop after a while” (B1). One principal focused on the expectation that teachers maintain rigorous instruction in co-taught classes, “making sure that we are continuing with the whole standards based approach with project learning, project based learning and not going back to specifically computation skills, paper, worksheets ... keeping that rigorous instruction for all kids” (C3, p. 13).

## **Patterns Associated With Priorities (P)**

Data coded under the level 1 code of Priorities (P) revealed nine patterns noted as level 2 codes (see Table 5.3). Appendix L contains a table of Priorities (P) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through priorities?

**Table 5.3 Patterns Associated with Priorities**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Benefits</b>	Comments referencing benefits of co-teaching to students or staff.	(P1) Participants highlighted benefits of co-teaching to students included student engagement, increasing academic scores, and fewer behavior issues (11/15).
<b>Time</b>	Common planning time for co-teaching partners.	(P2) Every participant from every school in the study emphasized time to collaborate and plan as a top priority for the successful implementation of co-teaching (15/15).
<b>Staffing</b>	Matching of co-teaching partners.	(P3) The majority of participants across all sites emphasized the importance of compatibility of co-teaching partners to the successful implementation of the model (11/15). Every co-teacher and coach stressed the compatibility issue (6/6).
<b>Preplanning</b>	Discussions of procedures, roles, responsibilities and long range plans prior to a new school year	(P4) Administrators reported an expectation that co-teachers engage in preplanning activities (5/9). Across all participants, other than the initial training offered through the co-teaching initiative, structures were not in place for this to happen on an annual basis for experienced partners (8/15).
<b>Collaboration</b>	Working together with fellow team members.	(P5) In order for co-teaching to go beyond the basic premise of simply having two adults in a classroom, participants stressed the need for daily collaboration (11/15) between the general education co-teacher and the special education co-teacher.
<b>Resources</b>	Technical, or material resources to meet students' needs.	(P6) All teachers and coaches reported they had abundant access to necessary supplies, resources and materials needed in their co-taught classroom (6/6).
<b>Funding</b>	Monetary resources	(P7) All district level administrators discussed the importance of funding to the support of co-teaching indicating that it is a more expensive model (6/6).
<b>Professional Development</b>	Advancement of skills or expertise, especially through continued education.	(P8) Participants expressed a need to expand opportunities for professional development on the topic of co-teaching in their districts (11/15).

### ***Benefits of Co-Teaching***

Providing for the specific needs of all students is a top priority in a co-taught classroom. Although students with identified disabilities are provided special education services in a co-taught classroom, co-teaching is not just a special education initiative, “It is for the benefit of all students” (B6). When asked what her priorities for collaboration and co-teaching in the district were, General Education Administrator B stated, “Number one would be student needs ... that both teachers understand what those are and they’re facilitating those needs either by accommodations, modifications, or whatever it is” (B1). A smaller student to teacher ratio allows for more immediate and accurate diagnoses of student needs and more active student participation. One director of special education shared, “You have that smaller student to teacher ratio so that all of the kids’ needs are being met and you see kids actively engaged and know that they’re learning” (A2). Two teachers are able to blend content expertise with access expertise resulting in a broader range of student access to core curriculum and an ability to structure classes to more effectively use research-proven techniques. One principal explained, “We can align the services with the need of the child [and improve] accessibility to content with the appropriate support systems for success” (B3). Data indicating changes in student academic performance were not collected for this study; however, one principal had student district assessment scores in reading and math for the past two years posted on her wall. She was proud to show and explain the increases in academic skills students are demonstrating on their assessments, “we’re seeing the numbers steadily go up” (A3). Others reported experiencing fewer behavior problems in co-taught classes because kids are engaged and the ability to monitor students is increased. One administrator attested, “kids are thriving ... you walk into these two and there is never behavior issues. You walk in and it’s generally 90-100% engagement every single time you walk in” (C3).

### ***Time***

The greatest facilitator of a successful co-teaching program (as expressed by participants in this study) was time. Regardless of the amount of co-plan time teams had in their schedules, every participant from every team declared a need for, “more collaborative time, planning time” (A4 and A5). Even district level administrators acknowledged a need for more time, “We are still missing enough collaborative time for the co-teaching teams ... you have to find that time to

meet together because I think that's what makes all the difference to the students" (B1). One principal recognized the difficult reality of supporting co-teachers with enough time while simultaneously acknowledging the need, "Having the same plan is a luxury and I keep telling them that. That's a luxury, but boy does it make all the difference in the world" (A3). One district level administrator delegated the responsibility, "finding that time in the schedule for them to be able to meet would be one of the priorities for the principal" (B1). Another district level administrator reported, "One of our big priorities in the very beginning was the scheduling. We made sure that they had at least one planning period together ... [it was] a priority that we needed to build in the time for them to collaborate" (B2). The principal at School C stated, "My job is to give them time. To make sure they have time to collaborate and make sure that's built into their day" (C3).

Expressions of needing more time were heard consistently in every interview this researcher conducted. This finding confirms Villa and his colleagues' assertion that, "Although many incentives are unique to individuals, one incentive is common to and highly valued by everyone engaged in co-teaching and other educational reforms: time—for face-to-face interaction and time to plan, share, and reflect with colleagues" (2013, p. 119).

### *Staffing*

In addition to iterating the importance of co-planning time, participants strongly expressed the need for thoughtful selection and pairing of co-teaching partners. A special education director explained that "choosing of the right people" (C2) is crucial to the successful co-teaching arrangement. She elaborated that the principal should primarily make determinations about partnerships, "because he knows his special ed teachers and he knows his gen ed teachers and that one pair that he put together ... made her a better teacher. I don't know if he knew that up front, but he must, he had some intuition to put those two together, because I'm not sure it would have been a natural marriage otherwise. So he knew to do that" (C2). Co-teachers agreed that careful consideration is necessary when partnering individuals to co-teach together. One pair expressed a need for, "making sure the people that they're pairing together do work well. That there is that personality mesh because I think if you get the wrong personalities together I don't think it would be a positive experience for the students or the teachers" (C4 and C5). A principal shared this philosophy:



“If the pair isn’t working, I wouldn’t send them to training. I don’t think training is going to fix the pairing. I think the pairing has got to be there first. If the pairing is there, I think we could talk them into, I think they could be ‘voluntold’. I think we could have that conversation that by the time it was over they would think they volunteered, but they didn’t. I think we could have those conversations and make it happen so that they got better, but I think if the pairing isn’t there, that isn’t going to fix it.” (A3)

When asked to talk about priorities related to co-teaching, one coach spoke to relationships between co-teaching partners, “Respect, you have to have [that] or it’s not going to work ... It’s time; time, communication, and respect. If I had anything to say, those would be my three things” (B6).

Participants expressed a desire to keep co-teaching partners paired together across school years. A coach, who is also a co-teacher, shared, “I think we’re the only team that has the consistency” (A6). When asked to describe an ideal co-teaching experience, one individual expressed, “one person to one person, like a one-to-one ratio ... you only teach this class with that person” (B4 and B5). A general education co-teacher from one district said of her special education partner, “she has two co-teachers ... being with two different grade levels makes it difficult [for her]” (C4 and C5). In another district, a special education co-teacher shared her delight at remaining in a consistent content area, “[Our principal is] letting me stay in the math area and I’m not all over the place like co-teaching language arts or co-teaching science ... it would be difficult to have many different contents” (C 5).

### ***Pre-planning***

School B’s district level general education administrator expressed that co-teachers need to, “have time in the summer to pre-plan and go over their IEPs and know whose going to be in their courses” (B1). The principal at School B shared, “they invite all of the co-teachers to come in, in the summer and [the teachers] work on, it could be lessons, it could be team building” (B3). School B’s special education director has communicated her expectations of pre-planning sessions to co-teachers, “You guys need to work out, here are the rules, what does that look like, whose going to take what role, are you both going to take it? How does it work for you? We do that in the very beginning and now it’s kind of a routine. We’ll hand out that packet again and say remember to go over this again” (B2).

At School C, administrators agreed that there is an expectation for co-teaching partners to engage in pre-planning activities where they clarify roles related to various organizational, logistical, instructional, and communication issues. In regard to pre-planning, one administrator stated, “I think it’s very important and I think that setting it up correctly, going through the checklist of what are our common beliefs, how do we feel about co-teaching, what can I live with, what can I not live with” (C2) is critical; however, another administrator in the same district clarified that while, “there is an expectation for them to do that, I don’t believe there is a protocol or a set time ... for them to do that” (C1).

### ***Collaboration***

Closely tied to the discussions of time, participants identified collaboration as a priority for successful implementation of co-teaching. Communication and collaboration frequently occurred simultaneously in conversations about co-teaching. A coach explained that for collaborative efforts to be productive, “you have to be honest and you have to talk” (B6). This coach also stressed, “my main thing about co-teaching is about communication” (B6). The special education director at this school shared the philosophy of the administrative team, “if we were going to ask them to do this and we’re going to ask them to collaborate we needed to break down those barriers that would allow them not to do that” (B2). She explained how that was accomplished, “We made sure they had the ability to meet with each other and collaborate” (B2).

### ***Resources***

Overall, co-teachers and coaches reported feeling very supported with regard to having access to materials and equipment needed to address individual needs of students in their co-taught classes. Co-teachers from School A shared that, “any time we need materials or something like that it hasn’t been an issue” (A4 and A5). They further elaborated, “I really don’t think there is anything that I could say, man I wish we had this. We’re good” (A and A5). School A’s coach stated, “we feel pretty well stocked” (A6). Co-teachers from School B also reported being well supported in this area, “we have materials” (B4 and B5) while their coach corroborated, “[the principal] does what she can to try to get the best resources and support for our staff” (B6). School C team members, too, were well supported in the area of materials and equipment:

“If there is something that we tell him that we need, he does his best to make sure that we get it. One of the things we’re asking for are stand-up desks for a couple of the students, so that they can stand instead of sit. We’ve gotten wiggly seats, so the kids have some mobility while they’re sitting. So he’s really supportive in trying to make sure that the kids are getting everything that they can to make the learning the focus of the classroom and not the behaviors and not the distractions. So, that’s, I think that’s how he supports us is by trying to give us what we need to make the kids successful.” (C4 and C5)

### ***Funding***

A district level general education administrator shared that his district is implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model to assist struggling learners. He then voiced his concern regarding co-teaching, “when we’re trying to implement an MTSS process district-wide, that’s very people intensive, when we pull people out of the ability to do that, it restricts what we can do in terms of providing interventions to all kids. That’s my reservation” (A1). When the researcher inquired as to whether he felt that MTSS and co-teaching are in conflict with each other, he replied, “It depends on your level of staffing. Where it comes into conflict is when, as I’m fearful is going to happen in this state, the budget gets constricted to the point that we don’t have the staff to do what we need to do with kids anyway” (A1). Principal A disagreed that MTSS and co-teaching are in conflict with each other. She stated, “They’re not at odds with each other. We have an expectation to meet student needs and to individualize, so if you look at it in that manner, they’re more complementary” (A3). Another administrator stated, “We know that it takes more staff when you’re going to co-teach. Funding is an issue” (C2). Still another administrator spoke of supporting the co-teaching model, “if you have the funding to make it happen” (A1). District Administrator C1 stressed, “We can say [co-teaching] is important, but if we don’t put the money and the time and the people and the training behind it, then it is a hollow empty and they know it. What’s important gets funded.”

### ***Professional Development***

A major vehicle for promoting the goals of the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative is professional development. As explained in Chapter One, districts participating in the initiative must commit to sending complete teams to co-teaching professional development activities provided through the grant. This professional development fosters implementation of co-

teaching; however, staff turn-over occurs, sparking a necessity for on-going training for sustainability of established co-teaching programs in schools.

Participants from School B and School C spoke to needs for more professional development. In every interview at School B, a desire for increased professional development on and related to the topic of co-teaching was verbalized. One principal stated that her school needs, “more training for staff ... when we have a new teacher come over, we have a new pairing, I wish and I hope we can get to where we have more stable training for them” (B3). Administrators also expressed a need to expand co-teaching professional development to related topics such as differentiating instruction to provide, “training for these teachers so they better understand the needs of all students” (B1).

To address the demand for more professional development, School C’s district contracted privately with Dr. Villa to secure the initial co-teaching professional development for new teams in the district. This principal in this district stated, “we took the new gen ed coach ... that was kind of an expectation too, we’re going to go again” (C2). This district is also implementing an innovative method of in-house professional development with thoughts of extending the concept to co-teaching, “we have some model classrooms going on for language arts and moving into math and it might be nice to have some model co-teaching classrooms ... lab classrooms” (C1).

In district A, some paraprofessionals have been included on teams that have attended initiative sponsored professional development on co-teaching. In addition, the co-teaching coaches are now providing professional development opportunities inside the district for teachers and paraprofessionals. They have recognized staff growth not only in teachers, but also in paraprofessionals through this practice, “[Para] is one that has really, really grown with the program. She was really quite shy and now I go in and if the teacher is gone, I have no doubt she could take over and actually teach the class” (A3). The principal is getting creative, “I’ve gotten permission now to give them in-service credit for doing peer observations” (A3). Co-teachers from School A expressed that, “whichever team is the sped team kind of gets more of the benefits to go to the professional development and stuff like that” (A4 and A5).

## **Patterns Associated With Roles and Responsibilities (R)**

Data coded under the level 1 code of Roles and Responsibilities (R) revealed nine patterns noted as level 2 codes (see Table 5.4). Appendix M contains a table of Roles and Responsibilities (R) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through roles and responsibilities?

**Table 5.4 Patterns Associated with Roles and Responsibilities**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Clear Understanding</b>	Comprehension that is free from doubt or confusion.	(R1) Participants in this study reported a need for co-teaching team members to acquire an understanding of not only their own roles and responsibilities, but also the roles and responsibilities of their fellow team members (8/15).
<b>Principal</b> Supervision/ management	Oversight of work during execution or performance.	(R2) Administrators identified key responsibilities related to supervision and management of co-teaching programs, in summary: monitoring staff performance, conducting frequent walk-throughs in classrooms, monitoring student achievement data, and maintaining continuity of co-teaching services (7/9).
scheduling	Coordination of daily agendas for teachers, paraprofessionals and students.	(R3) Participants identified principals' scheduling responsibilities, in summary: arranging common planning periods for co-teachers, coordinating co-teaching partners, scheduling paraprofessionals as co-teaching partners, and coordinating students' schedules to meet their needs for placement in co-taught classrooms (5/15).
professional development (PD)	Activities designed to advance skills or expertise of educators.	(R4) Principals are responsible for coordinating the extension of co-teaching PD to cover curriculum differentiation and strategies for working with students who have disabilities (9/15).
<b>Teacher</b> collaborate	To work in cooperation with another toward a common goal.	(R5) Co-teachers at Schools B & C indicated using a cooperative process where face-to-face interaction is used to analyze students' needs and determine the content areas to be co-taught (4/6).
shared instruction	To teach students jointly.	(R6) Participants across schools indicated that both co-teachers in a partnership should be actively and equitably engaged in the instruction of students in their co-taught class on a daily basis (12/15).
student learning	The positive outcome of shared instruction.	(R7) All principals agreed that student learning is a key responsibility of co-teachers (3/3).
interventions	Strategies, techniques, modifications, accommodations, or differentiated instruction.	(R8) Participants at all schools identified interventions to be used in the co-taught classroom (14/15).

### ***Clear Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities***

Schools have traditionally been places where teachers worked in isolation. They have functioned in an environment where complete autonomy in planning, instructing, and assessing students has been the norm for decades. Changes in federal laws discussed in Chapter Two laid the foundation for support personnel to enter the classroom on a regular basis. Even though many classrooms have had support services available to students in the general education classroom for years, there remains a lack of clear understanding of how to implement best practices as a team. One principal in this study shared that prior to joining the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative and receiving the professional development associated with the initiative, the role of the second adult in the classroom, “was more along the line of a glorified babysitter” adding, “that person kind of walked around the room while the teacher talked. They didn’t do any modification of assignments” (A3). The special education director added, “I think it’s critical for principals to support [co-teaching] and understand it and understand it’s not just a glorified para. It’s a special ed teacher. You know that there has to be a give and take with both of ... with the team” (A2).

