TRANSITIONING MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
FROM A RESOURCE SETTING TO AN INCLUSIVE SETTING:
A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

By

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A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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DEDICATION

Any attempt to list the people and opportunities with which my life has been richly blessed would be like trying to count the stars in the heavens. Yet among these stand my family members whose profound impact deserves special acknowledgement and to whom I would like to dedicate this dissertation.

To my husband, Derik, whose influence has been great; the friendship has been indescribable, and never fading.

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"Courage may be the most important of all virtues, because without it one cannot practice any other virtue with consistency." ~ Maya Angelou

Transitioning Middle School Special Education Students From a Resource Setting to an
Inclusive Setting

A Qualitative Multiple Case Study Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The number of students identified with special needs continues to increase, as does the achievement gap between general education students and students with special needs. The purpose of this study was to explore the academic growth of students transitioning from a non-inclusive setting to an inclusive setting as documented through the exploration of three case studies which examine the inclusion of special education students into the regular education classroom, the strategies employed, and the overall changes in the students' academic achievement and their transition experiences when moving to inclusive classrooms. Through a case study analysis, three case studies which examined the phenomenon of inclusion from several different perspectives, in an attempt to identify the most effective strategies to employ when transitioning students from a self-contained special education classroom to an inclusive classroom setting.

Findings included that students who transition into inclusive settings have improved self-esteem and more appropriate behavior. Students who experience the most success as they transition to inclusive settings have a strong support system at home. Teachers who teach inclusive classrooms generally agree that students with special needs enrich their classrooms.

Teachers also feel they are inadequately prepared to modify instruction to meet the needs of all students. Collaboration among all the adults within the inclusive classroom, as well as among the teachers who teach inclusive classrooms, facilitates successful transition. Gradually transitioning students with special needs into inclusive classroom settings appears to be among the more effective strategies for ensuring students' successful experiences with transitioning to inclusive classrooms.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The academic achievement of students worldwide is a pressing concern. In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142, which established provisions for students with disabilities to meet academic success in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The law states that students with special needs have the right to a free and appropriate education. Federal law also mandates that schools provide an alternative setting for special education students to ensure academic success, while being exposed to the regular education curriculum. These settings are designed to ensure special education students have the maximum interaction with their non-disabled students, while still meeting their respective individual needs (IDEA, 2015).

In addition to this, the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. NCLB Seq., 2002) mandates accountability measures for closing the achievement gap that exists in America today. The NCLB Act specifies that supplemental services are to be provided to the students who have fallen behind. States, districts, and schools must have clear standards for each school and must hold every student accountable. In summary, the goal was for every student to be proficient in reading and mathematics by the year 2014.

The Student Success Act (H.R. 3989) is similar to the NCLB Act, but this bill requires the states to develop and implement testing annually for students in reading and math. The new bill no longer allows the federal government to mandate testing in science. The states have the right to develop testing in science and other subject areas at their discretion. The states must still include accommodations for disabilities and adopt alternative testing to serve cognitively delayed students. The bill states that schools must ensure that 95% of their students are tested.

Federal education reforms have established accountability measures in the public education arena. These laws dictate that school districts can no longer expect the bare minimum

from students with special needs. Moreover, special education students must be exposed to the grade-level general education curriculum, and be included in the regular classroom setting with their grade-level peers. A major premise of the educational reform movement was to close the achievement gap between students with special needs and their regular education counterparts. The law established clear and concise guidelines for state and local education systems in their efforts to regulate and to maintain the same learning outcomes and expectations for all students. However, despite the desire for local agencies to provide a special curriculum for those low performing students, the law demonstrated that the academic needs of the students with special educational needs cannot be achieved by offering a less rigorous curriculum that does not align with the State's standards, grade-level expectations, and is not suitable or required for regular education students.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Over the last decade, the federal government has directed schools to provide, to the maximum extent possible, educational instruction for students with a variety of disabilities in general education classrooms (Fletcher, 2010).

NCLB and PL 94-142 mandate that special education students be placed in the inclusive settings. Some students may exhibit academic and/ or behavioral concerns which limit their ability to participate in the inclusive classroom. Educational opportunities for students with disabilities and the supports for them to be successful in inclusive settings have been established, tested, and are being strongly supported.

Successful implementation of inclusion requires a shift in attitudes and beliefs of all school personnel and parents such that all stakeholders involved truly believe that students with disabilities can succeed in the regular education environment (FSU Center for Prevention, 2002).

Dupuis, Barclay, Holmes, Platt, Shaha, & Lewis (2006), in their article, "Does inclusion help students: Perspectives from regular education and students with disabilities?", focused on the impact inclusion has on students with disabilities and on non-disabled students, utilizing 364 high school students in special education and regular education settings. The purpose of the study was to examine whether inclusion is beneficial for special needs students. The research data indicated that students with disabilities in inclusion settings benefit socially with fewer negative labels, reduced stigma, and increased interaction with regular education peers.

Before the advent of P.L. 94-142, the fate of special education students was frequently one of isolation, limited educational opportunities, sub-standard classrooms, or, in extreme cases, institutionalization or being hidden in the home, with no access to education. The passage of P.L. 94-142 brought about a major shift in thinking about the rights of the students with special learning needs. P.L. 94-142 mandate that such students receive education in the least restrictive setting, which meant moving students out of institutions and basement classrooms into the mainstream of education.

The passage of P.L. 94-142 resulted in many students who had previously been denied education, or housed in institutions, entering public schools for the first time. Schools were faced with finding ways to educate these students, and had very little time or training to integrate these students into the schools. In most cases, the students were placed in self-contained classrooms, where groups of students with disparate special needs were grouped together with a special education teacher. All instruction took place in the self-contained setting, with students being integrated into the school setting for lunch, recess, and, perhaps, physical education classes. As schools became more adept at educating students with special needs, they began to include students in regular classrooms, to the extent possible, and to assign students to resource

rooms for those classes in which they could not be included in the regular education setting. In many cases, the curriculum used in the self-contained and the resource setting differed from the general education curriculum, and students were not exposed to curriculum at their grade level. As a result, students with special education needs frequently received a sub-standard education with limited access to subjects such as science and social studies, as special education and resource teachers focused on reading and mathematics skills, taught at the students' functional level rather than at the grade-appropriate level. As a result, students never attained grade level proficiency, and remained behind their peers in educational attainment.

As P.L. 94-142 has been amended over the years, and as NCLB required that all students have access to the general education curriculum, it became even more imperative for schools to expose students with special needs to the general education curriculum, to provide instruction at grade level, and to assess students using the same assessments all students take. School accountability under NCLB included performance of students with special education in a school's measure of achieving adequate yearly progress, providing greater impetus to ensure that students with special education needs receive instruction at grade level and are exposed to the general education curriculum.

The resource setting consists of teachers and paraprofessionals. Normally, each resource teacher is required to teach more than one content area. The students are separated by grade level to assist the teacher with grade level instruction for each content area. In the course of a seven-period day, the resource teacher has to prepare for five to six classes each day. The regular education teachers have no more than two classes a day for which they prepare. Because of the class preparation demands, many special education teachers avoid the resource setting.

A typical resource class has approximately 15 students, while an average inclusion class may have 30 or more students. Special education teachers are required to follow the same curriculum as regular education teachers, but the pacing of instruction is adjusted to ensure students understand the concepts. The assessment aspect is usually different because students in the resource setting may require several days to complete a test. There is more guided instruction in a non-inclusive class than in inclusive classes. In order for students to transition from a resource classroom to an inclusion setting, they must demonstrate success in the resource setting. The transition process involves moving resource students from a non-inclusive setting to an inclusive setting. Students receive one to two classes in an inclusive classroom each marking period. This allows the resource teachers to monitor the student's progress and issues related to the transition process. Once success in resource has been determined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, the team meets to discuss the best way to transition the student into an inclusive setting. Meetings with regular education and special education teachers who work closely with students in the inclusive setting are held to ensure that students are in the proper placement for continued success. Finally, an official IEP meeting is held to make changes to the IEP to accommodate students for the transition from resource to the inclusive classroom.

Researchers for more than a decade have been warning educational leaders that the United States is falling behind, and failing to keep up with high-level science, mathematics and literacy skills needed to be successful in the global economy. Many studies and reports have been conducted throughout the years and yield similar findings. A recent study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development focused on people ages 16 to 65 in 24 countries (2013). The study examined three critical areas: literacy, numeracy, and the ability to problem solve. The overall problem is not that the United States is getting worse. The data

revealed that we are not making progress from generation to generation. According to The skills gap: America's young workers are lagging behind (Zinshteyn, 2015), data showed that American students and adults lag behind their peers in other countries. It was also noted by Donaldson (2010) that the American emphasis is based on memorization of skills for demonstrating proficient performance on standardized tests, while our counterparts are focused on higher-order cognition, literacy, writing, science, and mathematics.

Based on Paul Peterson's (2014) article entitled "Study Finds U.S. Students Lag Behind Those in Other Industrialized Countries," it was shared that the U.S. has two achievement gaps to be bridged: advantaged v. disadvantaged and itself v. its peers abroad. In conclusion, it is imperative that school systems look for a continuum of placement options for all school-aged children. Therefore, the first step in closing the gap is to evaluate the educational needs and concerns for students with special needs. In this case study, 15 students were identified in grades six through eight to examine the effects of the inclusion process.

"Helping children with disabilities has become part of the American education and tolerance over the years, and efforts to provide special education have become controversial" (Porfeli, Algozzine, Nutting, and Queen, 2006, p.6).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P. L. 107-110), built on the tenets of IDEA, is aligned with the philosophy of educating disabled students in the general education classroom and in systems of accountability. In an era of education reform movements that require L.R.E., accountability and transparency are variables that impact student achievement on high-stakes state assessments. A question that has been asked in the past is what influence the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom has on both disabled and non-disabled student achievement (Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Research on inclusion has shown some positive benefits that outweigh the difficulties inclusion presents (Kochlar, West, and Taymans, 2000). For example, they believe that for students with disabilities, inclusion has the following characteristics:

• The general education classroom has to have higher expectations for behavior;

• Achievement must be higher than or as high as achieved in the self-contained classroom;

• Must have social support from regular education classmates, also a large circle of support and;

• Improve teacher and students' ability to adapt to different teaching styles and learning styles (p.66).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the academic growth of students transitioning from a non-inclusive setting to an inclusive setting as documented through the exploration of three case studies which examine the inclusion of special education students into the regular education classroom, the strategies employed, and the overall changes in the students' academic achievement and their transition experiences when moving to inclusive classrooms.

1.3 Need for the Study

There is a compelling need for this research. The number of students identified with special education needs continues to grow, while, at the same time, there is an increasing demand to ensure that all students have access to the general education curriculum. The achievement gap between regular education students and those identified with special education persists, despite decades of efforts to close that gap. Haycock stated in an article: "To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, we need to focus on what really matters: high standards, a challenging curriculum, and good teachers" (Haycock, 2001, p. 6).