Over half of the participants in this study reported a need for co-teaching team members to acquire an understanding of not only their own roles and responsibilities, but also the roles and responsibilities of their fellow team members. One principal explained, “I think you have to outline what your roles are” (B3). Her director of special education shared an occasion when a special education teacher who was asked to co-teach in a general education classroom responded to the request with incredulity, “you want me to be a para? I went to school. I have a master’s degree. I have more education than the general ed teacher does and you want me to go in there and act like a para?” (B2). A principal shared, “we’ve had some really heated and serious discussions here in this building about what our jobs are” (A3).

### ***Principals’ Roles and Responsibilities***

#### ***Supervision and Management***

Related to the discussion of clear understandings in the previous section, one district level administrator shared his reservations about the co-teaching model of service delivery. He explained, “Too many times what I see is one person working and one person standing around”

(A1). He noted the principal's responsibility for supervision and management of the faculty, "the principal's responsibility in any instructional situation is to monitor." With specific regard to the co-teaching model, this administrator further clarified that the principal is tasked to, "make sure that it's successfully implemented. That it's working and if not, to make appropriate adjustments" (A1).

A range of supervisory responsibilities of the principal were identified by participants and included the examples below:

- Regularly monitoring staff performance for efficiency
  - "We have it built into our district observation of staff members and support members in the classroom." (B2)
- Frequently walking through classrooms
  - "I do at least one lap a day, sometimes with my iPad." (A3)
- Monitoring student achievement data –
  - "The principal also has to be checking the data." (B1)
- Maintaining continuity of services
  - "It's an ongoing process especially with our turn-over. To keep that moral up to keep the co-teaching going to keep making sure that we're touching base." (B2)

### ***Scheduling***

In response to the researchers query about the responsibilities of principals as they relate to co-teaching, one special education director replied, "I think their responsibility is to be supportive to their teachers. Give them an opportunity; try to arrange the schedule so that they have that opportunity for planning and things like that. That's one of the most difficult parts, is finding the time" (A2). Several other participants confirmed scheduling time for collaboration as a key element to successful implementation of a co-teaching service delivery model:

- "Common plan time I think is really important ... also have some collaboration time ... most of the planning time is happening during plan or after school." (C2)
- "Important at that time too, for the coaches to be able to meet with the co-teachers. Now the coaches are more flexible in terms of time so they might be able to do that during plan." (C2)



- “When I develop that master schedule, much of that has to do with making sure they have common planning time.” (B3)

The principal’s scheduling responsibilities extend to other related areas such as the establishment of co-teaching partners. One administrator stated, “principals have to be the one that sets the co-teaching teams” (B1). A coach expressed his thought that, “looking at the building schedule ... deciding who goes where, whose paired up ... making those decisions is probably the biggest thing that a principal can do” (A6) to support co-teaching. Co-teachers expressed the mindset that special education teachers should anticipate being assigned to co-teach, “I don’t think you need to be asked to co-teach as a [special education] teacher, I mean, I think that should be something you’re going to have to do if you want your children to succeed” (B5).

Similarly, assigning paraprofessionals to co-teach is another assumed responsibility of the principal. A coach shared that if he were principal, “instead of spreading out my paraprofessionals so they see three or four different teachers a day, maybe I try to keep them with one teacher as much as possible so that way they develop that relationship and work better ... or keeping them in one subject area as much as possible” (A6). Finally, scheduling students into classes is often a task that involves the building principal, who is tasked with, “making sure that there are not twenty sped students in a class of twenty-five, that there is balance” (B3).

### ***Professional Development***

Participants from all schools in the study identified facilitating professional development for teachers as a responsibility of the building principal. Individuals clearly stated that professional development activities should involve general education teachers as well as special education teachers:

- “Professional development [in differentiation] as much for the general education teacher as the special education teacher.” (C1)
- “Depending on the age and the experience of the general education teacher shifting the thinking around differentiating and modifying assignments and those kinds of things probably needs to happen ... there are some pretty experienced traditional teachers who think, what’s good for one is good for all.” (C1)

- “I hope we’re building enough capacity in those ESS (educational support services) and the content teachers.” (C1)

Principals agreed that ensuring appropriate professional development occurs in a timely manner is one of their responsibilities, “It’s up to me to work with central office in regard to professional development . . . assess the needs of our staff and what support systems they need for their own learning” (B3). Participants spoke to the need for paraprofessionals to participate in co-teaching professional development alongside their co-teaching partners as well because, “It’s awful hard for them to be a class within a class support staff and they’re not there for the training” (A2).

An additional need for professional development opportunities was uncovered. Participants expressed their observations that special education teachers are not coming into the schools with a repertoire of skills and techniques designed to assist struggling learners in accessing the general education curriculum. One administrator stated, “we do need support in the teaching of strategies again . . . start teaching these skills that the special education teachers just don’t seem to be coming out of their education with any more” (B2). Another administrator expressed that they hire a lot of waived teachers, many of whom have not yet even begun their master’s program in special education, let alone had an opportunity to complete it. This could be a contributing factor to the observance of special educators not being equipped with the skill set they used to have. One district has employed a special educator who will focus specifically on developing these types of skills in special educators. In her first year of this role, “quickly her time has been spent working with those new teachers; sitting next to them, helping them with their bag of tricks and the strategies that they don’t have, thinking of here’s the evaluation, what accommodations and modifications would you put in place. So she has been working with our new teachers to do that” (B2). The specialist’s services extend to coaches as well, “then she would work with those building level coaches to do that at the buildings” (B2) for continuity of ideas and expectations.

### ***Co-Teachers’ Roles and Responsibilities***

Participants identified four roles and responsibilities of both general education and special education co-teachers. The roles and responsibilities identified fell into four different categories: collaborative planning, shared instruction, student learning, and interventions.

### ***Collaborative Planning***

In reference to the past when teachers individually worked in their own classrooms (as discussed previously in the Clear Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities section) a director commented, “You could no longer be in your special education class teaching those kids. You had to come out of that classroom and go work and collaborate with somebody else” (C2). A precursor to collaboratively co-teaching with another educator is planning what your lessons will entail.

Study participants identified co-planning between team members, primarily the general education co-teacher and the special education co-teacher as a key responsibility. In one interview, teachers shared that their principal communicates an expectation for collaborative planning on a frequent basis, “She’s mentioned that quite a few times that we all need to be responsible for all the students and work together” (A4 and A5). When discussing collaborative planning, a special education director stated, “I think that’s important, to commit that that is part of their responsibility” (C2). Other participants agreed:

- “That’s part of their role as the special education teacher.” (B1)
- “I’ve got to balance that, what they do in the classroom with their responsibilities in regard to case managing and doing paperwork correctly ... and then lesson planning with their co-teacher.” (B3)
- “They need to understand what the job is and that it is a collaborative effort.” (A2)
- “We’re asking our special education staff to co-plan during [their] planning period with this group and they are building lessons together.” (B3)

Participants offered information regarding the types of things co-teachers discuss and reach consensus on during co-planning sessions. In School B, all teachers are expected to use a common template when designing their unit and daily lesson plans. The principal commented, “So if you work on this template together and you talk about what’s our know and do today, what’s our unit, what’s our outcome, how are we going to differentiate, how are we going to modify, what kind of instructional technology are we going to use, how are we going to connect it to career pathways or post secondary goals” (B3). A teacher in this district was even more specific in her description of the planning she and her co-teaching partner do, “We have to come up with the assignments and have the assignments loaded and have the videos loaded and the answers loaded and a lot of that stuff” (B4 and B5). Coaches regularly observe co-teachers in

action and provide them with feedback to help them develop their skills. Coaches also assist co-teachers in problem-solving any issues that arise. One coach shared a story about a co-teaching pair whose students were demonstrating learning in their class. She shared the advice she gave to the special education co-teacher regarding the situation, “If that many kids are failing in your math classes then you need to have a conversation with your co-teacher” (B6).

### ***Shared Instruction***

Participants from all three schools shared simple ways that administrators can support co-teaching efforts. When sharing about an opportunity they seized to reflect over a previous years co-teaching experience, one coach who is also a co-teacher stated, “I don’t know if you noticed, one of the things we asked for was outside of the door, both of our names are on it ... That was one of the things that came out of the reflection” (A6). This team felt this subtle communication spoke volumes, “the students see us as more equal then ... and I’m guessing other staff as well. A little thing, but yet can be big” (A6). He further elaborated, “That’s a problem with co-teaching. It’s the ‘other teacher’. You have the normal teacher and then you have the ‘other teacher’. We wanted to eliminate that as much as possible” (A6). A director in another district also addressed the idea of posting both co-teachers’ names and took it a step further, “Both names need to be on the door ... both names need to be on report cards or grade cards” (C2). Principal C agreed and verified that this is indeed a practice in his school, “We have both teachers on the grade card. Both teachers are listed as the teachers.” (C3). A coach from School B shared similar practices, “both their names are tied to their class list” (B6).

Co-teachers stated they assume joint responsibility for the delivery of instruction inside the classroom:

- “Both of us work with all students, not just me working with special ed kids and her working with the general ed kids.” (C5)
- “They both have the responsibility for the instruction.” (B2)
- “We generally try to share as much as possible ... instruction.” (A6)
- “They’re both talking and going back and forth on the topic. The teacher will usually lead, and then she’ll fill in and say, now we can do this, and this ... and clarify for the kids.” (A3)

Delivering instruction to students in a manner that is equitable between co-teaching partners yields benefits beyond the obvious one of student learning:

- “Helps cut down on distractions in the room because you cut your class in half to fifteen in each group.” (C4 and C5)
- “Two teachers in there are covering 13 kids each, and they can really teach rather than managing their staff.” (B2)

There are some potential disruptors to shared instruction. For example, it is not uncommon for colleagues to send for a special education teacher when a student on his or her caseload has an emotional melt down in another location in the building. This practice is detrimental to the co-taught classroom as the unpredictable presence of the special education partner facilitates less desirable implementation and in essence defeats the purpose of co-teaching. When the researcher inquired how it is handled when a student is in crisis, a director responded, “We have other supports. We have two social workers, we have a psychologist, we have a coordinator at the main building, and then we have another coordinator at that building. Our behavior specialist teacher who does not co-teach ... would handle it” (B2). Confirming that co-teachers in this school would not be forced to leave during a co-taught class to manage a difficult situation elsewhere.

To determine if this expectation is applied in other schools, the researcher inquired about the protocol for responding to a student in crisis during a co-taught class. In School C, the principal reported, “their responsibility is not to take one kid out. I mean your responsibility is co-teaching ... call me, I’ll come get them” (C3). He further elaborated, “generally, in our co-teaching classes those kids don’t have problems because they have full academic attention ... [we’re] accommodating for their behavior needs” (C3).

Traditionally special educators have had the flexibility and the need to go in and out of general education classrooms. Again, this practice is a barrier to a successful co-teaching situation. A director shared, “sometimes special ed teachers are used to coming in, going back out, doing this, and not really taking the responsibilities of the whole classroom. So we made sure that everybody understood that when they were co-teaching and they were assigned to this classroom. They would be in this classroom. And they both have responsibilities for the grades, they both have responsibility for the instruction, and the preparation for that classroom” (B2).

Another finding of this study relates to the difficulty some teachers have in releasing what has traditionally been their sole responsibility to a co-teaching partner. An administrator explained, “as you get more into the secondary when a special ed staff member doesn’t really necessarily have that content area licensure, it’s difficult for the general ed teacher to say I’m going to give up some control here when you’re not really certified in this area” (A2). A principal shared that it is difficult for core content teachers, “to even know what you can release to” (A3) in reference to content specific material. Some teachers are resistive to allowing another teacher to provide content instruction to students in their classes, which can in some situations prohibit learning for some students. A special education director pointed out that sometimes you, “have got to get to the point where you say, those may be your grades, you may be the highly qualified one, but they could be better if you let me support you” (B2).

### ***Student Learning***

A participant commented, “When you exclude students from the regular curriculum, they don’t do as well. Our special needs students are one of our underperforming subgroups and I believe that is because they don’t get the intended curriculum... they were not in a regular classroom receiving instruction from a content level teacher” (B1). Two patterns in the area of perceived goals emerged from this study: 1) educating students in the LRE where they are exposed to grade level core content curriculum, and 2) improved student learning. Co-teaching facilitates the merger of the special education teacher’s expertise in the area of access and the general education teacher’s expertise in the area of the core content. Together, co-teachers utilize their blended skills to fulfill their responsibility for ensuring that learning does indeed occur for all students. In co-taught classrooms, teachers strive to “provide the best opportunity for learning for all students” (B1).

Educators use student data to determine whether or not learning is occurring. To this end, co-teachers, “both have responsibility for the grades” (B2); however, it is a greater responsibility than simply entering scores in the grade book. As one administrator expressed, “both should be grading all papers or sitting down together and doing some of the grading and calibrating their grading so that’s it’s consistent ... as a general education teacher I should definitely be grading some of the papers from special education and vice versa. It it’s a partnership, it’s a partnership” (C1). A coach from another district emphasized that the responsibility is a daily one, not just one that is applied at test time, “it’s your job to monitor

what your kids are doing and what they're not turning in and you need to see them and get them to get it done or whatever ... so I've told my case managers that you're in these classes, if you can't tell me why they're failing, then something's wrong" (B6).

### ***Interventions***

When a student is identified with a disability and has a current IEP, most teachers understand it to be a legal document that must be implemented. Alternatively, there are other students who do not have an identified disability, but who struggle with learning. These students are primed to receive incidental benefit from the presence of a special educator in a co-taught classroom. The key to their success is in the application of appropriate interventions. A complicating factor that sometimes arises is the mindset that interventions cannot be provided for these students, "I think that's another struggle sometimes, I think people are like no, they're not on an IEP" (A6). To move forward, and make progress requires "shifting that thinking about modifying assignments or excusing students who are pulled out for other things that's just going to require professional development and opportunities for them to change their thinking" (C1).

More progressive educators recognize the need, "to understand the spectrum of learners that we have in the classroom and how we can differentiate" (C1) and the need to "differentiate not just with special needs students but also with general ed students that struggle" (C2). They accept that, "all kids live, work and learn differently and we can't just teach one way" (B6). The principal from School C summed it up nicely when he stated, "differentiation has to happen, I mean all the time" (C3).

"We modify; especially assessments and then the assignments. As far as the books we use in class, they're the same. The notes they have in class ... what materials I make available to them, I make available to everybody.... Whatever tool works for you. It doesn't matter if you're special education or if your general education. Everybody thinks differently so I try to make all of the tools available to everybody" (C4 and C5, p. 20). In co-taught classrooms, "Those modifications take place ... with the highly qualified teacher, with a special education person that could support the modifications" (B3).

Administrators are sometimes faced with engaging in difficult conversations. One principal shared, "I've been known to say to teachers and what do we pay you for? We pay you to teach. That child's grade is an F so apparently you didn't teach them" ... "if we pay you to

teach, and you haven't taught them anything ... so maybe you better differentiate ... maybe you better figure out what it's going to take to teach, reach that kid whatever you need to do" (A3).

In the planning phase, co-teachers explore options available to them that will meet the individual and unique needs of students in their class. Some comments exemplifying this were shared during interviews:

- "They can determine the assignments that are coming up, modifications that need to be made, where the best support time is spent with that student." (B3)
- "Let's use cooperative learning. Let's look at something where their peers can be helping or revising or partnering with to build up their strengths." (B3)
- "In terms of like focusing heavily on visuals, or chunking large projects, chunking notes ... when we hear differentiation, what we think of is how do we create instruction that appeals to all the different types of learners." (A6)

### **Patterns Associated With Self-Awareness (S)**

Data coded under the level 1 code of Self-Awareness (S) revealed two patterns noted as level 2 codes (see Table 5.5). Appendix N contains a table of Self-Awareness (S) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through self-awareness?



**Table 5.5 Patterns Associated With Self-awareness**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Self-confidence</b>	Realistic confidence in one's own judgment, ability, or power.	(SA1) Participants demonstrated self-confidence during the interview process (7/15). The strongest demonstrations of self-confidence came from participants at School A (3/5) and School B. (3/5).
<b>Awareness of self</b>	Realization of oneself .	(SA2) Participants indicated being aware of their own strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies.(8/15).

### *Self-Confidence*

During the interview process, the researcher noted that participants generally spoke confidently of their own skills as well as their teammates' self-confidence. Examples of statements made by participants include:

- “I think I’m a good teacher.” (A3)
- “I go to [my principal] like, ‘[Principal] you mind if I co-teach with [this teacher] next year?’ She kind of goes ‘let me think about that. And then, she put us together for three class periods ... and magic happened.’” (A6)
- “I want everybody to be as good a pair as I was with my co-teacher when I taught.” (B1)
- “We’re more like the ones that others can come to so that they could have assistance.” (B4 and B5)

### *Awareness of Self*

Most participants demonstrated self-awareness in terms of strengths and idiosyncrasies:

- “One of my pet peeves.” (A3)
- “I like to feed off of other people.” (A4)
- “I’m a pretty no nonsense kind of gal” later adding, “I struggle as a leader with that, because I just say, when the boss says let’s do this. I’m OK, what’s the best way we can do it and let’s do it.” (B3)
- “So we compliment each other very well ... I’m stuffy, and she is not stuffy.” (B4)
- “I’m also very kind hearted, caring too, and I would do anything for anyone if I know they need it.” (B6)

### **Patterns Associated With Leadership (L)**

Data coded under level 1 code of Leadership (L) revealed six patterns noted as level 2 codes (See Table 5.6). Appendix O contains a table of Leadership (L) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through leadership?

**Table 5.6 Patterns Associated With Leadership**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Support</b>	Any type of assistance provided to team members.	(L1) Participants stated a general need for administrative support of co-teaching (14/15).
		(L2) Co-teachers (2/3) and coaches (2/3) reported feeling personally supported by their principals with respect to co-teaching and indicated feeling encouraged and motivated.
		(L3) Participants indicated that supportive principals communicate clear expectations and provide guidance when needed (7/15).
		(L4) Co-teachers (3/3) and coaches (2/3) reported greater availability of opportunities for professional growth as a form of support were provided to them as compared to their colleagues who are not engaged in co-teaching. Administrators verified this practice (6/9).
		(L5) Participants indicated that the principal has the influence to develop a school culture that is conducive to the co-teaching philosophy (10/15).
<b>Team Formation</b>	Chosen or assigned participation in co-teaching.	(L6) Participants indicated that their participation in co-teaching is voluntary (12/15).
		(L7) Administrators believe co-teaching can be successful when assigned (10/15).
		(L8) Compatibility of partners is crucial to successful implementation of co-teaching (13/15).
<b>Relationship Building</b>	Promote strong connections between team members.	(L9) Co-teaching provides a vehicle for teachers and students to move from feelings of isolation and alienation to feelings of community and collaboration (8/15).
<b>Empowerment</b>	To enable or permit.	(L10) Principals (3/3), teachers (3/3) and coaches (3/3) identified empowerment of teachers as a supporting practice of principals.
<b>Supervision</b>	Oversee of work during execution or performance.	(L11) Participants reported the expectation that principals provide supervision for co-taught classrooms (12/15).
<b>Leadership Style</b>	Manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.	(L12) Participants reported that supportive practices of principals include those that promote professional growth or are instructional in nature (8/15).

### *Support*

Participants tended to make general statements regarding principal support of co-teaching. Examples of general statements made by participants that prompted probing questions from the researcher:

- “She has been very supportive of it. And she’s like that, she’s very supportive of her staff and she gets a lot out of them as a result.” (A1)
- “She is very well supportive.” (A4 and A5)
- “Some of the best things they probably do is just the support behind it.” (B4 and B5)
- “He’s very supportive.” (C4 and C5)

The researcher probed participants to tease out examples of ways principals specifically provide support. Responses to probing questions yielded four specific types of support administrators provide to co-teaching team members: motivation and encouragement, clear expectations and guidance, professional development, and nurturing a co-teaching school culture.

### *Motivation/Encouragement*

When responding to probing questions, co-teachers from Schools A and B provided evidence that principals engage in practices that lead to motivation and are encouraging to team members. These practices include such efforts as verbal compliments and the provision of private and public recognition. Examples of statements made by participants include:

- “She invites people to come in and see.” (A2)
- “I encourage them to do it themselves. Try your lesson out yourself.” (A3)
- “She just gave us certificates for our co-teaching.” (A4 and A5)
- “She’s real good with recognition.” (A4 and A5)
- “If we need stroked, they’ll stroke us... they’ll tell us, yes, you guys are doing a great job. I like what you’re doing here. So they kind of plug in that positive reinforcement which is needed sometimes to bring the best out of people and our administration does a pretty good job at that.” (B4 and B5)

### ***Clear Expectations and Guidance***

Participants indicated that a supportive principal clearly communicates his or her expectations for co-teaching teams and provides guidance when team members require it:

- “He has really brought to light, not just to us but to the whole building, what co-teaching is supposed to be and what he’s looking for. His expectations are very clear; what he wants to see.” (C4 and C5)
- “I go to PLCs once a week ... That way I can hear ideas, answer questions, address concerns.” (A3)
- “He was like I fully support and I love what you’re doing, but I just want you to be aware that you’re going to have to ease them into this a little bit.” (C6)
- “There’s only been one time in the two years we’ve done it that I’ve said, ‘Oh, I think you better take that back and rethink it before you take it PLCs, you’re going to get too much of a reaction.’” (A3)

### ***Professional Development***

Team members across all roles indicated one of the principal’s responsibilities is facilitating professional development. They strongly communicated the need for appropriate, thorough and on-going professional development in the area of co-teaching as well as in related areas such as differentiation of instruction. Examples of statements reflective of this type of support include:

- “Making sure the co-teaching teams are getting the training they need.” (C1)
- “He wanted us to have some training together on what those expectations were. What he was looking for with the co-teaching.” (C4 and C5)
- “Whichever team is the sped team kind of gets more of the benefits to go to the professional development and stuff like that.” (A4 and A5)
- “She’s like here’s something that these co-teachers would like. Hey, here’s a little training, you want go to this? ... We’ll go and then bring back some knowledge and apply it.” (A6)
- “I’ve got permission now to give them in-service credit for doing peer observations” ... “I give them a sub so they can go out.” (A3)

## ***Culture***

Participants across schools indicated a supportive practice of principals is to develop a school culture where all teachers take responsibility for educating all students, teachers understand the benefits of educating students in the LRE, and teachers are encouraged to engage in co-teaching.

- "... Belief that all kids can learn, that all kids can learn significant curriculum ... and they all deserve to learn that." (B1)
- "Get students who need to be in the general education [setting] with highly qualified teachers." (B2)
- "I know different administrators can tell you this is what we're going to do, but if they truly believe in it and they're excited about it, that's when it really, that spark can happen." (C2)

School B operates in more of a business-like culture than either School A or School C whose administration leans more toward voluntary engagement in co-teaching. At School B, all teachers know they could be assigned to co-teach during any given school year. Assignment to co-teaching is determined strictly by the numbers of students needing placement in a co-taught classroom as defined in their individual education plans.

- "It's a school-wide initiative. We've built it in our school improvement plan for literacy, we've built it in for math, we've built it in for climate. It is part of how we do business." (B3)
- "I think it needs to be a climate, not a pocket." (B3)
- "It's going to be this is how we do business, it's our culture and so when we need X amount of sections based off the IEPs and you teach that content area, you're probably going to co-teach." (B3)

## ***Team Formation***

Participants shared varying perspectives related to the formation of co-teaching teams, but most agreed that the principal has primary responsibility for this function. Most participants from School A prefer to allow co-teaching team members to volunteer to participate in the model:

- “You could, as an administrator, force a partnership that the teachers don’t buy into and it doesn’t ... it’s not going to work.” (A1)
- “I think it would be best if it was voluntary.” (A2)
- “The ones that were like, oh there’s no way I’m going to do this we didn’t push.” (A3)

However, some participants indicated that co-teaching partnerships could be successful when participation is assigned, “As long as the administrator takes those factors we talked about before into account, like personality, like who melds with who, as long as they’re making those considerations ... I think it’s fine” (A6).

School B operates in a business-like culture where administrators determine which teachers will be part of a co-teaching partnership from year to year based on the sections of co-taught classes needed to meet the needs of students as determined by individual IEP teams:

- “She stood up to her staff and said nobody is going to be designated as co-teachers, we’re doing this school-wide. So, wherever the kids land and that looks like a good co-teaching section, that is where we’re going to do it.” (B2)
- “I don’t think the special education staff has that, I guess that liberty to say yes or no. They KNOW they’re going to be part of a co-teaching team.” (B1)
- “I don’t think it should just be voluntary. I mean, you want somebody to want to do it, yes, but you don’t want to always burn out the same people to always do co-teaching.” (B2).

When discussing partnerships participants indicated a strong preference for consistent pairings across school years. They felt this practice facilitates the development of strong relationships between partners and the honing of skills. One participant indicated that partnerships generally remain consistent, “I don’t think [partnerships] usually change” (A4 and A5).

Participants agreed that building principals and co-teaching coaches are in a good position to judge the compatibility of individuals when considering partnerships, “I also think there is something to be said for that principal who knows their staff and says, boy [that teacher] has the right mindset about all students. I’m going to ask her if she’d be willing” (B1). Another participant stated, “I mean [the principal] and [the coaches], they know those personalities” (B2).

### ***Relationship Building***

Interviewees from Schools B and C indicated that principals are in a position to use their leadership role as a catalyst to the development of relationships among team members.

Principals agreed this is an important function for them.

- “The team building and time together to plan is crucial.” (B3)
- “You have to establish that relationship.” (C1)
- “It takes time to build relationships with each other and to trust” (C1)
- “My preference would be to support the staff more in regard to relationship and team building.” (B3)
- “They just kind of foster the relationship there by keeping us together all four years.” (B4 and B5)

### ***Empowerment***

Participants from all three schools involved in this study spoke to principal practices that lead to a sense of empowerment among staff. Although Schools B and C also shared opinions that establishing a sense of empowerment is a supportive practice, participants from School A spoke to this more frequently:

- “She empowers us to talk with our teams and take the time to meet with them.” (A6)
- “She’s allowed them to have the freedom to do their work.” (A1)
- “She’s empowering the paras to see that they’re not just auxiliary people and that they can actually be teachers.” (A2)
- “She gives them a lot of empowerment to go and be creative. I don’t think they’re afraid that if they fail they’re going to have ... that’s OK, what did we learn from it and pick up and change and go on. That’s just kind of her, the attitude that she has.” (A2)
- “I have to let them know I trust them and I have to give them that leeway to try out their idea and not all of them ... not all of them fly.” (A3)

Sentiments shared by participants at Schools B and C included:

- “They pretty much do, they run the program, the coaches and the department head.” (B2)



- “I’ve gone to [my principal] and he doesn’t like say, ‘Oh, I hear your problem. Let me take care of the problem’. He says, he doesn’t say this exactly, but Ok so what do you think you could do about it. He puts it back on me and gets me to brainstorm something.” (C6)

### *Supervision*

Participants expressed that the principal’s responsibility for supervision of staff members and the educational process lends itself to the support of co-teaching. Supervisory responsibilities noted by participants included observation, evaluation, enforcing accountability, and ensuring compliance with IEPs. The opportunities for supervision can be used as a format for coaching teachers in ways to strengthen their instructional practices.

- “I went in and observed one particular class period ...” (A3)
- “Through the evaluation process, co-teaching comes into play, particularly if you’re co-teaching for a majority of your instructional day.” (C1)
- “... and is quite good at making sure it’s done in a correct manner at her high school.” (B1)
- “Well, you’re a glorified para because that’s the role you’ve assumed. As a professional when you go in there and you’re there to support learning you just jump in.” (B3)

### *Leadership Styles*

Participants reported supportive practices of principals that included those that promote professional growth or are instructional in nature. One pair of co-teachers reported that it is helpful when principals, “... give us feedback on what they saw and what they thought went well ... what maybe they thought we could do better” (A4 and A5). The principal from School C indicated that, “Staying in the facilitator role is my number one way to influence co-teaching” (C3). He went on to explain, “if I go to that evaluation role, then that’s when they’re going to be freaked out ... but I stay in that facilitator role, helping coach them along and giving them what they need” (C3).

## **Patterns Associated With Group Dynamics (GD)**

Data coded under level 1 code of Group Dynamics (GD) revealed 3 patterns noted as level 2 codes (See Table 5.7). Appendix P contains a table of Group Dynamics (GD) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through group dynamics?

**Table 5.7 Patterns Associated With Group Dynamics**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Commitment to communicate and collaborate</b>	Determination to exchange information and work with a team.	(GD1) Every participant from every site agreed that a strong commitment to frequent and regular communication and collaboration between co-teaching partners is essential for the co-teaching model to be successful (15/15).
<b>Rapport</b>	A close and harmonious relationship.	(GD2) Every participant from every site agreed that for the co-teaching model of service delivery to be successful, co-teaching partners must be compatible with each other (15/15).
		(GD3) Building level team members (6/9) identified consistent pairing of co-teaching partners from one year to the next as a strong practice of support for the co-teaching model.
		(GD4) Participants expressed that well matched co-teaching partners are able to move fluidly between the various models of co-teaching (11/15).
<b>Confidence in others</b>	Trust and belief in abilities of team members.	(GD5) Participants felt strongly that co-teaching team members confidence in their fellow team-mates is critical for implementation of this model to be successful (13/15) as it contributes to the ability to release responsibilities to one's partner or take advice from one's coach.

## *Commitment*

All schools shared the sentiment that in order for co-teaching teams to be effective, co-teachers must be committed to communication and collaboration with their partner about all aspects of their joint responsibilities. A successful co-taught classroom requires a personal investment in not only the outcomes for students, but the process for teachers as well. The best way for principals to support the process is to actively participate in it. One principal shared, “We need that different perspective sometimes and that’s what the team brings or the relationship brings, or I can bring, or whatever ... is somebody to look at it differently and brainstorm” (A3).

Principal A told of supporting her co-teaching team as they advocate for the adoption of a district-wide school calendar that would allow for early release dates to be used for collaboration. Team members referred to proposed district-wide calendar as a ‘collaborative calendar’. Principal A shared how she has helped her team develop their position paper that was presented to the school board as well as presentations they made to teachers in other buildings in an effort to campaign for votes of approval for the collaborative calendar. She relayed advice she provided to the team as they prepared:

“They went to one school and I happened to go along. I kind of warned them, depending on where these questions go, you say, ‘Your building administrator has to answer that’. I said you be very careful not to step in their building politics. Just present.” (A3)

Her advice was applied on presentation day when a teacher in the audience asked a disturbing question. Principal A continued her relay of the story:

“And sure enough, this hand shot up and they said, ‘Well, if we went to an early release and we had this collaboration time, would we have to do any of that other collaboration the rest of the week?’ and my group looked at each other, and I’m sitting here going, ‘go to the administrator, go to the administrator, trying to send this signal to them. And one of my teachers, bless his heart said, ‘Why would you not want to?’. And I thought OK. You answered it, you answered it well.” (A3)

Participants reported that administrators must commit to supporting each other in district-wide initiatives of any kind. In District B, the special education director shared how she and her general education colleagues did just that, “If I couldn’t have got the principal, the secondary

director, and myself standing up there at the same time [announcing the co-teaching initiative], it wasn't going to happen ... it was a huge shock to our teachers when we all stood up and said this is where we are going next year and this is why ... the leadership had to stand up together and support each other by" (B2) modeling the group dynamics they expect of co-teaching teams in the buildings.