On World Teachers' Day (5 October), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has released a paper setting out the first-ever estimates of how many more teachers are needed to ensure that every child is in school and learning what they need to know by 2030. In short, the world has just 14 years to recruit a total of 68.8 million teachers: 24.4 million primary teachers, and almost twice as many – 44.4 million – secondary school teachers.

Entire education systems are gearing up for the big push to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 by 2030: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. But education systems are only as good as the teachers who deliver education to children and youth.
Global progress could depend on, first, whether there even is a teacher, or a classroom in which to teach. Second, on whether that teacher walks into the classroom with the training, resources and support that they need to do their job. And third, on whether they are greeted by a manageable number of children instead of 60, 70 or even more pupils (Montoya, S. 2016, p.1).

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual frameworks were used to structure and support the qualitative case study. The following theories were selected to help frame, support, and strengthen the research.

1.41 Social Learning Theory.

Albert Bandura, as quoted in Psychology History (Moore, 1999), combines both behavioral and cognitive philosophies to form this theory of modeling, or observational learning. He sees the human personality as an interaction between the environment and a person's psychological processes. Bandura says that humans are able to control their behavior through a process known as self-regulation. This process involves three steps:

1.   Self-observation - Humans look at themselves and their behavior and keep track of their actions.

2.   Judgment - Humans compare these observations with standards. These standards can be rules set by society, or standards that the individual sets for him or herself.

3.   Self-response - If, after judging himself or herself, the person does well in comparison with the set standards, he or she will give him or herself a rewarding self-response. If the person does poorly he or she then administers a punishing self-response to him or herself. Self-regulation has been incorporated into self-control therapy which has been very successful in dealing with problems such as smoking (p.2).

1.42 Collaborative Leadership.

The research on collaborative leadership is broad. It is broad in the sense that collaborative leadership is sometimes associated with shared decision making, collective leadership or participatory leadership, to name a few. The search to understand and get a clear perspective about collaborative leadership begins with the book, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, by Peter Northouse (2004). Northouse only touches upon the surface of collaborative leadership with such topics as participative leadership, which is a term associated with path-goal theory.

Northouse (2004) also examined and described collaborative climate as "trust based on honesty, openness, consistency, and respect . . . members can stay problem focused, be ope with one another, listen to each other, feel free to take risks, and be willing to compensate for each other" (p. 213).

In a text titled *Leadership in Organizations*, the author refers to collaboration as "integrative problem solving" (Yukl, 1994. Yukl describes the integrative problem solving process in the following manner:

An integrative solution may involve either a composite solution using the best features of the rival solutions, or a completely new solution that both factions can agree is superior to initial solutions. One way to begin this procedure is to examine both alternatives closely to identify what features they have in common as well as how they differ. This comparison develops a better understanding and appreciation of the opposing alternatives especially if all group members become actively involved in the discussion. The leaders should encourage participation, keep the discussion analytical rather than critical, and post the results of the comparison to provide a visual summary of the similarities and differences (p. 431).

This Comparative Case Study Analysis will examine the methods implemented to determine which students were chosen for transition to regular education classes, the strategies employed to provide for their individual learning needs and the support provided to ensure a smooth transition for students from a more restrictive setting to a more inclusive one. This Comprehensive Case Study Analysis will explore the following case studies:

> Young, Cheryl (2005). From seclusion to inclusion: A comparative case study of students with emotional and behavioral disorders in middle schools.
>
> Flores, Kathrine V. (2012). Inclusive general education teachers' perspectives on inclusion: A qualitative case study.
>
> Mackey, Megan (2012). Middle school inclusion: Case studies of three general education teachers.

1.5 Limitations

Limitations, as defined by Rudestam and Newton (2001), refer to "restrictions in the study in which you have no control" (p. 90). The conclusions and implications that will be generated as a result of this study will be limited to the following considerations. The study is limited to the examination and analysis of three purposely selected case studies, in which all data have already been collected. The results of this study cannot be generalized due to the fact that

the case studies are limited in their scope and generalizability. The findings of the case studies and of this comparative case study analysis may not be generalizable beyond this study.

1.6 Delimitations

According to Rudestam and Newton (2001) "delimitations imply limitations on research that you have imposed deliberately. These delimitations usually restrict the population to which the results of the study can be generalized" (p. 90).

This study is delimited to the three case studies selected by the researcher. Therefore, results may not be generalizable beyond this study.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Behavior Specialist: A school-based or district level employee who provides support services for behavior and is regarded to be competent in the area of behavior analysis, intervention and management. This person is also capable of conducting a functional behavior assessment.

Case Study- is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (for example, observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007).

Collaborative leadership- is skillful and mission-oriented management of relevant relationships.

Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) - Students who meet the federal definition of emotional disturbance and have been identified by their schools to participate in special education programs due to persistent and consistent effects that affect their educational achievement.

IDEA- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Also referred to as P.L. 94-142.

IEP-Individualized Education Plan.

Inclusion- Is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students).

Non-inclusion- Educating children with disabilities in a special education classroom, rather than a regular education classroom.

Public Law 94-142- The law states that students with special needs have the right to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restricted environment (LRE). Also referred to as IDEA.

Resource Room – a self-contained classroom for special education students. Usually staffed by a special education teacher and one or more paraprofessionals, this setting provides some or all instruction to students identified with special learning needs.

Support services for behavior: Special education students who have a Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP) are eligible for support services, which may include counseling, intervention, and behavior management from a school-based or district level employee.

1.8 Summary

Chapter 1 identified the problem to be studied, set forth the background and purpose of the study, as well as the need for the study. The conceptual frameworks of Social Learning

Theory and Collaborative Leadership have been established as the guiding theoretical

frameworks for this study. Limitations and delimitations of the study have been discussed and

terms, as they will be used in this study, have been defined. Chapter 2 includes an in-depth

review of literature related to special education inclusion, the identified conceptual frameworks

and comparative case study methodology.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to (1) inclusion; (2) leadership; (3) school climate and reform; (4) parent involvement; and (5) case study research. This literature review, coupled with the analysis of three relevant case studies, will lay the foundation for discovering themes which support successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classroom settings. From those themes, it will be possible to make recommendations for effective strategies to aid educators in facilitating the smooth and successful inclusion of students with disabilities into the general classroom setting.

2.1 Inclusion Research

In this age of accountability, the goals of inclusion must echo those of education as a whole to help students with disabilities gain the maximum in attitudinal impacts and social benefits from their school experiences (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro & Peck, 1995; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998). Dupuis, Barclay, Holmes, Platt, Shaha, & Lewis (2006), in their study, "Does inclusion help students: Perspectives from regular education and students with disabilities?", focused on the impact inclusion has on students with disabilities and on non-disabled students, utilizing 364 high school students in special education and regular education settings. The purpose of the study was to examine whether inclusion is beneficial for special needs students. The research data indicated that students with disabilities in inclusion settings benefit socially with fewer negative labels, reduced stigma, and increased interaction with regular education peers. The results further suggest that student achievement is better in an inclusion setting because students' social acceptance by non-special needs students is greater. Special education students reported that they

worked harder and were more motivated in inclusion classes than in non-inclusion classes. Another finding was that regular education students as a whole had no idea which students had special needs in the class. This was what the special education students wanted, and it made the special education students feel good because their peers treated them as equals. The goals of inclusion classes are to increase learning and create the best social interaction for all students.

In 1994, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERI) conducted a national survey (National Study of Inclusive Education, 1995) to investigate the inclusive schools reform movement. Key findings of the study include: programs [inclusion] are taking place in a wide range of locations (i.e., urban, rural, large and small districts]. Key findings suggest: "(a) outcomes for students in inclusive education programs are positive; (b) teachers participating in inclusive education programs report positive outcomes for themselves; (c) the range of disabilities in inclusive programs is increasing; and (d) school restructuring efforts are having an impact on inclusive education programs" (Trabucco, 2011, p. 29). Trabucco stated in his research, "disabled students in inclusive classrooms earned higher grades, achieved higher or comparable standardized test scores, committed no more behavioral infractions, and attended more days of school when inclusion was implemented with adequate adaptations, sufficient time for planning, ample personnel and individualized programming" (p. 29).

Jennifer Olson (2003) in her study, "Special education and general education teacher Attitudes toward inclusion", studied attitudes of both special education and regular education middle school teachers in a rural school district to determine if there were differences in their attitudes toward inclusion. She surveyed 65 teachers using a 19 item self-created survey employing a Likert scale. In addition, teachers were permitted to include comments in response to the questions. 22 teachers, 18 general education teachers and 4 special education teachers

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completed the survey. Significant differences in attitudes were displayed between the general

and special education teachers. General education teachers were more likely to feel that special

education students participated fully in inclusion clauses than their special education colleagues.

In addition, general education teachers were more likely to indicate that general education

students accepted the special education students as peers than the special education teachers.

There was general consensus that general and special education teachers "needed to collaborate

in order for inclusion to be successful" (p. 55). They also agreed "that in order to meet the needs

of students with disabilities, a continuum of services needs to be provided" (p. 56).

As stated in Olson's (2003) research, "inclusion continues to increase educational

benefits for students with disabilities in schools in the United States. Though the results of the

report are positive, there is still room for improvement, especially with the EB/D population"

(p.9).

Hansen and Boody (1998) found that the success of inclusion is in the perception that

teachers and students have of the classroom environment. How a student perceives the school

experience is directly related to the learning that takes place in the classroom. The study was

conducted at one middle school in Iowa and included grades six through eight with about 500

students. The sample included 202 children, both special and regular education students, who

were in inclusive classrooms. All students were administered the Classroom Environment Scale,

consisting of 90 questions. Results indicated that there was no significant difference between

special and regular education students in their perceptions of their classroom environment.

Kochlar, West, and Taymans (2000) drew from a review of the research to conclude that

the benefits of inclusion across grade levels far outweigh the difficulties inclusion presents.

They cite the following benefits of inclusion. The authors further contend that general education students also benefit from inclusion. For these students, inclusion:

- offers the advantage of having an extra teacher or aide to help them with the development of their own skills;

- leads to greater acceptance of students with disabilities;

- facilitates understanding that students with disabilities are not always easily identified; and

- promotes better understanding of the similarities among students with and without disabilities (Kochlar, West, and Taymans, 2000, p. 66).

There is a multitude of research that has been accumulated over three decades showing that, when children with disabilities are included in general education settings, they are more likely to exhibit positive social and emotional behaviors at a level that is much greater than their peers who are relegated to programs that serve only children with disabilities (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; Strain, Bovey, Wilson, & Roybal, 2009).

A recent and rigorous study of the inclusion-driven Learning Experiences and Alternative Program (LEAP) further confirmed improved outcomes in young children with autism in only two years (Strain & Bovey, 2011).

Inclusive classrooms are ripe with opportunities to engage children with disabilities in the daily routine and in activities that elicit and challenge academic performance. Typically developing peers, when coached by teachers, can become natural scaffolders of learning and interaction, for example, and evidence to support these types of peer-mediated interventions in the preschool population continues to grow (National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2010).

It was also found in research that a pull-out model is valued for its educational benefits, but less appreciated for social reasons, like the segregation from other students (Hanner, Von Arx, Christianes, Heyvarert and Petry, 2012).

The inclusive school movement has become the standard most used for the restructure of the special education delivery system today. Fletcher (2010) observed that over the past decade, the movement has mandated schools to provide educational instruction for students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Inclusive education practices have also been found to generate higher levels of achievement, more appropriate social behavior and improved social competence for students with disabilities, and regular education students being more accepting of the disabled students in the general education setting (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; McDonnell,Thorson, Disher, Mathot-Buckner, Mendel & Ray, L. (2003); Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Giasson, Royer, Simard, & Pierard (1998).

2.2 Effective Strategies to Achieve Inclusion

Researchers have not given one single model for effective strategies to achieve inclusion; there are several models and terms of differing roles for teachers (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; NCERI, 1995):

- Consultant model- The special education teachers are available to both the student and general education teacher to assist in re-teaching difficult or newly acquired skills and/or advising on curricular issues.
- Team model- The special education teacher works with a grade level or is assigned to one or more general education teachers (team) to broaden their knowledge, communicate on curricular, behavioral, and/or instructional strategies/accommodations/modifications;

- Parallel teaching model- The special education teachers provide in class resource to small group of students within the general education classroom;

- Cooperative teaching model- The special and general educators work together to deliver instruction to disabled and non-disabled students in the general education classroom (p. 12).

Turner (2003) discussed effective strategies for helping teachers who are working with students with special needs transitioning to regular education classes. Turner suggests that courses be offered on the college level when students are preparing to become teachers. The courses would be required of both special education majors and regular education majors. This would provide teachers exposure to principles of an effective inclusion classroom before entering the teaching profession. The teachers in the inclusive setting learn that teaching involves a partnership, and they must share the role of lead teacher.

Not many universities or colleges offer the type of program Turner (2003) recommends. However, one example of such a model is Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. St. Mary's offers secondary education courses focused on special needs students for regular and special education majors; only one such course is available for elementary majors.

"The faculty in the education department agreed that such a course was integral to full preparation of secondary teachers and this became the impetus for development of Educating Exceptional Learners in Middle School, Junior High, and Secondary Classrooms" (Turner, 2003, p. 491).

The courses cover topics from general information about special education to the legal issues concerning special education. The instructors of these courses are experienced in the field and give real life scenarios to the students as mentors. The students are involved in many field

experiences, and they have to come back and apply their knowledge by preparing lessons and reports (Turner, 2003).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a continuum of placement options be available to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Adamson, Matthews and Schuller (1990) identify several options to help teachers make inclusion successful for all students and teachers. One of the key ingredients is that the regular education teacher must believe that all students can be successful. Parents must be informed and support the program. The administration must accept responsibility for the outcome of students with disabilities learning in this type of setting. The regular education students and staff have to be prepared to accept the special needs students into their classrooms.

Bravmann (2004) asserts that services and physical accommodations must be adequate to meet the needs of special education students' in the classroom, as well as on the playground or any essential arts class. The essential arts classes include, but are not limited to, performing arts, art, technology, and consumer economics. Instructional methods for these students come from the teachers having prior training to adapt the curricula so students will meet success. Differentiated instruction should be implemented to make sure all students are meeting success in this type of environment.

Other important strategies based on research for inclusion are (a) collaborative planning, (b) shared classroom management, and (c) appropriate assessment. Developing these strategies helps teachers get a sense of awareness of themselves, their co-teacher, their students, and their understanding of the content (Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007). Professional development for the teachers and administration is needed for them to fully understand what an effective inclusion setting is like. In turn, this would help the administration know what type of

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instruction they should be looking for when arriving in a classroom to do an observation for inclusion teachers (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003).

A benefit of collaboration among regular and special education teachers is using different instruction techniques to meet the needs of all students. The teaching team uses planning time to find different tools for assessing what students have learned and assessing the progress of all students. This also helps the teachers when placing students in groups for various assignments because they have to make sure groups are divided fairly. These are the benefits that should be included to make a successful inclusion environment and all students benefit from the opportunity (Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007).

Inclusion requires educators to be proactive in creating and using new and inventive teaching and management strategies that build true learning communities, where all are recognized for their unique talents and contributions. This encourages the special education students to participate in learning communities without feeling intimidated by regular education students.

The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh developed several activities to help middle school students develop an awareness of unseen disabilities like social and emotional problems and learning disabilities. A simulation activity to develop awareness of learning disability (writing) was to have non-special education students hold a strip of paper on their forehead. Then, holding the paper they write their names on the paper. The simulation helped the regular education students understand the difficulties special education students can have with fine motor skills (Purnell, 2007).

Under NCLB the push for special education students to be in the least restrictive environment has increased in the public schools. The IDEA legislation states the least restrictive

environment for special education students is served best in a regular education class. In a nutshell, to be "included" is merely including regular education and special education students in one classroom together with two teachers to promote a successful learning environment for all students. In an inclusive classroom, the teachers enter into a partnership which allows the teachers to become a team. When there is tension and lack of trust between teachers, success is difficult to achieve (Hassall, 2007). There is a push for team teaching and Carter (2000) stated it this way:

> This team teaching approach is being promoted partly as a result of special education mandates for inclusion classrooms. With the inception of Public Law 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975, which was later amended and renamed, the right to full and free public education in the least restrictive environment is essential. Much of the push behind team teaching and inclusion at all levels stems from the realization that integration of curriculum across subject areas, attention to developmentally appropriate educational experiences at all academic levels, and student development of skills with technologically sophisticated, interactive media cannot be achieved effectively within an isolated, segregated teaching model (p. 1).

2.3 Benefits and Challenges of Inclusion Setting

Both the special education teacher and the regular education teacher benefit from their participation in managing an inclusive classroom. Results of the Tompkins and Deloney (1995) Inclusion: The pros and cons indicate that professional development for teachers contributes to their success, and the special education teachers believe they gain more content knowledge by working in an inclusion classroom. The regular education teacher benefits from observing the special education teacher's classroom management skills and curriculum adaptation skills. Teachers recognize that their students learned more when they cooperate with each other. The data indicate that special education students feel they learned more being in an inclusive setting,

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and in turn they worked harder. The students liked having two teachers in the classroom, and they believed it helped with the discipline in the classroom.

Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) identified concerns teachers had with the success of inclusion, including administrative support. The teachers believe they do not get the appropriate training to work adequately with each other in the inclusion setting. Their findings suggest that principals need to make sure the right teachers are chosen to work in an inclusive setting. This helps with teacher collaboration because the principal has to make sure the teachers have the same planning period. Administrators must make sure the staff is trained for an inclusion setting, or they will not understand the roles each teacher must play to make this a successful venture.

The challenges of inclusion fall under three general categories: organizational, attitudinal, and knowledge barriers. Organizational issues pertain to the difference in class structure and how teachers deliver instruction. Attitudinal problems focus on collaboration of teachers sharing space and the learning environment. Knowledge deals with the perception that special education teachers do not have the knowledge of the content area (Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000).

Positive attitudes towards inclusion are always an important factor in the success of the program. The attitudes must be positive from both the special and regular education teachers in order for the students to reach their maximum educational potential (Beattie, Jordan, and Algozzine, 2006).

Successful inclusion in the general education curriculum is most likely to happen when the following beliefs are fostered:

• Responsibility for positive outcomes for special education students is equally shared by all school personnel.

- General and special education classroom teachers both feel and are held responsible for identifying appropriate educational goals and providing instruction to help the student reach them.

- Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of all of their students.

- Administrators recognize that teachers need time and support to adequately teach diverse groups of students.

- Teachers recognize that a special education label does not direct how much or how well a student will learn or perform so assignments and activities are not based primarily on a student's educational category.

- All parties concerned recognize that good teaching involves sometimes alternative methods, activities, expectations, and approaches to meet the diverse learning strengths and weaknesses prevalent in today's classrooms (Beattie et al., p. 45).

A challenge of inclusion is the lack of parent involvement which is needed in public education with the mandates of the federal law toward special education. When information is shared with parents in the beginning of the school year about expectations of the students there is less chance of failure. Collaboration between school and home builds parents' awareness of the options their children are entitled to. This could include after-school tutoring, remedial classes, and transfers to other programs (Beattie et al., 2006, p. 45).

2.4 Leadership

This section of the review of literature focuses on the leadership perspectives that have been emerging in education over the past several decades. This section of the review of literature begins with the definition of leadership and then focuses on emerging leadership approaches that include collaborative leadership.

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The concept of collaborative leadership is defined by Rubin (2002) in the following

manner:

Collaborative leadership is skillful and mission-oriented management of relevant
relationship. It is the juncture of organizing and management. Whereas community and
labor organizers are trained to patiently build their movements through one-on-one
conversation with each individual they want to recruit, collaborative leaders do this and
more by building structure to support and sustain these productive relationships overtime
(p. 18).

Murphy (2002) examined the "strength" of teacher engagement and commitment to lead

through the willingness to collaborate with others as a way of demonstrating leadership capacity.

Teacher training programs such as Teach for America have also endorsed the principles and

standards that enable collaboration inside and outside classrooms that lead to improved student

performance in rural and urban public education settings. Throughout the years, teachers have

been afforded instructional leadership and collaborative opportunities that allow them to "think

outside the box" and create alternative methods of instruction, use flex hours to meet with

parents, share common planning periods for the purpose of developing best practices, and have

an active voice on faculty committees (p. 255).

Collaborative teaming must have essential characteristics that drive a Professional

Learning Community (PLC). The characteristics consist of shared mission; vision, values, and

goals require a collective commitment to establishing and articulating school beliefs and govern

instructional actions and behaviors (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010).

A study done by Lasker and Weiss (2003) gave a dynamic model of collaboration that

schools could follow, even if their study was done for public health. The study examined the use

of collaborative process and group dynamics. The model had three proximal outcomes; "(1)

empower individuals, (2) create bridging social ties that bring people together across society's

dividing lines, and (3) create synergy to engage a broad array of people and organizations in

solving complex problems" (p. 26). "This model, while used as a public health model, is

certainly relevant in context of schools as organizations and demonstrates the kind of mechanism

by which successful collaborative processes address the short comings in community problem

solving" (p.21).

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relationships. It is the juncture of organizing and management. Whereas community and
labor organizers are trained to patiently build their movements through one-on-one
conversations with each individual they want to recruit, collaborative leaders do this and
more by building structures to support and sustain these productive relationships
overtime (p. 18).

As education continues to change around the world and become more industrialized the

leadership must change also. In an article by Berry (2003) entitled Redefining roles for shared

decision-making, he states:

School buildings and the professionals in them are not independent islands of learning,
but collaborative partners in educating children as they move through a dynamic and ever
changing system. A decision made in one part of the system ripples through the entire
system. The linking together of the many parts of the system in sharing responsibility for
learning and system improvement is a fundamental shift occurring in school districts.
This linking, known as shared decision-making or site based management, is leading to
the alteration of leadership roles and responsibilities in school systems across the country
(p.3).