### ***Commitment to Collaborate***

Other study participants also emphasized commitment:

- "They've got to be heavily invested in the process." (A1)
- "Everybody is focused ... we don't have any excuses." (A3)
- "Something lit a fire under these guys when they started talking about transforming our building and changing our building and our culture." (A3)
- "Teachers who pair up have that kind of mentality, we're going to just do whatever it takes." (B3)

### ***Commitment to Communicate***

Collaboration and communication are so thoroughly intertwined that it is difficult to separate them. Some specific statements made by participants in the study related to communication included:

- "If you're not willing to communicate with the person you're working with it's not going to work. No matter how much any one is going to try to tell you it needs to work, find a way to make it work." (B6)
- "I met with all of my teams and I just said it's about communications and respect. You have to have those two things or it's not going to work." (B6)
- "If for some reason one of us had to come up with a consequence for a student, the other one never says at the time, 'Oh, you don't have to do that, let's just do this' but then later on we have discussion and say, well maybe we should have handled that differently." (C4 and C5)

### ***Team Rapport***

Participants in the study unanimously agreed that a key element to rapport between the general education co-teacher and the special education co-teacher is the compatibility of their

personalities. Teams who are compatible with each other perform much better as co-teachers. Principals can support this dynamic by considering personalities and prior relationships when matching co-teaching partners. Some examples of statements made by participants indicating the importance of compatibility included:

- “On the relationship piece, like whose compatible with who, cause you’re not always going to get along with everyone.” (A6)
- “The relationship is there. That’s what is so important is that relationship.” (A3)
- “Most of the teams are pretty, I’m going to use the word symbiotic. They have strengths and they have areas of need and one will cover one and one will cover the other.” (B1)
- “She’s got great energy and teamed real well with him. It’s kind of the ying and the yang in the math classroom.” (B3)
- “It does help having that relationship before you actually go into co-teaching.” (C4 and C5)

In contrast, a few statements indicating partnerships that did not work as well together included:

- “Teacher and teacher personalities just didn’t mesh.” (A3)
- “It’s very difficult if you don’t have that relationship, the co-teaching doesn’t work. You can’t just put any two people together.” (C4 and C5)

### ***Consistency***

Building level team members spoke about a group dynamic of consistency in a dual manner. Participants observed that effective co-teaching team members share common procedural norms and educational philosophies; they are ‘on the same page’. They also expressed that partners who are consistently paired together over multiple school years have the opportunity to build their relationship and fine tune their collaborative skills:

- “It’s very positive. We get along really well. I think we have similar philosophies on how things should be run and our expectations of the kids.” (C4 and C5)
- “Our expectations are similar.” (C4 and C5)
- “You have to know that person you’re teaming with is there for you and you’re on the same page.” (B3)

- “We’ve had some pairs who work together a long time and they are high performing teams.” (B3)
- “It takes a couple of years for them to really gel and get moving and really one isn’t just roaming the classroom versus the other one teaching.” (B2)

### ***Fluidity***

Participants shared testimony that well developed co-teaching teams are able to seamlessly weave in and out of various methods of co-teaching during lessons. The process is often enacted without spoken comment between teachers; it just naturally occurs during the course of a lesson as teachers respond to the needs of students. Their ability to change roles without notice has observers unable to determine which teacher is the general education content expert and which teacher is the special education access expert as evidenced by the statements below:

- “Anybody who walked into the classroom could not identify who the gen ed teacher was and who the special education teacher was. That to me would be the ultimate.” (C1)
- “I’m the only one who knows whose who in the room and the roles are changing because of the needs of the kids. That’s based on what kids need and whether it’s whole group, one assist, team teaching, parallel teaching ... and they’re kind of going in and out of the different styles of co-teaching and it’s purposefully planned to go in and out.” (C3)
- “Kids don’t even realize who is the head teacher.” (C4 and C5)
- “We don’t even want them to know generally who has an IEP ... that there are even special ed kids in there, if we’re going to do true inclusion. It’s just you guys are lucky enough to have two teachers.” (C3)
- “The kids can’t tell amongst themselves who, OK, that second teacher is in for this student, cause we don’t want any of that to be visible.” (B4 and B5)

### ***Confidence in Others***

Developed teams of co-teachers typically exhibit a level of confidence in their co-teaching partner’s skills and abilities. A level of trust has developed through their common experiences. Co-teachers say they, “know each other’s strengths” (C4 and C5) and are able to

structure lessons so that they “play to each other’s strengths” (C1). One teacher shared an example of how this unfolds in their math classroom:

“We’ll always say that they’re lucky. They have a mathematician in the room, and then they have a person that knows how to do math. He can give you the really in-depth description and the right words and stuff and sometimes I’m up here going well, you add that and then you bloop it, blop, beep and then ... whatever ... make some noises and we do it that way.” (B5)

This is a particularly important dynamic among team members, especially at the secondary level. A principal explained that as you go higher in the grades, “It’s really hard to sometimes release to that second person” (A3). Another administrator offered insight into why this is true when she explained:

“As you get more into the secondary [level] when special ed staff members don’t really necessarily have that content area licensure, it’s difficult for the general ed teacher to say, ‘I’m going to give up some control here’ when you’re not really certified in this area.” (A2)

### **Patterns Associated With Communication (C)**

Data coded under level 1 code of Communication (C) revealed 4 patterns noted as level 2 codes (See Table 5.8). Appendix Q contains a table of Communication (C) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in key elements of effective teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through communication?



**Table 5.8 Patterns Associated With Communication**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Flow of information</b>	The interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.	(C1) Participants reported a regular flow of information between co-teaching partners such as: sharing ideas, information, and materials, communicating concerns freely, and debriefing about what goes on in the classroom (14/15).
<b>Collaboration</b>	The act or process of working in cooperation with another.	(C2) Teachers share responsibility for making instructional decisions such as how to differentiate instruction and what accommodations and modifications will be utilized (15/15).
<b>Feedback</b>	Colleagues giving instruction or advice among themselves.	(C3) Principals (2/3) and coaches (3/3) reported feedback sessions with co-teaching partners following observations.
<b>Influence</b>	To speak or write in favor of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly.	(C4) Participants at all three schools reported presenting information about co-teaching to colleagues in other buildings or districts. (9/15) School A building level participants reported advocating at both the building level and the district level to adopt a school calendar that would provide early release dates for collaboration that this team would use for co-teaching collaboration opportunities (3/3).

### ***Flow of Information***

School A identified a teacher-lead group they call Conclave. Conclave is open to any employee in School A. One co-teacher described Conclave, “It is like a couple times a month and it’s totally voluntary ... we bring up any kind of concern, or positive, any kind of thing that we want to share and we try to collaborate and problem-solve and discuss” (A4). Ideas generated in Conclave are then taken to the building principal who pointed out, “I don’t want to be the last to know” (A3) for further discussion. The principal explained that the information flows back and forth between Conclave groups and PLC or MTSS groups that meet during the contract day:

“They have to come back and talk to me before it goes building-wide ... they can’t vote on anything or make anything happen for two weeks. It has to go back to the team PLC ... It has to go back and forth to PLCs, to MTSS or PLCs, to Conclave for at least two weeks before we’ll say OK, it’s ready and we’ll say it’s building-wide now.” (A3)

This is an example of how information flows back and forth within School A. Information also flows between School A and the district office. The district administrator shared that he and School A’s building principal are able to have candid conversations, “We can communicate openly and she can say to me, ‘I think you’re 30 degrees off’ and I can say to her, ‘This is where I see the pitfalls might be’.” When asked about his support of co-teaching, he replied, “If you’ve got open communication, I think it could work great” (A1).

School B’s special education facilitators, coaches, and administration meet on a regular basis to exchange updates and ideas and to problem-solve difficult situations occurring within the district. The director of special education explained:

“We have weekly meetings on Thursdays here in my office. Every Thursday except for KASEA day, we meet up here for two to three hours all of the facilitators in all the buildings ... They come together and they tell each other what they’re doing, ‘Oh, I did this training with paras and we did this’ ... They share ideas. So, it is individualized per their building, but it’s also, I believe, kind of standardized. Certain things are standardized across the district just because.” (B2)

The director indicated that she believes these regular communication opportunities, “broke down that silo effect” (B2).

At the building level, School B participants shared one of the benefits of continual communication between co-teachers:

“We go to those IEP meetings and everybody is sitting down together and it’s common language, ‘Do they need to be in a co-taught setting? Do they need to be in co-taught with tutorial? Do they need any support? It’s just when you’re doing that for 260 IEPs every year, that’s just kind of how you do business.” (B3)

At School C, the need for a fluid flow of information between team members and colleagues is recognized by the district administration, “Communication is essential ... I mean constant communication” (C1). In the building, teachers take advantage of collaboration or co-planning times to brainstorm and problem-solve issues at the classroom level, “It would be on a case to case basis and I would almost pull her aside and, ‘OK, this is what’s happened, what do you think?’ and then we would come to a decision together” (C4 and C5). Once teachers have reached consensus among themselves, they ensure that the information flows up to their building leaders, “I want to make sure whoever is above me knows what I’m about to be doing so that they’re not surprised by anything” (C6). Information is then in a position to flow on up to the district level where once again, administrators recognize, “Being a large district we have to have that level of communication between upper level administration and teachers” (C2).

### ***Collaboration***

Participants indicated that principals who are supportive of co-teaching provide regular scheduled times for co-teachers to collaborate. One principal explained that he protects scheduled collaboration time above all else, “The heart of collaboration is the instructional planning, the formative assessments, it’s the data you’re looking at, it’s the small group that you’re planning for, those two days have to happen in a collaboration week over anything else” (C3). He further elaborated, “The heart of collaboration has to be around that instructional planning and at no time does anybody ever instructionally plan by themselves. So a co-teacher can’t just go back, a sped teacher can’t go back to their room during that time and a teacher go there. They’re all meeting” (C3). In addition to supporting collaborative planning, principals support co-teachers in collaborative assessment, “Both should be grading all papers or sitting down together and doing some of the grading and calibrating their grading so that it’s consistent” (C1).

Collaboration with other team members such as co-teaching coaches is a beneficial aspect of co-teaching team work because it provides the ability to, “look at it through a different pair of eyes. It’s finding that person that can look at it and give you some feedback and say try this because when you’re too close to a situation you always can’t figure out what would make it better” (A3). Collaboration allows co-teachers to, “Have those different perspectives. Cause I might be teaching something from a language perspective, but if the social studies teacher is here, then they can say well look at it from this and we could piggy back off each other” (A4 and A5).

### ***Feedback***

Participants discussed two primary ways in which co-teaching partners receive feedback regarding their performance in their co-taught class. First, principals contribute when they, “Observe them function as a co-teaching team and give feedback” (C1). This can happen as a result of formal evaluative observations or as a result of regular unscheduled walk-through visits to the co-taught classroom. Second, as part of the co-teaching initiative coaches were trained in specific observation and feedback protocol. The role of the coach is to “observe their peers and work with them” (A3) to hone their skills. One pair of co-teachers expressed their feelings about coaching sessions, “If you want to come see us and walk us through a coaching session, we always appreciate it” (A6).

### ***Influence***

As reported by the principal at School A, “Our group has learned that they can influence outside of just our building” (A3). School C has also used their influence to share co-teaching, “They’ve done some presentations on what they’ve done with co-teaching” (C2). These teams have learned that as members of a co-teaching team, they can take on leadership roles that are influential to colleagues in their building, in their district and in other districts. They are able to share their expertise to expand implementation of this co-teaching service delivery model to other schools. When the coach from School A discussed the possibility of sharing information about co-teaching with the high school staff in his district, “the instructional coach of theirs was like it would be great to have you guys come up” (A6). One way principals support co-teaching teams in influencing colleagues is, “She invites people to come in and see. [It’s an] open door policy as far as people coming in and observing” (A2). Principals also arrange for non co-

teaching staff to shadow co-teaching team members and then share their experiences with others in faculty meetings, “So she was on the agenda to talk about her experience of shadowing me ... I wasn’t there and she led the meeting and she talked about the experience of shadowing me and she was still all positive about it” (C6). Another way is to release co-teachers and coaches to visit other buildings or districts to share their knowledge and expertise, “We’ve been to [a neighboring] district as coaches and we’re starting to get even more involved there ... we’re going to do a big training for their school” (A6).

Co-teaching team members in School A have learned that they have some power to influence the development of the district’s school calendar in an effort to secure collaboration days garnered through early release of students. Their principal reported, “They’ve already presented to the district team and I think the district team is going to ask our group to present to all of the schools now” (A3). The purpose of the presentation to schools, as described by a co-teaching pair is, “To like pitch it when they go to other schools to have the other schools buy in to having an alternative calendar. To have the collaborative time” (A4 and A5). Their coach added, “We’re kind of campaigning right now” (A6).

### **Patterns Associated With Context (X)**

Data coded under level 1 code of Context (X) revealed 3 patterns noted as level 2 codes (See Table 5.9). Appendix R contains a table of Context (X) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through context?

**Table 5.9 Patterns Associated With Context**

<b>Level 2 Codes</b>	<b>Definitions of Level 2 Codes</b>	<b>Patterns</b>
<b>Culture</b>	The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular school.	(X1) Administrators reported a greater sense of community being fostered in the classroom for students and in the school for staff when the work collaboratively together on a regular basis (6/9).
<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	Qualities or accomplishments that fit a person for the function of teaching; pertaining to teacher licensure.	(X2) School A and School B participants specifically identified addressing the issue of highly qualified core content teachers as an impacting factor in the implementation of a co-teaching service delivery model. (2/3).
<b>Students</b>	P-12 learners in the classroom	(X3) Participants discussed student composition in any given co-taught class to be important so as not to overload the class with students who have special needs thereby defeating the purpose of a co-taught classroom (9/15).

## *Culture*

Administrators at both the district and building levels spoke of a culture in which co-teaching is a common practice. School A's district administrator expressed his opinion that, "You could, as an administrator, force a partnership that the teachers don't buy into and it doesn't, it's not going to work" (A1). He advised leaders to "work on a culture where it's voluntary, but everybody is so excited about it that it becomes universal in a sense" (A1). The director of special education for School A echoed that advice, "Help them develop the environment where people want to try to do it" (A2). One way principals can encourage others to, "want to try to do it" (A2) is to facilitate an, "Open door policy as far as people coming in and observing" (A1). Maintaining an open door policy and inviting people in to observe co-teachers in action is exactly what all three principals involved in this study have done.

Another cultural shift within each school is that teachers no longer disaggregate special education students from general education students, viewing them as "your kids" and "my kids". Instead, they have worked diligently at, "Changing a culture that they're all *our* kids" (C3). At School B, "this has really become the culture with this principal" (B2). Teachers no longer look to special education to take care of "their" kids. The principal explained, "We're in the third year and it's kind of become the norm and people are OK, let's just do this" (B3). In co-taught classes, "The culture is positive in the classroom. You see everybody working with everybody. You don't know who the special ed kids are. You don't know who the special ed teacher is" (B2). The principal at School A has established a similar environment. She indicated she has, "Set kind of a culture of expectation here" (A3). She shared one of the benefits of a culture where all teacher accept responsibility for all students:

"A number of students who may have been referred in the past because of our past being so rigid of this in the classroom and these are my rules and this is the way I grade and if you don't get it too bad so sad. That isn't the norm anymore." (A3)

Principal C has done the same:

"Every teacher in the building teaches reading, every teacher teaches writing. Doesn't matter what you teach, so I think we're just coming on board with they're all of our kids and that's kind of where we're moving to." (C3)

### *Teacher Qualifications*

As discussed in Chapter One, a catalyst toward implementation of a co-teaching model of service delivery was the enforcement from the state for students to be educated by highly qualified teachers as required under IDEA 2004. The state began to more closely monitor the qualifications of special education teachers who were teaching core content courses in the resource setting. Special education teachers usually do not have more than one core content area of endorsement on their license. This is especially problematic at the secondary level, “You can’t get certified in all those areas” (A2).