Berry (1993) talks about a shift in education leadership that will result in a system wide

leadership that enhances the entire decision-making of the organization. Times are changing and

schools will no longer be able to do business the same way. As Berry stated, "this form of leadership is the result of the collaborative culture that emanates from shared decision-making" (p. 13). Distributed leadership is stated to have been around since the 1900s (Hallinger, 2003), and is one of the terms that always appears. Finding a definition for distributed leadership which leaders can agree upon is very difficult to do. Ritchie and Woods (2007) stated that distributed leadership is used to describe approaches to school leadership that are seen by some as conducive to school improvement in the current complex context in which schools operate (p. 364). For the purpose of this study distributed leadership was examined based upon the criteria used to transition resource students to an inclusive setting.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

2.51 **Social Learning Theory.**

Albert Bandura (1971) developed Social Learning Theory as a way of explaining people's behaviors. He believes that humans learn through observation and practice of observed behaviors. He also posits that individuals model the behaviors they observe and, depending on whether or not the behaviors are rewarded, either strengthening or extinguishing the behavior depending on the level and type of reinforcement. Bandura sees human personality as an interaction between the environment and a person's psychological processes. He also believes that humans are able to control their behavior through self-regulation.

This theory aligns well with the notion of inclusion as proponents of inclusion of students with special needs into the general education classroom exposes those students to positive behavior, as well as to help them model positive responses to learning activities.

2.52 Collaborative Leadership.

Collaborative leadership was chosen as the leadership framework for this study.

Northouse (2004) in *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* provides a cursory discussion of

collaborative leadership with topics such as participative leadership, a term associated with path-

goal theory. Northhouse (2012) states:

> defining leadership as a *process* means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides
> in the leader, but rather a transactional event that occurs between the leader and the
> followers. *Process* implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. It
> emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event.
> When leadership is defined in this manner, it becomes available to everyone. It is not
> restricted to the formally designated leader in a group (p. 5).

Hallinger and Heck (2010), in Collaborative leadership and school improvement:

understanding the impact on school capacity and student success, observe the positive impact

that collaborative school leadership has on student learning in reading and mathematics. They

attribute this improved student achievement to the role collaborative leadership has in building a

school's capacity to improve its academic achievement. Harris (2010) discusses the relationship

between teacher leadership and distributive or collaborative leadership, hinting at a positive

impact on student learning, as well.

Research supports the notion that successfully transitioning students from a restrictive

classroom setting to an inclusive setting requires collaboration among teachers, and between

teachers and school leaders. Therefore, collaborative leadership is an appropriate leadership

framework for this study.

2.6 Parent Involvement

A challenge of inclusion is the lack of parent involvement which is needed in public education with the mandates of the federal law toward special education. When information about expectations for students is shared with parents at the beginning of the school there is less chance of failure. Collaboration between school and home builds parents' awareness of the options their children are entitled to. This could include after-school tutoring, remedial classes, and transfers to other programs (Beattie, Jordan, & Algozzine, 2006, p. 45).

There are many challenges parents face as advocates for their children receiving proper accommodations to meet success in any setting (Morningstar and Torrez, 2003). Six challenges parents face standing up for the rights of students with disabilities are:

(1) Negative practitioner reactions. During this time parents are perceived to be advocating for their child's transition.

(2) History of parent-school conflicts and mistrust.

(3) Parents' time and energy.

(4) Trepidation about how an individual can truly make a difference in the machinery of a large or cumbersome system.

(5) Differing perceptions. When parents and educators have different perceptions of what is in the best interest of the student.

(6) Isolation and disempowerment. When students move from one setting to the next parents sometimes feel they have lost control (p.14).

2.7 School Climate and Reform

School climate is defined by The National School Climate Council (2007) as:

"School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (p. 1).

Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) observe that our legislation states that children with special needs should be educated in the least restrictive environment, making inclusion the number one way to fulfill legislation requirements. There are various factors which weigh on the effectiveness of inclusion, maintaining a positive attitude towards the approach of inclusion, its practices, implementation methods, and the delivery of services which can limit the success of students being transitioned into an inclusive setting. The findings of this research conclude inclusion is effective if the processes surrounding transition are developed and implemented with the student in mind rather than the system.

First impressions upon walking into a school set the stage for how the community views your school as a safe place for their children to be educated. There are questions that should be answered when checking to see if a school's climate is promoting social, civic, emotional and ethical as well as cognitive skills and dispositions that provide the foundation for learning and effective participation in a democracy (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007):

1. Will this school help to motivate my child to do well academically and learn to be a "life-long learner"?

2. How safe is the school?

3. Is the physical environment (e.g. temperature, cleanliness, size) supportive of learning?

4. How respectful and "connected" do the students feel?

5. Are teachers and students engaged in interesting and meaningful work? (p. 5).

When creating a positive school climate team, the members should include students, teachers, parents, principals, and members of the community.

There is a significant amount of research supporting educational reform; education reform is essential to improving the current education system. "America needs an educational system that teaches students how to think, not what to think" (Webmaster Vote.org., 2008, p.1). Presently, there is a push for inclusion in school districts because research data have indicated that students with disabilities in inclusion settings benefit socially with fewer negative labels, reduced stigma, and increased interaction with regular education peers. In this age of accountability, the goals of inclusion must echo those of education as a whole to help students with disabilities gain the maximum in attitudinal impacts and social benefits from their school experiences (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro & Peck 1995; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998). Teachers in an inclusion setting often struggle with incorporating effective strategies to help students with special needs transition to regular education classes.

An effective school climate helps ensure positive transition for special education students moving from the special education setting to the regular education setting. For example:

    Positive and sustained school climate is associated with and /or predicative of positive youth development, effective risk prevention and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention. These research findings have contributed to the U.S. Department of Education examining ways to use school climate and culture as an organizing data-driven concept that recognizes the range of pro-social efforts (e.g. character education, social emotional learning, developmental assets, community schools) and risk prevention/ mental health promotion efforts that protect children and promote essential social, emotional, ethical and civic learning (Jennings, 2009, p. 5).

2.9 Summary

  The purpose of this chapter was to review literature relevant to (1) inclusion; (2) leadership; (3) school climate and reform; (4) parent involvement; and (5) effective strategies. The Literature Review, coupled with the analysis of three relevant case studies, will lay the foundation for discovering themes which support successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classroom settings. From those themes, it will be possible to make recommendations for effective strategies to aid educators in facilitating the smooth and successful inclusion of students with disabilities into the general classroom setting.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide detailed descriptions of three case studies selected to support the basis for this study. The studies will provide an opportunity to confirm the literature highlighted in the literature review. The researcher hopes to identify patterns and find emerging phenomena within the three case studies that can be used to draw conclusions, connect to the theoretical framework employed in this study, and lead to recommendations for further research.

3.1 Case Study Research

Creswell (2003), summarizing Stake (1995), refers to the case study as:

A strategy associated with the qualitative approach in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (p. 15).

Researcher Robert Yin defines case study research method as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

When using case study methodology, well known researchers like Robert E. Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2003) give suggested techniques for organizing and conducting the research successfully.

1.   Determine and define the research question;

2.   Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques;

3.   Prepare to collect data in the field;

4.   Evaluate and analyze the data;

5.   Prepare the report.

Jennifer Rowley (2002) states that case study is a strategy that emerges as an option for

students and new researchers conducting small scale research projects and itis usually based on

their workplace or the comparison of a small amount of organizations (p.16).

> Before the enactment of Public Law 94-142, the fate of many individuals with disabilities was likely to be dim. Too many individuals lived in state institutions for persons with mental retardation or mental illness. In 1967, for example, state institutions were homes for almost 200,000 persons with significant disabilities. Many of these restrictive settings provided only minimal food, clothing, and shelter. Too often, persons with disabilities, such as Allan, were merely accommodated rather than assessed, educated, and rehabilitated (ED.gov., p.2).

3.2 Case I

Young, Cheryl. (2005).   From seclusion to inclusion: A comparative case study of students with

emotional and behavioral disorders in middle schools.   University of Central

Florida.

The purpose of this study (Young, 2005) was to give students with Emotional Behavior Disorder

(EBD) an opportunity to experience an inclusive setting. These students were in a separate educational

setting, never having classes with their regular education peers. The researcher wanted to study the

effects of the EBD students being transitioned into a regular education classes.

The three focal points of this research were: (1) student transition experience; (2) teachers'

perception of the transition process; and (3) to determine critical elements that facilitated transition from

separate classes to full inclusive settings for the participating students (Young, 2005, p. 45).

> This qualitative research employed the case study design with anticipated, emergent, constant comparative methods for data collection including but not limited to: (a) initial surveys for teachers, (b) student interviews, (c) follow-up surveys for teachers, (d) impromptu teacher interviews, student records review or document analysis, (f) school climate results, and (g) analysis of demographics (p. 47).

There were three phases of this research. The first consisted of getting permission from the principal to do the teacher survey and getting permission for the students to participate in the study. The next phase was the student interview and data collection and transcriptions. The final phase came from the analysis of the collected data.

The research was conducted in a large metropolitan southeastern school district with over 72,000 students. The schools chosen for this research were middle schools, which had adopted a school wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS). Each school had a full-time behavior specialist and no less than two ESE teachers for self-contained classes. The demographics of the three schools were different. Mapleview had an enrollment of 256 students of which 79% were free/reduced lunch and the minority population was 63%. The school had a SES population of 20%. This school is the oldest of the three, built in 1964. The location of the school was a block away from the largest low-income housing project in the area. The high number of free/reduced lunch and special education students made the school a Title-I school. The second middle school is Center Street Middle School and it is located in a middle to low-income housing area. This school is also a Title-I school, due the high levels of free/reduced lunch (63%). The school was built in 1997 and has a population of 771 students, with 61% being minorities and 18% being English as Second Language (ESE). The final school is the newest of the three middle schools, built in 1997 and located in the suburban area. The population of the school is 1239 students and only has a free/reduced lunch population of 42%, minority population of 26%, and ESE population of 12%.

The participants in this research consisted of teachers and EBD students. The research took place over a nine-week period. The teachers were placed in two groups. The teachers who worked with the EBD students in a self-contained setting were group one. Group two teachers were the regular education teachers and special education teachers who worked with the EBD students in the inclusion setting. The EBD students in this research were also placed in two different groups. The first group was the students who transitioned out of the self-contained classroom and did not receive any referrals over the nine weeks

and had all passing grades. The second group was the students who had at least one referral and one or more failing grades.

The research was based on three questions:

> (1) how do students with EBD perceive the transition from self-contained class to an inclusive general education class? (2) How do teachers describe the experiences of students with EBD who transition from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class? (3) What behavioral supports facilitate the transition of students with end of this EBD from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education classroom? (Young, 2005, p .4).

Through the research, all three questions would be answer.