The director of special education recounted how district leaders handled the shift at the state level:

“We had a call from the state where they were reviewing the highly qualified component and the executive staff sat in on that phone call to listen to them review again what the highly qualified component was, and that there were changes in how they were going to look at it and make sure that it was in place for the next school year.” (B2)

In reference to bringing buildings within the district on board with the idea of co-teaching, she continued:

“The one thing that held out is the highly qualified changes in our data management systems at the state, where now they could tell. Human Resources now use the same data management system as special ed. It all kind of combined at that time, our technology got better at the state and they could cross check ... there was no hiding from it anymore.” (B2)

The ability to cross check teacher licenses with the content classes they taught resulted in the state’s awareness of and ability to monitor whether or not special education students were receiving core content instruction by highly qualified teachers. This development prompted districts to be more conscientious about placement of students, “The licensure change at the state, really kind of pushed us ... the only reason I think we all knew it had to happen was because of the highly qualified shift and we were going to start getting in trouble for not, we had a large amount of students who were not in the general ed classroom” (B2). Principal B corroborated, “Getting that student in front of a highly qualified instructor, that was the direction the state was going, it seemed like the right way to go” (B3).



Due to the criteria for highly qualified teachers, schools began taking advantage of the option to hire special education teachers under a waiver for special education license. The thought behind this was expressed by School A's director of special education who stated, "How are we going to get these people who are dual certified? ... I have a lot of teachers on waivers" (A2). School B utilizes this practice as well, "I do a lot of waivers and so I'll waiver an English teacher ... and they can go be our resource teacher because their highly qualified in English" (B3). As a result, schools are able to meet the highly qualified criteria for core content instruction, but often end up hiring a high number of teachers who are brand new to the teaching profession, but have not been able to secure jobs in their core content areas. School B's district administrator shared, "We have some waiver ESS teachers who are new to the teaching profession" (B1). This leads to concern regarding the teacher's level of expertise in working with students who have disabilities. Waivered teachers frequently begin special education assignments prior to taking their first course toward special education licensure.

### *Students*

Each student's IEP team makes decisions about whether the student needs to be in any co-taught core content classes. When building the master schedule, students with special needs are placed in co-taught classes as predetermined by their individual IEP teams. Additional decisions regarding the overall composition of the class must still be made and are ultimately the responsibility of building principals who reported they, "Try to stay around one-third of the class with an IEP" (B3). This is the ratio that Dr. Villa and his colleagues recommend as the limit for creating the best co-taught environment (2013). The principal from School A explained that quality co-teachers working harmoniously with a well-composed class allows for an environment in which observers, "don't know which students are identified and which are not." One principal explained what he looks for when placing general education students in co-taught classes:

"We look at some data of where kids are and it's not just ... we're not pulling just all of the bright kids kind of thing ... we look at kids who are hard working, kids who are in the middle, who also we could push them. It's not [just] about bringing IEP kids along. It's about trying to push *all* kids, gen ed and everything, and push them all and just being an environment that's going to help push them." (C3)

Another administrator pointed out that it could be very difficult to stay within the one-third parameter, “We have some classes like that, that are almost, that are too sped heavy” (B1). There are other considerations to be factored in when assigning both special education and general education students to co-taught sections:

- “There’s concerns around tracking ... because if I’m going to put special education and a general education teacher together to teach math in sixth grade, do I put all the sixth grade special education students in that section and if I do, it almost locks those kids into being together the rest of the day.” (C1)
- “Look at their kids and decide what kids need to be in that co-taught classroom. How many kids I’m going to put in there ... they’re not always real good about setting that limit.” (C2)
- “It takes more staff to do this ... then you don’t have the staff to put elsewhere. I think they tend to sometimes overload those classes.” (C2)

### **Patterns Associated With Infrastructure (I)**

Data coded under level 1 code of Infrastructure (I) revealed four patterns noted as level 2 codes (See Table 5.10). Appendix S contains a table of Infrastructure (I) tallies. The analysis that follows responds to this research sub-question: How do principals support co-teaching team functioning in Key Elements of Effective Teams (as defined by Sheard & Kakabadse) through infrastructure?

**Table 5.10 Patterns Associated With Infrastructure**

Level 2 Codes	Definitions of Level 2 Codes	Patterns
<b>Master Schedule</b>	A building plan indicating staff and student assignments.	(I1) Participants identified the development of the building master schedule as crucial to the implementation of a co-teaching model of service delivery (13/15).
<b>Common Plan Time</b>	Concurrent time within the master schedule for two or more teachers to collaborate.	(I2) Participants from Schools A and C expressed the support of a common planning time for co-teaching pairs as highly influential on the success of a co-taught classroom (4/5, and 4/5 respectively).
<b>Professional Development</b>	Any activity available to staff to increase their professional understanding of a topic.	(I3) Support of professional development activities related to co-teaching was identified as a primary indicator of a successful co-teaching programs (14/15).
<b>Co-teaching Coaches</b>	Colleagues assigned and trained to provide instructional feedback regarding co-teaching.	(I4) Participants reported that the support of building level coaches for co-teaching pairs was beneficial to the sustainment of the model. (8/15).

### *Master Schedule*

Participants across schools and roles spoke of the importance and difficulties of master scheduling to the implementation of co-teaching. In all of the schools involved in this study, the building principal played an integral role in the development of the master schedule.

In some schools, department heads or counselors assisted at various stages:

“That scheduling piece goes on the department leader’s side. She’s the one that is hand-in-hand with the principal doing the scheduling ... they help with it and do sections from each of the departments like what type of classes. But really, the principal at the high school has the major hand in forming her master schedule. And she works with special education, she works with each of the department leaders.” (B2)

In other schools, the building principal reported sole responsibility, “I do the whole thing ... build that schedule based on those needs” (B3). Participants also shared a general consensus that it is “really difficult for the elementary staff” (A1) to schedule co-teaching opportunities, but by “fifth through twelfth grade you have more of an opportunity to do it” (A2). In other words, once students reach the middle school years where courses are taught by core-content specialists the scheduling for co-teaching is less difficult; however scheduling difficulties do remain at the secondary level. One principal shared, “There is only so many ways I can change that master schedule” (A3) and another administrator agreed, “Scheduling. You have to schedule people to be together at the same time and that sometimes gets difficult” (B1).

The two middle schools involved in the study have created a unique strategy for lessening scheduling difficulties while providing students with a stable team of teachers across their middle school years. Schools A and C have combined the concepts of “co-teaching and looping” (C3). At both of these two middle schools, co-teaching teams loop with students from one grade to the next, “The 7/8 team, it’s a looping team” (A3). Other teams in their buildings do not loop.

School A has the unique privilege of one pair of co-teachers who teach exclusively with each other, “We have five classes together [every day]” (A6). The special ed partner reported, “My last class, I have a study skills class” (A6). The remaining two periods of every day are for team planning and individual planning. These two co-teachers also happen to be the districts’ co-teaching coaches and were interviewed for their coaching role.

Although this study has focused on co-teaching, it is important to remember that placement in a co-teaching class may not be right for every student. Districts and schools are tasked with maintaining a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all learners. To that end it should be noted that the districts in this study do indeed maintain a continuum of services for their students:

- “We offer tutorial ... so they may co-teach within the classroom with the [general education] teacher and then that special education teacher, during tutorial ... those students would come to her and she would support their work.” (B3)
- “We have one, like a resource room teacher.” (A3)
- “We have what’s call foundational. It’s kind of the in-between the general ed class and ... These kids are probably reading at a second or third grade level, they’re probably doing elementary math still, but they have functional skills in place and adaptive behavior. They have their adaptive behavioral skills in place. It’s just that they are severely LD, or they are ID, but they’re functioning at a higher level. We call that foundational and so we make sure that we have one person at each subject area that is highly qualified and special ed certified.” (B2)
- “This year we added a resource couple classes for some one percentile kids we would just need to give some differentiated instruction.” (C3)

### ***Common Plan Time***

Common planning time has been the area with the largest expression of need throughout this study. Participants from every role in every school have discussed common planning time as a need. Principals support this need when they arrange their master schedules:

- “These teams meet every single day, during this plan time. And if you look, they all have another plan somewhere else.” (A3)
- “We’re on a block schedule they’re all individual plans, but we made sure they had the ability to meet with each other and collaborate.” (B2)
- “They had an hour and a half plan every day.” (C2)

Even the most creative of principals are not able to always arrange co-planning time for every single co-teaching team in the building as was evidenced by the statement made by the co-

teaching pair at School A, “I don’t have common planning time with anybody, I’m like one of the few” (A4 and A5).

### ***Professional Development***

Participants in the study were clear regarding the need for thorough professional development on co-teaching, “the formal training is so important” (C2). As discussed in Chapter One, the state of Kansas in cooperation with TASN Project Success and Keystone Learning, coordinated professional development on co-teaching for invited districts in the state. The grant-funded opportunities have made quality professional development accessible to many districts enabling the implementation of a co-teaching service delivery model, “With the TASN grant we were afforded the opportunity to work with Dr. Richard Villa and so it’s just grown from that” (B1). For at least one district, the timing of the initiative was good, “TASN was putting out the co-teaching initiative and we thought it fit right in with what we were about to do” (B2). Districts were required to take a full-team of professionals composed of the roles set forth by the grant as described in Chapter One, “I took the buildings that showed interest ... we took the administrator, one administrator anyway, a regular ed teacher, special ed teacher and a coach from each building. They had to bring a team and then myself” (C2).

Administrators recognized the importance of quality professional development for all team members, “Training, professional development, as much for the general education teacher as the special education teacher” (C1). A key objective for administrators was said to be, “shifting that thinking to that equitable relationship between co-teachers and getting teachers who work collaboratively together through the training” (C1). A principal pointed out, “It’s easy when you go through training to sit down and identify strengths, identify weaknesses, identify where we want to be, what we want, what do we want out of our relationship as co-teachers” (C3).

While the initial training is critical, on-going training is just as important for the sustainability of co-teaching. It’s important to “keep providing professional development” (B1) due to the propensity for staff turn-over in school districts. It is also important for veteran co-teachers to, “continue to brush up on training” (C2). One administrator described it as, “on-going process every year. It’s not one of those initiatives that you start and it’s good to go” (B2).

Staff development time can be extremely difficult for directors of special education to attain, “At the beginning of the year, I beg for half a day” (A2). Those districts that have made co-teaching a joint effort between special education and general education have had better success at implementing continuing professional development, “Every year we’ve had schools that we’ve put it out there as an opportunity to have teachers trained or additional teachers trained ... getting those co-teaching partners training together, collaboratively” (C1). When new partners attend co-teaching professional development in some districts, “Principals attend with the co-teachers” (C1) believing this is important in communicating their support of the model. Some districts have continued to access co-teaching training through TASN, “We still go to the TASN trainings ... I’ll ask the coaches, here’s another TASN training coming up ... do you have any new people or anything that you want them to come on board for” (B2). If the district has already been through the year of grant-funded opportunities, they can continue to access them at the district’s expense, “We’ve funded quite a bit of it 50/50 with special education and general education” (C1). Larger districts have found it more cost effective to bring the experts into the district and have contracted separately with Dr. Villa, “this year I opened it up to every school. We had, in the initial training, we had 120 people” (C2). She explained that her district, “Brought Rich in to do ... the initial training with that 120 people and then we, the second time he came in we did 5 days ... we did the second day of training, which was just for coaches” (C2). Of course this option is not cost effective for small districts. Still other districts have provided in-house training in the area of co-teaching as a means of expanding the model, “We’ve expanded since they’ve come back because of the sheer energy of the ones that have been through the training” (A3). One principal shared, “I’ve got permission now to give them in-service credit for doing peer observations, so that’s going to start next semester” (A3).

In addition to providing on-going professional development for staff new to co-teaching each year, districts have looked for professional development opportunities that complement and support the model of co-teaching for experienced staff, “When we offer building staff development, we have gotten in the habit of offering ... sections for co-teachers” (B3). Administrators expressed a need to, “Start teaching these skills that the special education teachers just don’t seem to be coming out of their education with any more” (B2).

The coach in School A reported, “so most of the co-teaching that goes on in our building is not conducted by a certified teacher with a planning period, but is done by classified staff, that

don't have training" (A6). Co-teachers in this school reported a desire to see paraprofessionals receive in-service on co-teaching, "It would be nice if the paras could have some training with us, because when the district wants us to do something a certain way they train us ... we're trained to do one thing and then we kind of assume that the paras are trained the same and then they're not" (A4). Unfortunately, while it is difficult to arrange co-teaching professional development for licensed staff, "I have a hard time being allowed to pull my staff away from the regular staff development" (A2), it is next to impossible to arrange it for paraprofessionals.

### ***Co-Teaching Coaches***

Support of an infrastructure where coaches with expertise in co-teaching work with co-teaching teams on a regular basis is a critical element. Administrators reported utilizing already existing academic, literacy, and/or math coaches to fulfill the role of a co-teaching coach. Other schools have experienced co-teachers as coaches. Districts in this study do not have the funds available to hire dedicated co-teaching coaches. At School B, the district administrator reported, "We don't have a particular co-teaching coach. We have a literacy coach at our high school who supports absolutely everything" (B1). A School C administrator reported, "We don't have any specific co-teaching coaches. We have the instructional, or literacy and math coaches, that work in the building that have participated in the training so that they can train, cross-train, or coach. Cross-coach" (C1). At School A, the most experienced pair of co-teachers function as co-teaching coaches for the building.

### **Emergent Patterns (E)**

Data coded under Emergent (E) revealed only one pattern. There were insufficient data to warrant level 2 codes (See Table 5.11). Appendix T contains a table of Emergent (E) tallies.



**Table 5.11 Patterns Associated With Rapport**

<b>Level 2 Codes</b>	<b>Definitions of Level 2 Codes</b>	<b>Patterns</b>
<b>Rapport</b>	Connections between students and staff that involve trust and fun.	(E1) Co-teaching helps meet the need for fun by enabling creativity, providing someone to laugh and talk with, creating a positive learning environment, and improving staff morale (8/15).

Co-teachers and coaches from all three schools provided evidence to support an emergent code related to the rapport that is established and maintained between teachers and students in co-taught classrooms. At School A, co-teachers explained, “you kind of have a different relationship with students when you go and, when you’re reading out loud and I go take them to the library and you’re reading out loud at this age they maybe don’t get a whole lot of that, but they just feel comfortable with me because, I guess because, you’ve built a relationship with them. So they feel like they can tell me, just privately, instead of ... if they don’t have a chance to talk to [the general education teacher] with everybody in the room” (A5). Having a second teacher, or in this case a paraprofessional who is functioning in the capacity of a co-teacher, in the room enables a smaller student to teacher ratio and the ability to develop stronger relationships between teachers and students.

School B’s coach reported that co-teaching enables educators to “build relationships with the students” (B6). School C’s principal explained that co-teachers, “have fun with kids ... they have those instructionally fun times where you can have that little fun joke.” He also reported that the students in co-taught classrooms, “trust the two of them” (C3) in reference to co-teaching partners. Co-teachers at School C stated, “building those relationships with the students is a key piece to the kids’ success” (C4 and C5). Her partner added “one of the reasons that [our principal] places some of the kids in our class that he has, is because those are the kids who need those relationships” (C4 and C5).

## **Themes**

After examining hundreds of pages of interview transcripts through the framework of key elements for effective teams, sixty patterns emerged. The final step in the analysis was to examine the patterns to identify themes. Creswell (2013) explained that themes form in qualitative research when the data are interpreted to discover the larger meaning of the data. After analyzing the patterns, three themes emerged that contribute to answering the research question: “What practices of principals provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the least restrictive environment?” These themes are: 1) Principals arranged and protected time during the daily schedule for collaboration between co-teaching partners, 2) Principals paired co-teachers together with careful consideration for compatibility, and 3) Principals established and maintained a culture of professional growth.

The first theme is comprised of an interwoven cord of three threads: collaboration, communication, and time. During the analysis phase of the study, the researcher realized these three threads are so strongly woven together that they are not easily separated. The researcher, therefore, left them intact as one theme. The second and third themes uncovered by the data were relationships and professional development. Summaries of the patterns that contributed to the formation of each theme are located in Table 5.12.

**Table 5.12 Patterns Contributing to Themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Patterns Contributing to Theme</b>
Principals arranged and protected time during the daily schedule for collaboration between co-teaching partners.	G9, P5, R5, GD1, C2 P2, P4, R3, I1, I2 GD1, C1, C3, C4
Principals paired co-teachers together with careful consideration for compatibility.	G4, P3, L8, L9, GD2, GD3, GD4, X1, L5
Principals established and maintained a culture of professional growth.	P8, R4, L4, L12, C3, I3, I4

### **Summary**

Chapter five described the patterns related to the practices of principals that are supportive of co-teaching in the least restrictive environment and the patterns related to the nine key elements of effective teams. This section included emergent patterns as well as disaggregated patterns based on the research sub-questions and the emergent patterns. It concluded with the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Chapter Six summarizes the study, explains the findings and discusses the significance of the study; it addresses implications for professional practice and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 6 - Discussion**

This study examined the perceptions of district level general education administrators, district level special education administrators, building principals, general education co-teachers, special education co-teachers, and co-teaching coaches regarding the practices of principals that provide the most meaningful support to collaborative co-teaching in the context of the LRE. Based on the perceptions of those interviewed, three themes emerged that addressed the overarching research question and sub-questions. This final chapter includes a summary of the study, the findings from the study based on the research question and sub-questions, significance of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies. Connections to the literature were integrated throughout this chapter, particularly in the sections dedicated to discussions of the themes.

### **Summary of the Study**

This research project examined the types of practices principals use in support of co-teaching. The selection of participants was limited to three public school teams that participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative and were recommended by the lead facilitator of the initiative. The purpose of this multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to discover what practices of principals are perceived by teachers, coaches, administrators and principals themselves to be most meaningful in the support of a collaborative co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the LRE. The research sub-questions asked how principals support co-teaching team functioning in key elements of effective teams (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004) through:

- 1) Clearly defined goals.
- 2) Priorities.
- 3) Roles and responsibilities.
- 4) Self-awareness.
- 5) Leadership.
- 6) Group dynamics.
- 7) Communication.
- 8) Context.

## 9) Infrastructure.

Collectively, the impetus of NCLB and IDEIA was to ensure that all students have access to core content curriculum taught by highly qualified teachers in the LRE. In 2008, Kloo and Zigmond noted that co-teaching is, “one way of ensuring that students with disabilities benefit from core-content instruction taught by content specialists in general education classrooms” (p. 13). Schools selected for this study participate in co-teaching professional development activities through a grant-funded, state coordinated initiative. At the schools involved in this research project, teachers engage in collaborative co-teaching on a daily basis as a special education service delivery model.

The researcher conducted and transcribed interviews with administrators, principals, co-teachers, and coaches in order to learn more about what practices of principals are most supportive to a co-teaching model of service delivery in the context of the LRE. Data derived from the transcripts and supporting documents were analyzed using the framework of key elements of effective teams (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004) as a lens.

## **Results**

Based on the patterns derived from analysis of data, principals in this study demonstrated supportive practices that can be categorized into three themes. The first theme is an interwoven cord of three threads: communication, collaboration, and time. The patterns comprising the second theme fit in the category of relationships. The patterns that comprise the third theme are related to professional development. These themes were derived from the patterns that emerged across key elements of effective teams as discussed by participants. The overarching research question can best be answered by addressing these themes.

### ***Discussion of Theme One***

*Principals arranged and protected time during the daily schedule for collaboration between co-teaching partners.*

An examination of the patterns that emerged in the research found that principals arranged and protected time during the daily schedule for collaboration between co-teaching partners. The specific principal practices contributing to this theme are derived from three interwoven threads: collaboration, communication, and time.

### ***Collaboration***

In the first thread, collaboration, principals set an expectation that co-teachers collaborate to work toward meeting perceived goals of co-teaching. The literature consistently highlights that one of the essential elements of a team is its focus toward a common goal and a clear purpose (Fisher, Hunter, & Macrosson, 1997; Harris & Harris, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995, 1999). Interestingly, none of the participants in the study could articulate nor produce a written document with a known common goal for co-teaching. Most of them did, however, have some idea of what they perceived goals of co-teaching to be. In establishing a school culture where staff is committed to collaborative co-teaching, the principal is the most important element (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). To that effect, principals must have knowledge of strategies for collaboration (Canole & Young, 2013) and set an expectation for it. In the literature, “researchers reported a strong need for collaboration . . . in today’s schools” (2012, p. 3); however, not much time is available for collaborating with colleagues unless an expectation for collaboration is a set priority (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002) of principals.

Co-teachers represented in this work collaborate daily in face-to-face interactions during a common planning period. Face-to-face interactions are necessary for co-teachers to make critical decisions (Villa, et al., 2013). Principals were credited with arranging the time for their collaboration in the master schedule. Participants reported their time was used to reflect on previous lessons, analyze student data, and plan for upcoming lessons. According to Villa and his colleagues, co-teaching “involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, differentiating instruction, and monitoring progress for a classroom of students” (2013, p. 4). Under the guidance and supervision of the principal, co-teachers in this examination assumed shared responsibility for making all instructional decisions relevant to their co-taught class.

### ***Communication***

In the second thread, communication, principals in the study are committed to ensuring that co-teachers are able to engage in a frequent and regular flow of communication that supports their collaboration. Principals enacted this commitment by arranging co-planning time for co-teachers in the master schedule. Just as importantly, principals protected that time by preventing interruptions. For example, it is not uncommon for special educators to have students on their caseloads with behavioral and or emotional difficulties. Students with this type of disability

often find themselves in crisis requiring additional supervision from a trusted adult (typically the special education teacher). This can happen at any time throughout the school day, including during a co-taught class or a co-planning period for teachers. Supportive principals protect this time by arranging for alternatives to the management of crisis situations that do not involve the removal of the special education co-teacher from scheduled activities, including collaboration time. Co-teachers need regular communication (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002), and such removals disrupt the flow of critical conversations between co-teachers that are essential to their work. A number of challenges and barriers impact the success of collaborative teaching in schools, by far the biggest of these barriers is time, not just time to work together, but time for constructive communication (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

### *Time*

In the third thread of this corded theme, time, principals place a priority on arranging the master schedule to coordinate a common planning time that allows for regular collaboration between partners. Co-teachers from School B indicated, “having our plan times together is probably really the best thing ever.” (B5). Co-teachers require time for face-to-face interaction and time to plan, share, and reflect with their partner (Villa, et al, 2013). As discussed in the communication section above, administrators need to understand the necessity for continuity among co-teachers and work with classroom and support personnel to decrease the amount of time that support personnel are pulled from general education classrooms to handle behavioral emergencies, attend meetings, conduct assessments, and do paperwork (Villa et al., 2013).

Recognizing that forming a trusting co-teaching relationship is contingent on several variables (including frequency of contact, capability, willingness, and dependability) (Villa et al., 2013), principals arranged for common planning time for co-teaching partners. Principals expect that co-teaching partners will engage in preplanning activities prior to the beginning of a new school year; however, some participants reported a need for a designated time and structured format for this to occur. Principals supportive of time, also coordinate student class schedules to align with designated co-teaching sections.

### ***Discussion of Theme Two***

*Principals paired co-teachers together with careful consideration for compatibility.*

Examination of the patterns that emerged in this research also found that principals perceived to be most supportive of the co-teaching model exercised careful consideration for compatibility of partners when pairing co-teachers. Participants from every role and across every school in the study repeatedly stressed the importance of compatibility. Mastropieri et al. noted, “the relationship between the co-teachers is a major critical component influencing the success or failure of the inclusion of students with disabilities” (2005, p. 268).

Principals who carefully pair compatible individuals in co-teaching partnerships observe effective and efficient working relationships between co-teaching partners. This was one of the perceived goals expressed by participants, and one most participants reported was being met. Consistently pairing co-teachers together over consecutive years was reported to support their relationship development and was a valued trait. Well-matched and cohesive partners are able to move fluidly in and out of various methods of co-teaching to respond to student needs at a moment’s notice.

Finally, participants indicated that the principal has the influence to develop a school culture that is conducive to the co-teaching philosophy. “To construct a school culture requires knowledge of the importance of shared school vision, mission and goals for student success that is documented in the effective schools literature ... and subsequently in the school improvement literature” (Canole & Young, 2013, p. 22). Bradley, 2000, tells us, “principals need to realize they set the tone for the entire school” (p. 172). Principals perceived as supportive of such a culture foster the development of relationships between co-teaching partners. As a result, participants reported a greater sense of community in the classroom for students as well as in the building for teachers. Co-teaching provides a vehicle for teachers and students to move from feelings of isolation and alienation to feelings of community and collaboration.

### ***Discussion of Theme Three***

*Principals established and maintained a culture of professional growth.*

Finally, the examination of patterns found that principals perceived to be supportive of co-teaching establish and maintain a culture of professional growth in their buildings. Many participants indicated that quality professional development on co-teaching is one of the most



significant supports needed. Professional development on co-teaching should be refreshed regularly. On-going development of co-teaching skills contributes to well-refined repertoire of strategies and techniques that benefit all students in the classroom.

Study participants reported that supportive practices of principals include those that promote professional growth or are instructional in nature. There were participants in the study, both teachers and administrators, who reported that co-teachers at their school had greater access to attending professional development opportunities in the state than did their non co-teaching colleagues. This is consistent with the work of Walther-Thomas (1997) who shared that teachers participating in a co-teaching model of instruction reported, “increased professional satisfaction [and] opportunities for professional growth” (p. 401). The increased opportunities reported were typically on the topic of co-teaching itself, or on related topics such as differentiation of instruction, or working with students who have specific disabilities. It was noted that principals are typically responsible for coordinating these opportunities. This confirms earlier research purporting that principals’ responsibilities include “securing ongoing training” (Katsyannis, Conderman, and Franks, 1996, p. 83).

Participants did express a need to expand professional growth opportunities in the area of co-teaching within their own districts. They reported a need for their colleagues to understand the purpose of co-teaching as well as the roles and responsibilities of those engaged in the practice. This finding is very important. It indicates basic professional development is likely needed for the entire faculty in a school where co-teaching is being implemented.

Participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative required the attendance of an individual designated to serve as the team’s coach. Principals were instrumental in selecting coaches for their buildings. In some cases the principal functions in the role of coach. This component of the initiative fostered some capacity for schools to engage in on-going skill development. Study participants reported that the support of building level coaches contributes to the sustainment of partnerships in co-taught classes. The feedback sessions provided by coaches following observations enable the team to maintain a fresh perspective on their program and provide a fresh set of eyes when problem solving difficult situations.

## **Significance of the Study**

Co-teaching offers students the opportunity to receive core academic instruction from highly qualified teachers in the general education classroom where special education teachers provide the support necessary for success. This examination contributed to the current educational discourse by providing new knowledge regarding the practices of principals perceived to be most supportive of a co-teaching service delivery model. Results from this investigation also contributed affirmations to existing knowledge.

### ***Affirmations of Current Research***

This study was significant because it affirmed:

- The school principal is at the center of responsibility of all functions of the school (Cooner et al., 2005; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff & Harniss, 2001; Wong & Nicotera, 2007).
- Challenges and barriers that impact the success of collaborative teaching in schools include: planning time, scheduling, caseloads, administrative support, and staff development (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Three of these challenges (planning time, scheduling, and staff development) resurfaced during interviews with participants indicating they continue to be challenging today.
- Collaborative relationships take time to develop. Simmons and Magiera (2007) tout the importance of keeping co-teaching pairs together as long as they continue to be an effective team. Although change can be a catalyst for growth, change only for the sake of change, can disrupt the delicate partnerships that take time to form.

### ***New Understandings from this Study***

This investigation identified the practices of principals perceived to be most supportive of co-teaching in the areas of clearly defined goals, priorities, roles and responsibilities, self-awareness, leadership, group dynamics, communication, context, and infrastructure. New data emerged that add to the research on principal leadership as it relates to co-teaching. The following new findings emerged:

- Principals who pair individuals in co-teaching partnerships with careful consideration given to the compatibility of the personalities observe effective and efficient working relationships between co-teaching partners.
- Principals who nurture the development of relationships between co-teaching partners are perceived to be more supportive of this model of service delivery.
- Trust and confidence in their co-teacher's competence were essential to maintaining the co-teaching partnership. Co-teachers expressed their belief that a relationship grounded in a similar educational philosophy (being "on the same page") was necessary. The teams reported this common ground enabled them to learn from one another and collaborate in creating a positive learning environment.

### **Implications for Professional Practice**

The results of this study have potential to significantly impact practice for principals. Administrators expressed concern regarding additional expenses associated with implementation of a co-teaching model, "Because it takes more staff and we still have to offer a continuum of services" (C2). This concern is an unfortunate reality.

The literature consistently highlights that one of the essential elements of a team is its focus toward a common goal and a clear purpose (Fisher, Hunter, & Macrosson, 1997; Harris & Harris, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995, 1999; Parker 1990). However, none of the participants from any of the schools in the study were able to either articulate or to produce a written copy of a common goal for co-teaching. Educational leaders in the field should recognize the absence of goals for this initiative or any other initiative will have a substantial impact on the success of the initiative. Schools in this investigation were operating co-teaching programs with a measure of success, but the researcher wonders how much more successful they might be if common goals were established, communicated, and monitored for progress.

A strength of this inquiry was that it gathered data from three unique schools. Readers can therefore compare, contrast, and ponder the similarities and differences among the schools and make their own decisions about transferability based upon the unique characteristics of each school. The results of this study could provide guidance for principals desiring to strengthen specific leadership practices in support of their own co-teaching programs. Principals could study patterns and themes from this research to identify intersections with their own leadership

practices. The three themes identified in this examination point to the leadership practices perceived as supportive of co-teaching.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study explored the practices of principals perceived to be supportive of co-teaching in the context of the LRE. Although there is substantial research on co-teaching, the existing body of literature would benefit from data informing the following topics:

- Case studies of individual schools may be able to explain more specifically how the co-teaching relationship is developed. A longitudinal study might focus on co-teacher teams that have been together over time. An investigation of such a relationship may help leaders nurture new and existing co-teacher relationships.
- Further researchers might choose to examine staff development for co-teaching. A review of training offered at the university, district, and school levels would provide insight for leaders. Job-embedded training, such as co-teachers observing other co-teaching teams, might be compared with traditional staff development opportunities. Such a study may stimulate innovative thinking and planning for educating those involved in the co-teaching service delivery model.
- A review of the professional development plans of school districts and how special education fits into the plan would be a potential topic for future investigation. This inquiry brought into question the amount of time available for professional development in the area of meeting the needs of students with disabilities, but could also include students with gifted exceptionalities. Even in buildings where co-teaching is the norm, administrators indicated a struggle to obtain professional development time throughout the year.
- One district indicated they had begun to expand opportunities to engage in co-teaching efforts to students themselves. This expansion involved careful selection of students for co-teaching opportunities and some instruction regarding expectations and procedures. Research into the utilization of peer co-teachers could provide valuable information regarding the efficacy of this innovation as well as practical knowledge on ways to implement it in a manner that is successful for all students.