The students' answers to question one varied. The percentage of students answering the question ranged from 60%-82%. Only one student had an off-target answer and had to be re-directed. The students that were successful gave a lot of credit to their moms or grandmothers being supportive of their transition. These students took pride in being selected to be included in the regular education setting. The study showed that the EBD students had supportive relationships both in school and out of school. Question two asked how teachers describe the experiences of students with EBD who transition from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class. The surveys from the teachers showed that they believed the students with good support systems at home and positive attitudes met great success. The students that had a lot of environmental issues out of school struggled with meeting success, because they could not separate school from home. Also, the frustration of academically not meeting success in certain subjects was causing behavioral issues. One of the students was considered an outlier, because she met success in the inclusive setting, but got an F in reading in the self-contained setting. Overall, the teachers describe successful students as highly motivated, worked really hard, and they had the ability to monitor their own emotions and demonstrate appropriate behavior during class. Question three asked what behavioral supports facilitate the transition of students with EBD from self-contained class to an inclusive general education class. The successful inclusion of students with EBD in a general education classroom was based on several factors that emerged from the literature review in three categories: (a) systemic support, (b) ecological factors, and (c) quality relationships. These factors, when delineated into

the three categories of support, provided a theoretical framework on which to develop data sets (Young, 2005, p. 105). The responses from this question were transcribed and put into a matrix. Some of the teachers' responses could fit into two categories and the responses that were lengthy were summarized into fewer words.

The findings of this research are presented in the following order in this chapter: (a) a description of the sample population, and (b) a statement of each research question and related excerpts from the data collection (Young, 2005).

Mapleview K-8 Academy

A site visit to Mapleview Middle School revealed to the researcher that the classroom spaces appeared to be originally designed for elementary school-aged children. The self-contained classrooms had approximately 10-15 desks arranged in rows with nice decorations on the bulletin boards. The bathroom was located inside the classroom, instead of being in a 'common area' like the other middle schools. Sinks and countertops were at a low height, perhaps designed for younger children. Beautiful murals were observed throughout the school. The general education classrooms were of the same size and design as the self-contained classes Young, 2005, p.77).

Center Street Middle Academy

Concerning the school environment at Center Street, one student responded positively by saying, "it's nice and clean". This student also appreciated the school's culture and prestige by saying he wanted to go to that school because he knew it was an "A+ magnet school". The essential art classrooms were bigger than the math classroom, where the teacher would have to pack 30 desks in the classroom (Young, 2005, p.77).

Discovery Middle School

The self-contained classroom for this school was located on the second floor, off the 8th grade hallway. There were no windows and it looked like it was teacher planning space before it became a self-contained room. The general education classrooms were larger and had lots of windows and rows of desk and the bathrooms were not in the classroom, but in a common area (Young, 2005).

Students

There were six students that participated in this study, three black students, two Hispanic students, and one white student. Most of the participants were from the eighth grade (Young, 2005).

Student 1- Jessica Garcia (not successful)

Jessica is a student that had a lot of behavior concerns and low achievement concerns. She was placed in a behavioral setting, due to her explosive behaviors in the classroom. They wanted her to transition from a behavior setting to an inclusive setting before she went to high school. Jessica was chosen to participate in this study transitioning self-contained students to an inclusive setting. In the beginning, Jessica struggled with the transition due to the natural of struggling to understand the directions of the teacher. She was sent out of class three times in a six month period. In a 45 day period, Jessica had no discipline problems and the only issue she had was getting an F in general education reading class (Young, 2005).

Jessica was interviewed at the end of her 8th grade year. She thanked the teachers for helping her and teaching her everything that she had learned. Not once did she mention the referrals or the failing grade in reading class, except for the fourth marking period where she got a D. Jessica's perception of the transition process was that it was successful, because she was

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able to take classes with her friends and when she didn't understand the directions, her friends would re-explain the directions. After a while, she was able to understand the teachers' directions (Young, 2005).

She loved that she was able to reveal during the interview how she felt about herself. Jessica did not feel good about herself. She felt she was stupid because she struggled academically. She was able to turn it around. When she was about to get on the A-B honor roll, Jessica believed it was because of the teachers who were trying to prepare her for high school (Young, 2005).

Student 2- Terence Brown (successful)

Terence was a sixth grade student from Center Street Middle School, who was diagnosed with ADHD when he was younger. In the self-contained classroom, he had support systems in place to address his behavior concerns. The IEP team met with Terence and his mother to discuss transitioning to two inclusive classes from the self-contained classes. He received an A in math and a C in Art, and he did not get a referral the entire 45 days of the transition (Young, 2005).

During Terence's interview, he reflected positive comments about his experience in the inclusion setting. He stated the only problem he had with inclusion was not turning in his assignments. Terence was involved in a lot of activities outside of the school, too. There were three things Terence told the researcher that would make inclusion more successful. They were "do all your work, have a good attitude, and try hard" (Young, 2005, p. 84).

Student 3- Jerome Story (unsuccessful)

Jerome was a black male student in the 8th grade from Center Street Middle School. His transition classes were Art, Math, and Science. He was removed from these inclusion classes

due to his behavior and academic concerns that were presented during the trial of the transition (Young, 2005).

During the interview, Jerome talked about the fun he had in inclusion science and how he like the experiments they conducted in class. He liked technology class and was elected the recorder in his class, but he talked about some concerns he had in math. Jerome never says it is him with the problem in math. He just says the girl was making noise and they both had to leave the class. He also talked about how to meet success in an inclusion. Jerome knew he would have to ask the teachers for help, but felt he would get more help from a support classroom. He liked the way the support class gave rewards for good behavior and work completion. Jerome was hopeful that next year during high school he would meet success with inclusion (Young, 2005).

Student 4-Lakeisha Bennett (successful)

Lakeisha was a black 8th grade student from Mapleview Magnet Middle School who started transitioning into inclusion classes her 8th grade year. Starting on October 8, she was in inclusive classes for 45 days and did not have any referrals and had all passing grades (Young, 2005).

During her interview, she referenced Social Studies as her favorite class, because she liked many of the topics they studied. Lakeisha believed she was getting smarter by being in inclusion classes. She said her Reading, Math, and Social Studies grades had improved, because she was no-longer with the teachers in the self-contained classroom. She knew there was no time to fool around in inclusion classes. Lakeshia credits a lot of her success to the support she got from the self-contained staff and her grandmother. The last thing she said in her interview

was for incoming sixth graders to believe in themselves, "don't give up, just study very hard and just worry about you. And [you will] achieve your goals (Young, 2005, p.90)."

Student 5- Justin Johnson- (non-successful)

Justin was a white male 8th grade student from Discovery Middle School. He was a foster kid new to the area and was moved from another foster home. Justin was placed with the foster system due to abuse of his younger brother by his mother. She was placed in jail for battery and physical abuse, and neglect of necessary medical attention of both boys. The boys did not get along so they were put in separate foster cares (Young, 2002).

The therapeutic foster care services included counseling and psychotropic medication for Justin. According to his teacher, Justin was diagnosed with ADHD and was being evaluated for oppositional defiant disorder by a psychiatrist (Young, 2005, p. 91). For nine weeks, he was in the behavioral self-contained classroom and was meeting success, so the team decided they would try him in a partial inclusion setting. When he was moved to the inclusion setting, he immediately stopped working. He would put his head down on the desk. The behavior system changed from the self-contained classroom to the inclusion classroom, and the consequences and rewards were no longer instant, but delayed. When things did not go his way in class, the self-contained setting could call his foster home right away, but that could not be done in an inclusive setting.

Justin's behavior seemed to continue to decline and he was even suspended from school. When grades came out, Justin was failing all his inclusion classes and was passing all his self-contained classes. The IEP team decided that inclusion was not for Justin (Young, 2005).

Student 6-Ryan Rodriguez (successful)

Ryan is a Hispanic 8th grade male student from the Discovery Middle School. He was not diagnosed as learning disabled, but he did have a wide discrepancy in expressive and receptive communication. He scored in the gifted range of intelligence and his reading achievement test was high (Young, 2005). Ryan did well in his inclusion classes and when he would fall behind, the inclusion teachers would communicate with the self-contained teacher who would call home. Ryan's work would get turned in and he would be meeting success again. Ryan had a strong support system from home.

3.3 Case Two

Flores, Kathrine V. (2012). Inclusive general education teachers' perspectives on inclusion: A qualitative case study. California State University.

Katherine Flores (2012) did a qualitative case study on Inclusive General Education Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion. The study examined what general education teachers did to ensure all their students meet success in their classes.

The following questions were examined in this study:

- What teacher behaviors enhanced students with significant disabilities membership in a general education classroom?
- How are general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education formed?
- What are the philosophies that general education teachers have towards inclusion? (Flores, 2012, p. 4).

It was proposed that through field observations, interviews, and artifacts, the researcher would have a better understanding of how the general education teachers are successful. This would in turn allow them to become models of how an inclusive class should be run (Flores, 2012, p. 4).

Two elementary schools from Northern California were used for this study. The first

school started from kindergarten through the eighth grade and has used inclusion for many years.

They had twenty-one general education teachers and four special education teachers. The school

is located in a semi-rural area. A large portion of the students are from low-income homes and

have diverse backgrounds (Flores, 2012, p. 29). The second school was kindergarten through

sixth grade, and it was its first year of inclusion. The school had just gone through an entire staff

change before the research began.

The criteria used to select the general education teachers for this research was to have

special education teachers pick the teachers for this case study. Three special education teachers

chose teachers who did not mind working with severely disabled students and did not mind

collaborating with the special education teachers on a daily basis. The three teachers chosen

were teaching in inclusion classrooms. Teacher one was a fourth grade teacher who had been

teaching for twelve years and had done inclusion for nine years in school one. Teacher two had

been teaching for thirteen years and had some experience including special needs students at

various levels. Teacher three had been teaching for thirteen years, was in her second year at

school two, and this was her first year teaching inclusion. The researcher spent nine days in each

classroom and shared his notes with each teacher (Flores, 2012).

The data collection of this study revealed eight major themes from this case study.

1) classroom community;

2) choices;

3) engaging activities;

4) high academic;

5) personal experience;

6) intentional teaching;

7) collaboration between the general education teacher and the special education teacher; and

8) the relationship between the paraeducator and the general education teacher (Flores, p. 34).

The three teachers used in this study had shown through data collection that their classes gave the students a sense of community. The teachers built a classroom environment where all the students felt welcome and felt like they belonged in the classroom, whether they were special education or regular education students. For example, one teacher said, "the classroom is set up so they feel like they are in a safe environment and that they have a sense of belonging and that they are able to take risks and try things" (Flores, 2012, p. 35). Another example was one teacher discussed the difference it made in creating an environment in which it was important that all students learned working together was important:

> I'm really big on natural supports. So, for instance, at the beginning of the school year, I didn't sit down with the kids down with the kids and have a whole conversation about differences…My thought about that is, kids will make their own observations and they will naturally come to certain conclusions about things and people and situations and so in here, a lot of support systems are formed naturally. But then I do use very specific and intentional buddying. My one student who does not communicate orally…I gave him a buddy who is very helpful. She has a younger sister at home that she helps take care of. So she is very helpful. So she knows the differences between help and doing for and that's a big difference. And that's a very intentional support. At the same time, the same student has developed many natural supports which you will see when he needs help tying his shoe or when someone is picking on him at recess…so I think it's both of them, let it happen naturally but be strategic and intentional in some instances (Flores, 2012, p. 36).

Another teacher would allow students to do work in many different styles, like partner, teams, self, or teacher or paraprofessional help. The teachers felt this gave the students

ownership into their educational learning experience. All three teachers worked directly with the

special education students. For instance, one of the teachers gave a writing assignment and she

allowed the student with special needs to pick a prompt and the student appeared to need help

and the class was going to recess. The teacher asked the student if she needed help and she

nodded her head (Flores, 2012, p.38). When the classes where observed by the researcher. she

noticed how well the general education teacher and special education teacher worked together in

this study. Another demonstration of teacher and para-educator good collaboration was when the

researcher was observing the class and the teacher was working one-on-one with a student the

para was roaming around the room helping any student who needed help (p. 39). They

collaborated with each other about the presentation of lessons to be taught to the students during

the inclusion class. Also, when a special education teacher was not in the class and a

paraprofessional was used, there was still communication between the teacher and

paraprofessional to show co-teaching was still present. The results showed a strong sense of

unity among the classes in the study.

    The Common qualities of general education teachers that enhanced their attitude towards inclusion of all students with disabilities were identified as a result of the in-person interviews, classroom observations, interviews of special education inclusion support teachers, and collection of artifacts. The most prominent aspect of the results was the general education teachers all had a sense of ownership of the students with significant disabilities in their classes. They all saw the students as their students who were supported by the paraeducator as well as the special education support teacher (Flores, 2012. p.94,).

Another result of this study was the importance of collaboration between general education teachers, special education support teachers, and paraeducators. Without the collaboration of these educators, the students with significant disabilities would not have had their needs met.

3.4 Case Study Three

Mackey, Megan. (2012). Middle school inclusion: Case studies of three general education

      teachers. University of Connecticut.

      The purpose of Megan Mackey's (2012) case study was to explore real life structure and implementation of inclusion in a general education class in a middle school. This case study did not give specific research questions, but said evidence showed that all three teachers in the study successfully implemented many of the defining characteristics of inclusive education (Mackey, 2012, p.18). Over 65% of the school's population qualified for free and reduced lunch. The race of the students consisted of whites and Hispanics, with the majority of the students being white. The researcher explored these areas: preparation, training, and/or support; attitudes and beliefs; learning environment; planning; and types of adaptions. The main purpose of the research was to explore how three general education middle school teachers include students with special needs in their classroom.

      The three teachers chosen for this case study (Mackey, 2012) include one Hispanic male, who had gone to the middle school as a student when he was a kid. He was a social studies teacher in his seventh year of teaching. The two other teachers were Caucasian females. One was in her late twenties with five years of teaching experience in sixth grade science. The other teacher was in the late 30s, teaching eighth grade math for seven years. The data for this study were collected by a pre- and post- observation interview for each teacher. The purpose of the

case study was to see how the general education teachers included special education in their classrooms.

The results of the study (Mackey, 2012) showed that all three teachers felt that their college training had not prepared them to work with students with disabilities in a regular education class. The teachers had only taken one special education class. The science and the math teachers each had a para-professional or a special education teacher in the room with them, while the social studies teacher had no assistant with him. "According to the findings of numerous studies, teachers felt they lacked the in-class supports necessary to implement the practice that characterize inclusion" (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Pagan, 2004, p. 104-116).

The study revealed that the paraprofessional working with the math teacher was always late and did not engage often with the students. This would disrupt the classroom. Then she would go sit at the desk. The math and social studies teachers felt hopeless about the help they had in the classroom. The paraprofessionals and special education teacher usually didn't know the content area and the regular education teacher would have to teach them the concepts. The math teacher said, "Sometimes I feel like I'm teaching the paras too" (Mackey, 2012, p. 12). She continued, "figure that if they learn something here then they are better prepared to help students during resource hour" (p. 12). After that the paraprofessionals and special education teacher would be able to assist the students in the resource room.

A teacher's attitude is one of the most important determinants of inclusion success (Cook, Cameron, & Tankersley, 2007). All the teachers were positive about having special needs students in their class.

All three teachers stated the belief that the inclusion of students with disabilities had a positive impact on the overall classroom environment. The eighth grade math teacher felt that having students with disabilities in her classroom made students more accepting of each other and that ultimately, it made them better people. The sixth grade science teacher thought that students without disabilities developed more empathy and understanding through their interactions with students with disabilities, and that it taught them more about life. The seventh grade social studies teacher felt that students were very accepting of each other. He also thought the inclusion of students with disabilities impacted the learning environment of his classroom in a positive way, because it changed the dynamics of the class and it improved his teaching (Mackey, 2012, p.13).

The teachers had positive attitudes and confidence in their ability to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. They all agreed that some students were unsuccessful in their class, but it was due to circumstances out of their control. For instance, students had severe cognitive disabilities or severe emotional problems and issues outside of the school, so the students did not meet success. The social studies teacher stated that even though the students were not successful, he had a great relationship with them (Mackey, 2012).

The learning environment of the three teachers was very different. The eighth grade math teacher did not vary from her lesson plans, because she had to make sure she stayed on schedule. She felt that the special education students slowed the learning process down. The sixth grade teacher was similar to the eighth grade teacher, but not as structured. She expected all her students to pass her assessments, because she taught them all the same. The seventh grade social studies teacher was flexible in many areas of his lesson planning. For instance:

He was an easy going man and it was evident that his primary concern was making his students feel welcomed, supported, and appreciated within the classroom. He treated all his students with a great deal of respect and his students in turn treated him, and each other, with respect (Mackey, 2012, p.15).

Another example of the Social Studies teacher's dedication to the students was his adapting assignments and test for students to meet success in his class. He stated:
If his class average was 60%, then he was doing something wrong. He stated some of the students said his class was easy. His response was to them was, "I'm not trying to make it hard. If you get what I'm teaching you, then we're doing good" (Mackey, 2012, p. 17).

The thing that made the seventh grade teacher stand out was he always put himself in the place of the students. This would help him develop how the lesson should be driven so the students would get a deeper understanding of the concept being taught. He believed this helped him cover more of the content the student should receive during course of the subject (Mackey, 2012).

These three teachers were in the same school, same district, yet their interpretation of an inclusion classroom varied from room to room. Some teachers believe if the students with disabilities are in the classroom, they have an inclusive classroom. There must be a change in instruction to reach all learners (Mackey, 2012).

Limitations to this study were the fact that there were only three teachers used from a middle school. Therefore, the results do not represent the general group and they do not represent the entire middle school population. Further, everyone in the study was not included in the research. For example, the paraprofessionals, students, parents, and other school personnel were not included in the study. (Mackey,2012).

The study was a qualitative case study conducted in an uncontrolled environment. So, cause and effect could not be determined: behaviors could be described, but not explained (Mackey, p.20).

3.5 Summary

Each of the three case studies was trying to study transition of students from a resource setting to an inclusive setting. Each study had their own way of moving students from one placement to another. The studies wanted to show how students with disabilities learned more in an inclusive setting versus a full resources or behavior setting classroom.

In case study one (Young, 2005), the goal was for the behavior students to be able to transition from the behavior setting to the inclusive setting with no behavior issues, and no failing grades. The students were given all kinds of support systems to reach this goal. For example, the teacher always would give positive feedback, "Mrs. G. always told us as long as we've been together-it should be like a family" (p.76). The students were given peer support by being able to work with their peers during class. So, if the students could not understand the directions from the teacher, their peers would re-explain the directions. Some students were given Behavioral Interventions to change negative behavior toward students and adults based on social interaction. Teachers did a lot of planning and working together with parents.

Case study two (Flores, 2012) found that inclusion was only effective when the teachers had good collaboration skills with each other. The research showed that the climate of the school had a lot to do with the success of the students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. The type of supports the students were given in the inclusive setting also made a difference. The teachers made their classroom environment feel like a community. Students were given the opportunity to work in groups sometimes or with partners for support. "The classroom is set up

so they feel like they are in a safe environment and they have a sense of belonging and that they are able to take risks and try things (p.35)." Another example would be:

> I'm really big on natural supports. So, for instance, at the beginning of the school year, I didn't sit down with the kids and have a whole conversion about differences…My thought about that is, kids will make their own observations and naturally come to certain conclusions about things and people and situations and so in here, a lot of the support systems are formed naturally, but then I do use very specific and intentional buddying. My one student does not communicate orally… I gave him a buddy who was very helpful (p. 35).

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion contributed to the success of the students with disabilities reaching their goals

Case study three (Mackey, 2012) showed the success of students with disabilities in a regular education classroom was based on several factors. The first would be the willingness of the student to work hard, be positive, have positive behavior, and the strategies and adaptations put in place for the students. The regular education, special education teachers and paraprofessionals must have a good working relationship. They must also have a good working relationship with the students.

The goal for each case study was to take students with disabilities and place them in the least restricted environment so they could maximize their academic success. I will study the characteristics of classrooms, teachers, and students where inclusion was successful so that teachers and school leaders will learn from these studies and introduce successful practices into their classrooms.

Chapter 4 will provide a summary of the findings of each of the three case studies examined in the foregoing chapter, will compare and contrast methods, settings and findings, and

will analyze emerging trends that were found in the case studies. A chart will be used to visually

display the similarities, differences, and trends found in the three case studies.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

All three studies examined in this case study analysis employed case study methodology.

However, there were some variations in the case study methodology selected by each author.

Case Study One (Mackey, 2012) based her case study on a constructivist foundation. Kathrine

Flores (2012) used a collective case study methodology to describe and compare the perceptions

and practices of three different general education teachers. Young (2005) employed an empirical

inquiry to investigate a contemporary phenomenon. Each author chose a methodology

appropriate to the topic, the setting studied, and the information sought. The chart below

provides a visual display of the similarities and differences of the three case studies.