- This exploration focused on co-teaching between licensed teachers. Participants in at least one district indicated they are co-teaching providing professional development to paraprofessionals and utilizing them in the capacity of co-teachers in partnership with a general education teacher. The research on co-teaching could be enhanced by an exploration into the practice of partnering paraprofessionals as one member of the co-teaching team.
- This study focused on how principals supported co-teaching partners when the team was comprised of a special educator and a general educator. Future research could compare principal practices when supporting special education/general education partnerships and principal practices when supporting co-teaching partnerships involving two general education teachers.
- Principals support co-teaching teams in a variety of ways as this study revealed. A future study exploring how leadership specifically assists co-teachers in navigating various sensitive issues, such as conflict between colleagues, would benefit the field.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This study was dependent on the participants' generosity and comfort in sharing information with a stranger. The researcher was fortunate to have participants so willing to give their time and share their experiences and reflections. Each participant was enthusiastic in the desire to contribute to this research. Their enthusiasm was both inspiring and very rewarding.

Reflecting on the process involved in this examination, the researcher can identify some practices for future researchers who seek to conduct a similar study. First, the pace with which interviews are conducted and analyzed needs to be considered. When the researcher completed the transcriptions without assistance, there were times that more time between interviews was needed to complete open coding of the transcripts and identify emerging categories. Second, the pace and excitement of collecting data, transcribing interviews, and analyzing data can easily become overwhelming. Adjusting the pace of data collection to allow more time on analysis is highly recommended. These process recommendations are relatively minor adjustments, but may facilitate future research efforts. Finally, giving more time to the task of writing and editing is often neglected, but can enhance the final product.

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## Appendix A - Informed Consent

**PROJECT TITLE:** A Multi-case Study of Principal Practices Supporting Co-Teaching in the Context of the Least Restrictive Environment

**APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT:**

**EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT:**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Dr. Trudy Salsberry

**CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):** Debora Howser, Ed.S.

**CONTACT NAME AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:** Dr. Trudy Salsberry, [tas@ksu.edu](mailto:tas@ksu.edu), 785-532-7801

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT/ PHONE INFORMATION:** Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

**SPONSOR OF PROJECT:** None

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** The purpose of this study is to understand the types of practices of principals that are perceived to be most meaningful to the support of a co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the least restrictive environment.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:** This multiple case study of principal practices will result in a description of principal's practices that are most meaningful to the support of a co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the least restrictive environment as perceived by co-teaching team members. Data collection will include one-on-one interviews, a Demographic Questionnaire, ©Instructional Observation previously conducted by co-teaching coaches, ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers completed by co-teaching team members, supporting documents, and field notes of the researcher. Interviews will be audio recorded for later transcription.

**LENGTH OF STUDY:** Completion of one electronic demographic questionnaire approximately 10 minutes in length, completion of one © Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers form approximately 5 minutes in length, one face-to-face interview approximately 30-60 minutes in length, and reactions to emerging themes from data via email approximately 10 minutes in length. Total time commitment for participants is anticipated to be 55-85 minutes.

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:** No known risks

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:** This study will seek to understand what practices of principals are supportive to co-teaching models. The study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse about co-teaching.

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** Names of participants will be changed to protect anonymity. Individual results will not be shared. A password protected data table will be used to organize participant information. A number identifier will be used to ensure confidentiality throughout the data coding and peer review/debriefing process. Records will be kept in a locking file cabinet in the researcher's office. All transcript recordings will be located on a passcode protected computer and eventually burned to a disc that will also be secured in a locking file cabinet. All consent forms, transcripts, files, and research information will be stored in a locking file cabinet at the conclusion of the study and will remain secure for a minimum of five years after the conclusion of the project at which time paper documents will be shredded.

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness to Signature (project staff):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B - Letter of Invitation to Participate

November \_\_, 2014

District Principal, Coach, Teacher  
Recommended District  
Recommended Building  
Address  
City, KS \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Debora Howser and I am a doctoral student at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. My dissertation focus is a qualitative case study design on the practices of school principals most meaningful in the support of a co-teaching service delivery model as perceived by co-teaching team members. I am selecting districts from the cohort groups that participate in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. Shonda Anderson, Grant Coordinator for the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative, recommended your district for my study and \_\_\_\_\_ recommended your site team for participation in my study.

My goal is to interview six co-teaching team members from one site in your district that participates in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative, specifically the district level general education administrator, the district level special education administrator, the building principal, one pair of co-teaching partners consisting of a general education teacher and a special education teacher, and their designated co-teaching coach. By interviewing all co-teaching team members, I hope to understand more fully the practices of principals that are most meaningful to the development and sustainment of a co-teaching service delivery model in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities in Kansas.

I am writing to inquire if you would participate in my study as one of the requested co-teaching team members at your site. Data collected for the study will include one face-to-face interview with each individual participant (30-60 minutes), completion of a demographic questionnaire by each participant (10 minutes), completion of © Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers (5 minutes), collection of supporting documents such as the master building schedule and daily schedules for teachers (with student names removed or blacked out), previously completed coaches' ©Instructional Observation forms, field notes, and participant reactions to emerging themes from data via email (10 minutes). The total time commitment for each participant is anticipated to be 55-85 minutes.

The interview will take place at a private location convenient to you. Interviews will be audio recorded to assist in analyzing the data. I assure you that your identity will be protected and a pseudonym will be used to protect your confidentiality.

In exchange for your participation, I will provide you with a summary of my findings at the completion of this study. Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary and there are no employment consequences as a result of your decision to participate or not participate in the study. No other school system employees will be informed of who chooses to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Trudy Salsberry. Dr. Salsberry can be reached either by email [tas@ksu.edu](mailto:tas@ksu.edu) or by phone at 785-532-7801.

Please let me know by return email ([dhowser@k-state.edu](mailto:dhowser@k-state.edu)) if you are willing to assist me and to participate in this study and I will then contact you to schedule a time for the interview. I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Debra Howser, Ed. S.  
Doctoral Student  
Kansas State University

## Appendix C - Interview Confirmation/Reminder Note

November \_\_, 2014

Debora Howser, Ed. S.  
10541 NW 46<sup>th</sup> Street  
Silver Lake, KS 66539

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for agreeing to assist me in my studies. I recognize that your time is valuable. You may be assured that the time I spend with you is valuable to me as well. I believe the time I spend with you, your co-teaching team members, and reviewing various supporting documents will provide important information for this study.

On \_\_ (date) \_\_, I plan on visiting with you at \_\_\_\_\_ (location) \_\_\_\_\_ for an interview at \_\_\_\_ (time) \_\_\_\_ as previously arranged. The interview will require 30–60 minutes of your time. Our conversation will focus on co-teaching in your school. Our conversation will be audio recorded with your permission, and I will transcribe it for use in my dissertation. All information will be kept strictly confidential and any identifying information will be kept in locked storage and disposed of after completion of the study.

Prior to our meeting, I would appreciate the opportunity to review the attached Demographic Questionnaire and ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers attached to this letter as well as a copy of your daily schedule with student names removed. The information requested in these documents will provide me with a foundation on which to base our conversation. Please complete both documents and return them to me electronically at [dhowser@k-state.edu](mailto:dhowser@k-state.edu) at least 2 days prior to our meeting date.

Following our conversation, I would be grateful for the opportunity to review documents such as a master schedule for the building, co-teachers' weekly schedules (with names of students removed or blacked out), and previously completed coaches ©Instructional Observation forms. These can either be emailed to me prior to our meeting, or picked up during our scheduled meeting whichever is most convenient for you.

Thank you for agreeing to give of your time. If you have any questions or need to contact me, I can be reached at 785-817-7093 or by email at [dhowser@k-state.edu](mailto:dhowser@k-state.edu).

Sincerely,

Debora Howser, EdS.

Encl.  
Demographic Questionnaire  
© Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers?

## Appendix D - Sample Demographic Questionnaire

### General Education Co-Teacher's Demographic Questionnaire

Please indicate your response for each item.

1. How many years have you worked in public school systems?
2. What is your current job assignment in the district?
3. How many years have you been assigned to your current position?
4. How many years have you partnered with your current co-teaching partner?
5. What grade level and content area do you co-teach?
6. How many observations and feedback sessions does your coach provide to you in a school year?
7. What previous experience, if any, have you had working with students with disabilities and special education teachers?
8. In your district, is participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative driven by general education or special education?
9. In your district, is participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative driven by general education or special education?
10. Was your participation in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative voluntary?
11. What is your class's demographics in terms of:
  - a. Total number of students.
  - b. Number of students who are ELL.
  - c. Number of students on IEPs.
  - d. Racial make-up.

## Appendix E - ©Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers?

Completed by teachers. Used with permission.

### Resource M Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers?

Directions: Check *Yes* or *No* for statements to determine your co-teaching score at this point in time.

Yes	No	In our co-teaching partnership:
		1. We decide which co-teaching approach we are going to use in a lesson based on the benefits to the students and the co-teachers.
		2. We share ideas, information, and materials.
		3. We identify the resources and talents of the co-teachers.
		4. We teach different groups of students at the same time.
		5. We are aware of what one another is doing even when we are not directly in one another's presence.
		6. We share responsibility for deciding what to teach.
		7. We agree on the curriculum standards that will be addressed in a lesson.
		8. We share responsibility for deciding how to teach.
		9. We share responsibility for deciding who teaches what part of a lesson.
		10. We are flexible and make changes as needed during a lesson.
		11. We identify student strengths and needs.
		12. We share responsibility for differentiating instruction.
		13. We include other people when their expertise or experience is needed.
		14. We share responsibility for how student learning is assessed.
		15. We can show that students are learning when we co-teach.
		16. We agree on discipline procedures and jointly carry them out.
		17. We give feedback to one another on what goes on in the classroom.
		18. We make improvements in our lessons based on what happens.

Yes	No	In our co-teaching partnership:
		19. We communicate freely our concerns.
		20. We have a process for resolving our disagreements and use it when faced with problems and conflicts.
		21. We celebrate the process of co-teaching and the outcomes and successes.
		22. We have fun with the students and each other when we co-teach.
		23. We have regularly scheduled times to meet and discuss our work.
		24. We use our meeting time productively.
		25. We can effectively co-teach even when we don't have time to plan.
		26. We explain the benefits of co-teaching to the students and their families.
		27. We model collaboration and teamwork for our students.
		28. We are both viewed by our students as their teachers.
		29. We include students in the co-teaching role.
		30. We depend on one another to follow through on tasks and responsibilities.
		31. We seek and enjoy additional training to make our co-teaching better.
		32. We are mentors to others who want to co-teach.
		33. We can use a variety of co-teaching approaches (i.e., supportive, parallel, complementary, team)
		34. We communicate our need for logistical support and resources to our administrators.
TOTAL YES: _____ NO: _____		

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## Appendix F - Sample Interview Guide

Introduce myself & provide brief background.

Explain purpose of this study.

Assure confidentiality and security of research materials.

Request consent to audio record the interview.

Ask if participant has any concerns or questions before beginning.

opening

### **How did you become involved with the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative?**

1. (clearly defined goals)

#### **Describe the goals/expectations for collaborative co-teaching in this building?**

- Describe the principal's involvement in the development of the goals/expectations?
- How does your principal promote the goals/expectations of collaboration and co-teaching to staff?
  - In your opinion, which is the most meaningful?
- How is progress toward the goals/expectations monitored or planned to be monitored?
  - What is the principal's role in monitoring ?
- Tell me about a time when your principal promoted the concept of co-teaching to the faculty in your building.

2. (priorities)

#### **How are priorities for collaboration and co-teaching supported in this building?**

- In what ways does your principal support the priorities?
  - In your opinion, which is most meaningful to your team?
- In your opinion, what is missing from the priorities that would help support co-teaching?

3. (roles and responsibilities)

**What are your principal's responsibilities related to collaboration and co-teaching?**

- In your opinion, which of the principal's responsibilities do you believe are most supportive to your team?
- What are other roles and/or responsibilities that are needed?
- How could the principal be more supportive to your co-teaching team?

4. (self-awareness)

**As your co-teaching team formed, what were the components of your formalized agreement (pre-nump)?**

- What was your principal's role in formation of your co-teaching team?
- In what ways did your principal recruit teachers for participation in the co-teaching initiative?
- Was your participation in the co-teaching initiative voluntary?
- In your opinion, should participation as a co-teaching team member be voluntary? Why?
- How could your principal best promote the concept of co-teaching in your building to encourage new teams to begin a co-teaching partnership?

5. (leadership)

**Describe the principal's leadership and influence related to collaborative co-teaching in your building.**

- What supports does your principal provide that enable collaboration and co-teaching to happen in your building?
  - In your opinion, which is most meaningful?
- Tell me about other supports you feel would be meaningful to your co-teaching team.
- What incentives does your principal provide to encourage collaborative co-teaching in your building.

6. (group dynamics)

**Describe the relationships among the members of your co-teaching team.**

- In what ways does your principal support positive and productive relationships between you, your co-teaching partner and your coach?
- In what ways could your principal better support positive and productive relationships between you, your co-teaching partner and your coach?

7. communication

**How does your principal support effective and efficient communication between you, your co-teaching partner, and your coach?**

- How does your principal support your needs for communicate frequently and regularly with your co-teaching partner and coach?
- In what ways does your principal support your need for collaboration time to plan and communicate with your co-teaching partner and your coach?
  - Which is most meaningful?
  - How many hours of common planning time do you have with your co-teaching partner each week?
  - When do you typically plan/collaborate with your partner?
- How could your principal better support your need for collaboration time to plan and communicate?
- How does your principal support your need to differentiate curriculum and provide accommodations and modifications to your learners with disabilities?
  - Which is most meaningful?
- How could your principal better support differentiation of curriculum, and provision of accommodations and modifications in your co-taught class(es)?
- What resources are available to you to support differentiation of curriculum and provision of accommodations and modifications in your co-taught class(es)?

8. (infrastructure)

**In what ways does your principal provide stable support for cooperation and collaboration between co-teaching teams and support services (technology, library/media, ELL)?**

- In your opinion, which is most meaningful?
- What additional supports would improve cooperation and collaboration between departments?

9. (context)

**What would an ideal co-teaching experience look like?**

- In your opinion, how close is your co-teaching team to the ideal?
- What would you need from your principal to reach the ideal co-teaching experience?