Table 1

Comparison of Case Study Methodologies and Findings

	Case Study 1 (Young, Cheryl 2005)	Case Study 2 (Mackey, Megan 2012)	Case Study 3 (Flores, Kathrine 2012)
Method	The case study is an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13).	This case study research was constructivism. The foundational belief of constructivism is that knowledge acquisition occurs through knowledge construction, as opposed to knowledge transmission.	A collective case study method was used to describe and compare the perceptions and practices of three different general education teachers that had been identified by their special education teacher colleagues as successful. The researcher used a case study ethnographic design as a method of inquiry. This was

			used because it enabled the researcher to study multiple individuals who were in similar situations. Purposeful sampling was used to select the three participants.
Subjects/setting/time	Mapleview had an enrollment of 256 students of which 79% were free/reduced lunch and the minority population was 63%. The school had a SES population of 20%. This school is the oldest of the three, built in 1964. The location of the school was a block away from the largest low-income housing project in the area. The high number of free/reduced lunch and special education students made the school a Title-I school. The second middle school is Center Street Middle School and it is located in a middle to low-income housing	The study took place in a middle school with three teachers, a seventh grade Social Studies teacher, a sixth grade Science teacher, and an eighth grade Math teacher. Two of the teachers were given para support. The areas explored were: preparation, training, and/or support of study participants; attitudes and beliefs of study participants; learning environment created by study participants; planning engaged in by study participants, and types of adaptations made by study participants.	It was through field observations, interviews, and artifacts, the researcher would have a better understanding of how the general education teachers are successful. This would in turn allow them to become models of how an inclusive class should be run (Flores, 2012, p. 4). Two different elementary schools were used for this study. School I started from kindergarten through eighth grade. This school had used inclusion for many years. The school was in semi-rural area and most of the families were low-income and diverse backgrounds. School II started with kindergarten through sixth grade, in an urban

	area. This school is also a Title-I school, due the high levels of free/reduced lunch (63%). The school was built in 1997 and has a population of 771 students, with 61% being minorities and 18% being English as Second Language (ESE). The final school is the newest of the three middle schools, built in 1997 and located in the suburban area. The population of the school is 1239 students and only has a free/reduced lunch population of 42%, minority population of 26%, and ESE population of 12%.		environment. Most of the student population was minority and low-income households. The school had just gone through an entire staff and faculty change and it was the first time of them during inclusion during this research study.
Research Questions	1. How do students with EBD perceive the transition from a selfcontained class to an inclusive general education class? 2. How do teachers describe the	How do three middle school general education teachers include students with disabilities in their classroom?	What teacher behaviors enhanced students with significant disabilities membership in a general education classroom? • How are general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education formed? • What are the

	experiences of students with EBD who transition from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class? 3. What behavioral supports facilitate the transition of students with EBD from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class?		philosophies that general education teachers have towards inclusion? (Flores, 2012, p. 4).
Findings	The findings from this research project in the following sections: (a) a description of the sample population, and (b) a statement of each research question and related excerpts from the data collection. Teachers and students both appreciated the small size at Mapleview Middle School. One teacher felt that small size of the school made a big	According to the findings of numerous studies, teachers felt they lacked the in-class supports necessary to implement the practices that characterize inclusion. Observation revealed that the eighth grade para-professionals offered little to no support for teacher or student. The Social Studies teacher had no support in his classroom. The teachers and paras did not meet to discuss classroom expectations or	The three teachers used in this study had shown through data collection that their classes gave the students a sense of community. The teachers built a classroom environment where all the students felt welcome and felt like they belonged in the classroom, whether they were special education or regular education students. All three teachers worked directly with the special education students. Another demonstration of teacher and para-educator good

	difference in the attitudes of the students toward each other. The general education classroom was the same size as the self-contained classrooms. Concerning the school environment at Center Street, one student responded positively by saying, "it's nice and clean." This student also appreciated the school's culture and prestige by saying he wanted to go to that school because he knew it was an "A+ magnet school." The essential art classrooms were bigger than the math classroom, were the teacher would have to pack 30 desks in the classroom. The discovery School was had a self-contained class occupied an interior room with no windows. It appeared that the room might have	responsibilities. Attitudes and Beliefs All three teachers believed that inclusion of students with disabilities had a positive impact on the overall classroom. The teachers had only taken one special education class. The science and the math teachers each had a para-professional or a special education teacher in the room with them, while the social studies teacher had no assistant with him. "According to the findings of numerous studies, teachers felt they lacked the in-class supports necessary to implement the practice that characterize inclusion" (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Pagan, 2004, p. 104-116).	collaboration was when the researcher was observing the class and the teacher was working one-on-one with a student the para was roaming around the room helping any student who needed help (p. 39). The results showed a strong sense of unity among the classes in the study. Another result of this study was the importance of collaboration between general education teachers, special education support teachers, and paraeducators. Without the collaboration of these educators, the students with significant disabilities would not have their needs met.

	originally been used as a teacher planning area. The room had two handicapped accessible bathrooms. The classrooms for general education students were much larger and had rows of windows overlooking the courtyard or front street. Successfully included students shared several characteristics according to their teachers. Two of three successful students were reported to be highly motivated and willing to put forth the extra effort that was sometimes required.		
Conclusions	Case study 3 (Young, Cheryl 2005)	Research revealed that two of the teachers established classroom learning environments that reflected many of the ideals of inclusive education, while the third fell short in a number of areas. All three teachers initially	Perhaps what can be gained from this study is the notion that there is not one "type" of general education teacher who can successfully include students with disabilities within his or her classroom. This study appeared

		appeared to be extremely responsive to practice of inclusion, but only two of the teachers remained engaged in the inclusive process over the course of the study. Research showed that in the same district inclusive education can vary from build to build and classroom to classroom. Evidence showed that the three teachers in the study successfully implemented many of the defining characteristics of inclusive education, but they used implement strategies of inclusive education.	to show how with a positive attitudes towards students with disabilities— understanding they are people first who deserve a quality education like every other child—general education teachers can support all students within their general education classrooms.
Recommendations	The case study is an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13).	What could use further research is what school districts need to do in order to get teachers and staff members to exert the time, effort, and energy necessary to develop those collaborative relationships. Furthermore, once teachers have bought-in to the development of those collaborative	It would be interesting to see if preservice general education teachers were given the opportunity to student teach in an inclusion setting, if their attitudes toward inclusion would be positive because they had practical experience working with students with disabilities. To see if a

		relationships, there is a need for research pertaining to the sustainability of those collaborative efforts and its resulting impact on inclusive classroom.	correlation exists between teachers who are non-Caucasian and positive attitude towards inclusion.
Common Themes	Mapleview had an enrollment of 256 students of which 79% were free/reduced lunch and the minority population was 63%. The school had a SES population of 20%. This school is the oldest of the three, built in 1964. The location of the school was a block away from the largest low-income housing project in the area. The high number of free/reduced lunch and special education students made the school a Title-I school. The second middle school is Center Street Middle School and it is located in a middle to low-income housing area. This school		The data collection of this study revealed eight major themes from this case study. 1) classroom community; 2) choices; 3) engaging activities; 4) high academic; 5) personal experience; 6) intentional teaching; 7) collaboration between the general education teacher and the special education teacher; and 8) the relationship between the paraeducator and the general education teacher (Flores, p. 34).

	is also a Title-I school, due the high levels of free/reduced lunch (63%). The school was built in 1997 and has a population of 771 students, with 61% being minorities and 18% being English as Second Language (ESE). The final school is the newest of the three middle schools, built in 1997 and located in the suburban area. The population of the school is 1239 students and only has a free/reduced lunch population of 42%, minority population of 26%, and ESE population of 12%.		
Unique Findings	1. How do students with EBD perceive the transition from a selfcontained class to an inclusive general education class?

2. How do teachers describe the experiences of | | The data suggested that the three participants allowed for unique ways to give students choices. This was evident in all three classrooms since not everyone had to do the activities the same way. Students were given the opportunity to meet their own needs by giving them options. |

	students with EBD who transition from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class? 3. What behavioral supports facilitate the transition of students with EBD from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class?		Some choices given to the class by the teachers included: seating/environment, materials, kinds of activities, who to work with, whether or not to participate in sharing, and higher level thinking questions.

4.1 Methods

Case Study – 1: Young (2005)

The results of the study showed a cross-case comparison done between case-oriented and variable oriented matrix. In this case, teachers stated that in the non-successful cases, students were motivated toward inclusion in the beginning of the transition. Once the study was over and the teachers had to complete the follow-up survey, the students' perceptions have been a focal point of this research study. Therefore, a discussion of relationships, systems, and classroom ecology would not be sufficient if student perceptions were not included in the final analysis. A 'stacked' case-oriented and variable-oriented matrix provided a stable structure for analysis of behavioral support variables identified by and for students in student interviews, teacher surveys, and other data sources (phones, electronic mail, photographs, and school walk-throughs) (p. 107).

Case Study – 2: Flores (2012)

A collective case study method was used to describe and compare the perceptions and practices of three different general education teachers that had been identified by their special education teacher colleagues as successful. The researcher used a case study ethnographic design as a method of inquiry.

Case Study – 3: Mackey (2012)

The method used for this case study was constructivism. This study involves the exploration of bounded system through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Mackey, 2012, p.9).

The research methods are different forms of case study, but the researchers all conducted interviews before and after the research was completed of the participants studied.

4.2 Research Questions

Young's, Flores', and Mackey's research questions were not the same, but some of the themes that came out of the data collection were related to each case study. The questions for each case are listed below.

Case Study – 1: Young (2005)

The results of the research questions were answered in this order. Question 1) "How do students with EBD perceive the transition from self-contained class to an inclusive general education class?" (p. 94). Most of the students felt the transition period was a success, except for two students who did not meet success behavioral or academically. One student did not make it academically because she failed reading per the research study, but in her mind, she had

transitioned successfully, because she did not get in trouble and she was meeting success in her other classes. The student was considered an outlier to this case study.

Question 2) "How do teachers describe the experience of students with EBD who transition from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class?" (p.102). The surveys from the teachers showed that they believed the students with good support systems at home and positive attitudes met great success. The students that had a lot of environmental issues out of school struggled with meeting success, because they could not separate school from home. Also, the frustration of academically not meeting success in certain subjects was causing behavioral issues. One of the students was considered an outlier, because she met success in the inclusive setting, but got an F in reading in the self-contained setting. Overall, the teachers described successful students as highly motivated, worked really hard, and they had the ability to monitor their own emotions and appropriate behavior during class.

Question 3) "What behavioral supports facilitate the transition of students with EBD from a self-contained class to an inclusive general education class?" (p. 105). The successful inclusive of students with EBD in a general education classroom was based on several factors that emerged from the literature review in three categories: (a) systemic support, (b) ecological factors, and (c) quality relationships. These factors, when delineated into the three categories of support, provided a theoretical framework on which to develop data sets (Young, 2005, p. 105). The responses from this question were transcribed and put into a matrix. Some of the teachers' responses could fit into two categories and the responses that were lengthy were summarized into fewer words.

Case Study – 2: Flores (2012)

The following questions were examined in this study:

- What teacher behaviors enhanced students with significant disabilities membership in a general education classroom?

- How are general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education formed?

- What are the philosophies that general education teachers have towards inclusion? (Flores, 2012, p. 4).

The philosophies that general education teachers have towards inclusion varies on many different factors. The teachers' attitudes toward special education students, their training and their experiences with working or knowing someone personally with special needs differed depending on their training, experience, and backgrounds. The general education teachers' philosophies varied throughout the experience and no teachers shared the same set of beliefs.

Case Study – 3: Mackey (2012)

The research question in this case study was "How do three middle school general education teachers include students with disabilities in their classroom?" (p. 5). All three middle school general education teachers believed that the included students with disabilities belonged in their classrooms. The research showed different levels of including all students. Evidence showed that the three teachers in this study successfully included the students with special needs, but how the students were included varied from teacher to teacher within the same building. Two of the three teachers used a variety of strategies to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. The third teacher did not vary in her lesson and the students would just have to get the material. The Social Studies teacher would always adapt his lessons to meet the needs of the students. The Science teacher would change the lesson sometimes, but not always. The Math teacher believed that it could only be done one way. Inclusion means that all students are included in the learning process and only the Social Studies teacher did that on a daily basis.