10. Wrap-up

**Is there anything else you think would be helpful to my understanding of the practices of principals that are most supportive to co-teaching in the context of the least restrictive environment?**

Inquire if participant can be contacted via email if clarifying or follow-up questions arise  
Inquire if participant is willing to respond to emerging themes via email communication

Thank the participant for their time  
Provide participant with my contact information

## Appendix G - Sample Field Note Form

District/Building: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Role: Special Education Co-Teacher Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Introduce myself & provide brief background.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Explain purpose of this study.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Assure confidentiality and security of research materials.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Request consent to audio record the interview.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Review Informed consent document and acquire signature.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Ask if participant has any concerns or questions before beginning.**

Interview Questions	Probing Questions	Observations	Reflections
<p><i>Opening</i></p> <p><b>How did you become involved with the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative?</b></p>			
<p><i>Clearly defined goals</i></p> <p><b>1. Describe the development of goals/expectations for collaborative co-teaching in this building?</b></p>	<p>* Describe your principal’s involvement in the development of the goals/expectations.</p> <p>* How does your principal promote the goals/expectations of collaboration and co-teaching to staff?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- In your opinion, which support is the most meaningful?</p> <p>* How is progress toward goals monitored (or planned to be monitored)?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">- What is the principal’s role in monitoring?</p> <p>* Tell me about a time when the principal promoted the concept of co-teaching to the faculty in your building.</p>		

<p><i>Priorities</i></p> <p><b>2. How are priorities for collaboration and co-teaching supported in this building?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* In what ways does your principal support the priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In your opinion, which is most meaningful to your team?</li> </ul> </li> <li>* What is the principal's role in communicating the priorities?</li> <li>* In your opinion, what is missing from the priorities that would help support co-teaching?</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p> <p><b>3. What are your principal's responsibilities related to collaboration and co-teaching?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* In your opinion, which of the principal's responsibilities do you believe are most supportive to your team?</li> <li>* What are other roles and/or responsibilities that are needed?</li> <li>* How could the principal be more supportive of your co-teaching team?</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Self-awareness</i></p> <p><b>4. As your co-teaching team formed, what were the components of your formalized agreement (pre-nump)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What was your principal's role in formation of your co-teaching team?</li> <li>* In what ways did your principal recruit teachers for participation in the co-teaching initiative?</li> <li>* Was your participation in the co-teaching initiative voluntary?</li> <li>* In your opinion, should participation as a co-teaching team member be voluntary? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>* How could your principal best promote the concept of co-teaching in your building to encourage new teams to begin a co-teaching partnership?</li> </ul>		

<p><i>Leadership</i></p> <p><b>5. Describe the principal’s leadership and influence related to collaborative co-teaching in your building.</b></p>	<p>* What supports does your principal provide that enable collaboration and co-teaching to happen in your building?  - In your opinion, which is most meaningful?</p> <p>* Tell me about other supports you feel would be meaningful to your co-teaching team.</p> <p>* What incentives does the principal provide to encourage collaborative co-teaching in your building?</p>		
<p><i>Group dynamics</i></p> <p><b>6. Describe the relationships among the members of your co-teaching team.</b></p>	<p>* In what ways does your principal support positive and productive relationships between you, your co-teaching partner, and your coach?  - In your opinion, which is most meaningful?</p> <p>* In what ways could the principal better support working relationships between you, your co-teaching partner, and your coach?</p>		
<p><i>Communication</i></p> <p><b>7. How does your principal support effective and efficient communication between you, your co-teaching partner, and your coach?</b></p>	<p>* How does your principal support your need to communicate frequently and regularly with your co-teaching partner and coach?</p> <p>* In what ways does your principal support your need for collaboration time to plan and communicate with your co-teaching partner and your coach?  - Which is most meaningful?  - How many hours of common planning time do you have with your co-teaching partner each week?  - When do you typically plan / collaborate with your partner?</p> <p>* How could your principal better support your need for collaboration time to plan and communicate?</p> <p>* How does your principal support your need to differentiate curriculum and provide</p>		

	<p>accommodations and modifications to your learners with disabilities?  - Which is most meaningful?</p> <p>* How could your principal better support differentiation of curriculum, and provision of accommodations and modifications in your co-taught class(es)?</p> <p>* What resources are available to you to support differentiation of curriculum and provision of accommodations and modifications in your co-taught class(es)?</p>		
<p><i>Infrastructure</i></p> <p><b>8. In what ways does your principal provide stable support for cooperation and collaboration between co-teaching teams and support services (technology, library/media, ELL)?</b></p>	<p>* In your opinion, which is most meaningful?</p> <p>* What additional supports would improve cooperation and collaboration between departments?</p>		
<p><i>Context</i></p> <p><b>9. What would an ideal co-teaching experience look like?</b></p>	<p>* In your opinion, how close is your co-teaching team to the ideal?</p> <p>* What would the team need from the principal to reach the ideal co-teaching experience?</p>		



<p><i>Wrap-up</i></p> <p><b>10. Is there anything else you think would be helpful to my understanding of the practices of principals that are most supportive to co-teaching in the context of the least restrictive environment?</b></p>			
---	--	--	--

\_\_\_ **Inquire if participants can be contacted via email if clarifying or follow-up questions arise.**

\_\_\_ **Inquire if participant is willing to respond to emerging themes via email**

\_\_\_ **Thank the participant for their time**

\_\_\_ **Provide participant with my contact information**

# Appendix H - Coaches' ©Instructional Observation

**Resource O** Instructional Observation Form

Instructor(s):	Observer:	Date:	Room #:	Period/Time:	Scheduled: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Grade:	Subject:	# of Students: present absent	# of SpEd:	# TAG:	# ELL:

**Content**

Instructional Objective/Learning Outcome(s):	
Language Objective:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Listening	
Purpose Posted for Students to See <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Objective Referenced <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Differentiated Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Product**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Learning outcomes demonstrated in multiple ways
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Learning outcomes measured in a variety of ways
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Criteria for success explained

**Process**

Co-Teaching Approaches <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/> Supportive <input type="checkbox"/> Parallel <input type="checkbox"/> Complementary <input type="checkbox"/> Team	
Bell-to-Bell Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Transition times are smooth <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Think time provided <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Directions Clear <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly
Checked for understanding of concepts/ principles/facts <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Checked for understanding of directions <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Active student engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Teacher asks higher-level-thinking questions <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Students ask higher-level-thinking questions <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Called on learners who didn't volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	

Utilized Think-Pair-Share and other quick cooperative structures <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Frequency <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
<input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal	
Students required to speak in complete sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level of teacher talk <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Level of student talk <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Students engaged in academic dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Teacher(s) was/were in control of the classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Positive behavior support strategies employed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Degree used <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Feeling Tone/Climate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Negative	
Adapted lectures <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____	
Activity based <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____	
Simulation/role play <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____	
21st-century technology in the hands of teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21st-century technology in the hands of the students <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Stations <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____	
Lecture/pencil-paper tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____	
Whole group <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Research-based strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Application of concepts from multiple intelligence theory <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  All students monitored through the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Partner work <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Cooperative group learning <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Teacher-directed small groups <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Instructional sequence	
Comments:	
_____	
_____	
_____	

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**Resource P** Instructional Postconference Form

Name(s) _____		Date _____	Time _____
Teacher(s) identified "things that went well":	Teacher(s) identified "things that they would do differently":	Length of time co-teaching: Teacher-identified approaches used: Supportive Parallel Complementary Team  Observer-identified approaches used: Supportive Parallel Complementary Team  Planning Time Length: _____ Frequency: _____	
Observer-identified things that went well:	Observer wonderings:	Teacher(s)-identified next steps / <i>takeaways</i> :	
Suggestions:			

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## Appendix I - Permission to use ©copyrighted forms

**From:** Richard Villa <ravillabayridge@cs.com>  
**Subject:** Re: copyright  
**Date:** September 9, 2014 8:21:48 PM CDT  
**To:** Anderson, Shonda S <sanderson@ku.edu>  
**Cc:** DEBORA HOWSER [DEBORAH@usd383.org](mailto:DEBORAH@usd383.org)

Deborah

You have my permission to use both of those items. Good luck!

Rich

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 9, 2014, at 5:54 PM, "Anderson, Shonda S" <[sanderson@ku.edu](mailto:sanderson@ku.edu)> wrote:

I am forwarding your request to Dr. Villa.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** DEBORA HOWSER <[DEBORAH@usd383.org](mailto:DEBORAH@usd383.org)>  
**Date:** September 9, 2014 at 4:53:42 PM CDT  
**To:** "[sanderson@ku.edu](mailto:sanderson@ku.edu)" <[sanderson@ku.edu](mailto:sanderson@ku.edu)>  
**Subject:** copyright

Hi, Shonda!

I need to get in touch with Rich Villa to request permission to use a couple of his co-teaching forms in my dissertation study. The forms I want to use are:

Coaches' Instructional Observation Form -- most recent version  
Self-Assessment: Are We Really Co-Teachers?

Can you tell me how I can get in touch with Rich to request permission to use these forms?

Also, do you have an electronic copy of the most recent Instructional Observation form? I wrote on my copy at the Coaches' Update meeting last week. If you have one, could you please send it to me?

Thanks!

Deb

## **Appendix J - Debriefing Statement**

The purpose of this study is to understand the types of practices of principals that are perceived by co-teaching team members to be most meaningful to the support of a co-teaching service delivery model in the context of the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom. The study seeks to contribute to the discourses about leadership and co-teaching to provide guidance for improving delivery of the model of co-teaching. Upon completion of the study, participants will be provided with the electronic website where they can access the research (dissertation) in full text.

As stated earlier, your responses to the interview questions and questionnaires as well as any other supporting documents you provided will be absolutely confidential. Your name and the name of your school will be converted to a pseudonym, and only people who are associated with this research will see your name or your responses.

If you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Trudy Salsberry, Kansas State University, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-7801, [tas@ksu.edu](mailto:tas@ksu.edu), or Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224, or Debora Howser, Manhattan-Ogden Public Schools, 2031 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785), 587-2000, [deborah@usd383.org](mailto:deborah@usd383.org).

Thank you very much for your participation!

## Appendix K - Clearly Defined Goals Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEWS PER SITE			TOTALS
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
	<b>Presence of Goals</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Absence of Goals</b>	1	0	0	2	1	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	5	1	1	7
<b>Perceived Goals</b> LRE	1	1	2	1	2	0	0	4	11	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	4	2	9
response to student needs	1	8	1	5	3	0	4	5	16	0	3	1	0	0	0	3	4	3	10
relationships amongst staff	0	1	6	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	3	7
<b>Support for Perceived Goals</b>	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
<b>No Support for Perceived Goals</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Statement of . Meeting Goals programs</b>	0	1	0	1	1	1	4	3	2	2	1	4	1	0	1	4	4	4	12
students	0	11	0	0	2	0	7	4	1	3	2	0	3	0	1	3	4	2	9
staff	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	4
<b>Enacting Goals collaboration</b>	0	1	2	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	2	7
instruction	0	2	0	1	4	0	7	0	6	2	0	0	2	0	1	4	2	2	8

## Appendix L - Priorities Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTALS
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
	<b>Benefits of Co- Teaching</b> students	2	11	1	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	3	0	3	0	4	4	3
staff	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	4
<b>Time</b>	1	10	8	11	11	16	8	4	11	7	11	13	24	7	3	5	5	5	15
<b>Staffing</b>	7	1	1	0	4	5	0	0	1	1	3	4	2	2	2	3	4	5	12
<b>Preplanning</b>	0	4	3	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	6	1	4	3	8
<b>Collaboration</b>	0	3	5	1	3	0	1	0	2	0	5	1	5	15	3	3	4	4	11
<b>Resources</b>	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	6	7	1	2	5	1	1	3	3	4	10
<b>Funding</b>	2	3	8	3	2	2	0	0	5	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	3	3	10
<b>Professional Development</b>	0	3	6	0	1	2	4	2	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	2	5	4	11
<b>Admin Support</b> . In general, listening, team building	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	5



## Appendix M - Roles and Responsibilities Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTALS
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
	<b>Clear Understanding</b>	0	0	0	4	2	0	8	1	0	3	1	0	0	2	1	3	4	1
<b>Principal's RR</b> supervision/ management	5	1	0	2	5	1	8	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	3	2	8
resources	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	6
scheduling	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	1	3	1	5
provide professional development	0	1	4	0	6	1	2	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	3	3	3	9
<b>Teacher's RR</b> collaborative planning	0	1	1	1	2	2	6	5	0	4	2	0	5	2	0	4	5	2	11
shared instruction	0	2	1	2	4	5	4	4	0	1	7	2	4	2	0	4	5	3	12
student learning	0	3	3	0	1	1	8	1	1	6	0	0	3	3	0	3	4	3	10
IEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	3
Interventions	2	5	8	1	5	2	13	3	1	2	6	5	4	9	0	5	5	4	14

## Appendix N - Self-Awareness Tallies

LEVEL 2 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTALS
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
Self-Confidence	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	0	6	1	0	3	3	1	7
Awareness of Self	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	0	8	2	1	2	4	0	3	3	2	8
Reports of Other's Self- awareness	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

## Appendix O - Leadership Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			SITE TOTALS			ALL SITES
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
<b>Support</b> in general	1	2	2	4	2	0	2	1	3	5	2	3	3	2	1	5	5	4	14
motivation/ encouragement	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	8	3	0	1	0	1	4	1	1	6
clear expectations/ guidance	1	0	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	7	3	0	4	7
professional development	0	2	4	3	0	5	6	0	2	6	2	1	5	1	0	4	3	4	11
culture	0	3	0	6	6	11	0	5	3	4	0	4	1	2	0	3	4	3	10
<b>Team Formation</b> voluntary	2	3	1	5	0	3	3	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	1	5	3	4	12
assigned	0	1	1	1	5	0	4	4	0	3	3	2	3	0	0	4	4	2	10
pairings	0	2	5	1	4	8	0	2	8	1	5	5	4	3	6	3	5	5	13
<b>Team/Relationship Building</b>	0	0	7	0	1	3	0	2	4	0	5	0	0	3	3	0	4	4	8
<b>Empowerment</b>	3	0	0	4	2	0	4	2	1	2	2	2	9	4	5	5	4	3	12
<b>Supervision</b>	0	3	1	0	1	3	4	1	0	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	5	4	12
<b>Leadership Style</b> instructional	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	2	4	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	8
reflective	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	3	5
distributive	0	0	0	1	0	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	4

## Appendix P - Group Dynamics Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTAL
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
	<b>Involvement</b> . commitment to communication and collaboration	2	3	2	7	8	5	19	5	3	11	3	2	5	8	6	5	5	5
<b>Rapport</b> . compatibility	4	3	3	6	3	4	19	7	9	8	5	8	8	5	6	5	5	5	15
consistency	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	3	2	6
fluidity	1	0	7	5	4	4	0	3	5	0	7	2	0	3	2	2	4	5	11
<b>Confidence in Others</b>	3	6	2	3	1	0	31	0	1	6	3	1	1	1	1	5	4	4	13

## Appendix Q - Communication Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTAL
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
	Flow of Information	6	0	4	4	7	1	24	5	2	9	5	1	8	3	2	5	4	5
Collaboration	1	3	5	3	26	2	17	8	10	7	4	1	5	3	2	5	5	5	15
Feedback	0	0	1	0	0	4	8	4	0	0	0	2	3	1	3	2	2	4	8
Reflective Practices	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	3
Influence advocating	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	3
sharing/spreading co-teaching	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	12	1	5	4	3	2	9

## Appendix R - Context Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INTERVIEW SITE TOTALS			TOTAL
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
<b>Culture</b>	2	0	0	3	4	0	13	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	6
<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	0	1	0	5	8	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4	0	5
<b>Students class composition</b>	0	2	3	1	0	4	6	3	7	0	0	5	0	2	0	2	3	4	9
as co-teachers or mentors	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	10	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	4

## Appendix S - Infrastructure Tallies

LEVEL 2 and LEVEL 3 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			SITE TOTALS			ALL SITES
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
<b>Building Level</b> master schedule	0	1	1	3	15	2	9	5	5	15	6	3	7	1	0	4	5	4	13
common plan time	0	0	0	1	2	2	9	0	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	4	1	4	9
<b>Professional Development</b> in-service/ conferences/ book study	0	4	9	14	19	15	11	3	12	6	1	1	6	1	3	4	5	5	14
lack of training	0	1	1	4	1	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	3	3	2	3	8
<b>Coaches</b>	0	1	2	0	10	0	3	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	2	8

## Appendix T - Emergent Tallies

LEVEL 2 CODES	GEN ED ADMIN			SPED ADMIN			PRINCIPALS			CO- TEACHERS			COACHES			INDIVIDUAL SITE TOTALS			TOTALS
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	ALL SITES
<b>Fun</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	4
<b>Trust</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Rapport</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	2	0	3	2	3	8