4.3 Findings

Case Study - 1: Young (2005)

The results of the study showed a cross-case comparison done between case-oriented and variable oriented matrix. In this case study, teachers stated that in the non-successful cases, students were motivated toward inclusion in the beginning of the transition. Once the study was over and the teachers had to complete the follow-up survey, they reported a student successful in their class, but the student had failed reading for three marking periods. This made the student be placed in the non-successful category versus successful. This is what they considered an outlier, because the teachers considered the student successful in their classes, but because the student failed a class it made her non-successful.

One of the themes that came out of this research was that all participants used engaging activities. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is engaging, interactive activities. UDL was developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) as a way for teachers to plan lessons that are differentiated for many different types of learners (Spencer, 2011)

Case Study – 2: Flores (2012).

Katherine Flores (2012) did a qualitative case study on Inclusive General Education Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion. The study examined what general education teachers did to ensure all their students meet success in their classes.

It was proposed that through field observations, interviews, and artifacts, the researcher would have a better understanding of how the general education teachers are successful. This

would in turn allow them to become models of how an inclusive class should be run (Flores, 2012, p. 4).

Two elementary schools from Northern California were used for this study. The first school started from kindergarten through the eighth grade and has used inclusion for many years. They had twenty-one general education teachers and four special education teachers. The school is located in a semi-rural area. A large portion of the students are from low-income homes and have diverse backgrounds (Flores, 2012, p. 29). The second school was kindergarten through sixth grade, and it was its first year of inclusion. The school had just gone through an entire staff change before the research began.

The criteria used to select the general education teachers for this research was to have special education teachers pick the teachers for this case study. Three special education teachers chose teachers who did not mind working with severely disabled students and did not mind collaborating with the special education teachers on a daily basis. The three teachers chosen were teaching in inclusion classrooms. Teacher one was a fourth grade teacher who had been teaching for twelve years and had done inclusion for nine years in school one. Teacher two had been teaching for thirteen years and had some experience including special needs students at various levels. Teacher three had been teaching for thirteen years, was in her second year at school two, and this was her first year teaching inclusion. The researcher spent nine days in each classroom and shared his notes with each teacher (Flores, 2012).

The data collection of this study revealed eight major themes from this case study.

1) classroom community;

2) choices;

3) engaging activities;

4) high academic;

5) personal experience;

6) intentional teaching;

7) collaboration between the general education teacher and the special education teacher; and

8) the relationship between the paraeducator and the general education teacher (Flores, p. 34).

All three teachers in this study stated the belief that students with disabilities should be included in general education classrooms and their adherence to the use of many of the characteristics of inclusive education reflected that belief (2012, p.17). The teachers used different types of instructional strategies in their inclusive classroom, and the environment of the classroom was effective for meeting the needs of all students.

One teacher used many different strategies on a daily basis in her classroom. Another teacher used a small number of strategies, but they were used on a consistent basis. The final teacher used a lot of strategies, but they were not used daily. Two out of the three teachers established classroom learning environments that reflected many of the ideals of inclusive education. The third teacher was not always on target, and sometimes would wander.

Case Study – 3 Mackey (2012)

The results of the study (Mackey, 2012) showed that all three teachers felt that their college training had not prepared them to work with students with disabilities in a regular education class. The teachers had only taken one special education class. The science and the math teachers each had a para-professional or a special education teacher in the room with them, while the social studies teacher had no assistant with him. "According to the findings of

numerous studies, teachers felt they lacked the in-class supports necessary to implement the practice that characterize inclusion" (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Pagan, 2004, p. 104-116).

The study revealed that the paraprofessional working with the math teacher was always late and did not engage often with the students. This would disrupt the classroom. Then she would go sit at the desk. The math and social studies teachers felt hopeless about the help they had in the classroom. The paraprofessionals and special education teacher usually did not know the content area and the regular education teacher would have to teach them the concepts. The math teacher said, "Sometimes I feel like I'm teaching the paras too" (Mackey, 2012, p. 12). She continued, "figure that if they learn something here then they are better prepared to help students during resource hour" (p. 12). After that, the paraprofessionals and special education teacher would be able to assist the students in the resource room.

A teacher's attitude is one of the most important determinants of inclusion success (Cook, Cameron, & Tankersley, 2007). All the teachers were positive about having special needs students in their class. All three teachers stated the belief that the inclusion of students with disabilities had a positive impact on the overall classroom environment. The eighth grade math teacher felt that having students with disabilities in her classroom made students more accepting of each other and that ultimately, it made them better people. The sixth grade science teacher thought that students without disabilities developed more empathy and understanding through their interactions with students with disabilities, and that it taught them more about life. The seventh grade social studies teacher felt that students were very accepting of each other. He also thought the inclusion of students with disabilities impacted the learning environment of his

classroom in a positive way, because it changed the dynamics of the class and it improved his teaching (Mackey, 2012, p.13).

The teachers had positive attitudes and confidence in their ability to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. They all agreed that some students were unsuccessful in their class, but it was due to circumstances out of their control. For instance, students had severe cognitive disabilities or severe emotional problems and issues outside of the school, so the students did not meet success. The social studies teacher stated that even though the students were not successful, he had a great relationship with them (Mackey, 2012).

The learning environment of the three teachers was very different. The eighth grade math teacher did not vary from her lesson plans, because she had to make sure she stayed on schedule. She felt that the special education students slowed the learning process down. The sixth grade teacher was similar to the eighth grade teacher, but not as structured. She expected all her students to pass her assessments, because she taught them all the same. The seventh grade social studies teacher was flexible in many areas of his lesson planning. For instance:

He was an easy going man and it was evident that his primary concern was making his students feel welcomed, supported, and appreciated within the classroom. He treated all his students with a great deal of respect and his students in turn treated him, and each other, with respect (Mackey, 2012, p.15).

Another example of the Social Studies teacher's dedication to the students was his adapting assignments and tests for students to meet success in his class. He stated that if his class average was 60%, then he was doing something wrong. He stated some of the students said his class was easy. His response was to them was, "I'm not trying to make it hard. If you get what I'm teaching you, then we're doing good" (Mackey, 2012, p. 17).

The thing that made the seventh grade teacher stand out was he always put himself in the place of the students. This would help him develop how the lesson should be driven so the students would get a deeper understanding of the concept being taught. He believed this helped him cover more of the content the student should receive during course of the subject (Mackey, 2012).

These three teachers were in the same school, same district, yet their interpretation of an inclusion classroom varied from room to room. Some teachers believed if the students with disabilities are in the classroom, they have an inclusive classroom. There must be a change in instruction to reach all learners (Mackey, 2012).

Limitations to this study were the fact that there were only three teachers used from a middle school. Therefore, the results do not represent the general group and they do not represent the entire middle school population. Further, everyone in the study was not included in the research. For example, the paraprofessionals, students, parents, and other school personnel were not included in the study. (Mackey,2012).

The study was a qualitative case study conducted in an uncontrolled environment. Therefore, cause and effect could not be determined: behaviors could be described, but not explained (Mackey, p.20).

Summary

Each of the three case studies was trying to study transition of students from a resource setting to an inclusive setting. Each study had their own way of moving students from one placement to another. The studies wanted to show how students with disabilities learned more in an inclusive setting versus a full resources or behavior setting classroom.

4.4 Common Themes

Classroom Community/Learning Environment

Case Study – 2 (Flores, 2012)

All three teachers' classrooms showed a strong sense of classroom community. They worked hard in creating a classroom environment; they made everyone feel welcome and safe. The classrooms had peer support with students working together. Good example, classroom community would be an example that teacher two gave:

I'm really big on natural supports. So, for instance, at the beginning of the school year, I didn't sit down with the kids and have a whole conversation about difference…My thought about that is, kids will make their own observations and they will naturally come to certain conclusions about things and people and situations and so in here, a lot of the support systems are formed naturally (Flores, 2012, p.35).

The general education teachers worked with the special needs students even if there was a paraeducator in the classroom. All three teachers used positive language in the classroom. This help with the social and emotional development of the students in the classroom (Flores, 2012).

The three teachers used in this study had shown, through data collection, that their classes gave the students a sense of community. The teachers built a classroom environment where all the students felt welcome and felt like they belonged in the classroom, whether they were special education or regular education students. For example, one teacher said, "the classroom is set up so they feel like they are in a safe environment and that they have a sense of belonging and that they are able to take risks and try things" (Flores, 2012, p. 35). Another example was one teacher discussed the difference it made in creating an environment in which it was important that all students learned working together was important:

But then I do use very specific and intentional buddying. My one student who does not communicate orally…I gave him a buddy who is very helpful. She has a younger sister at home that she helps take care of. So she is very helpful. So she knows the differences between help and doing for and that's a big difference. And that's a very intentional support. At the same time, the same student has developed many natural supports which you will see when he needs help tying his shoe or when someone is picking on him at recess…so I think it's both of them, let it happen naturally but be strategic and intentional in some instances (Flores, 2012, p. 36).

Learning Environment

Case Study – 3 (Mackey, 2012)

The seventh grade teacher showed flexibility in many different areas. For instance, he would alter his lesson plans, assessments, assignments when students did not comprehension what was being taught. He would allow his students to share personal stories and this would give a sense of connection between student and teacher. The teacher's main focus was to make the students feel safe.

What was common between classroom community and learning environment how the students felt when they enter the classroom. For instance, did they feel welcomed when they entered the classroom, was there a sense of being a part of the class, did the students feel safe in the new environment. This is what helped the special education students meet success in the general education setting.

Collaboration/Planning

Case Study – 2 *(*Flores, 2012)

All three teachers had great collaboration with their special education teachers on a regular basis. They would meet with the special education teachers and make adjustments, modifications and adaptation for students with special needs during collaboration time (Flores, 2012). Times were different for each teacher and they believed that it was important for the

special education teacher and support to meet and plan the lessons. This would help the success

of the students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Both regular and special education

teachers believed if they had more time to plan together, they would have a greater rate of

success for special needs students.

All three teachers believed that their classroom instruction improved by them having

students with disabilities. The eighth grade teacher noted that it forced her to be more

methodical, but she felt that having students with disabilities in her classroom caused her to

cover less of the curriculum content (Mackey, 2012, p.15). The sixth grade teacher believed that

working with special needs students in her class, made her put more thought and preparation into

her lessons. She believed the driving force for her covering or not covering the entire curriculum

was all the students in the class. The seventh grade teacher was the only one who put himself in

his students' shoes and this helped him figured out how to present the lessons from the students.

He would make sure he gives the important concepts a student needed from the lesson. The

seventh grade teacher's planning was done based on the needs of the students.

Case Study – 2 (Flores, 2012)

Another teacher would allow students to do work in many different styles, like partner,

teams, self, or teacher or paraprofessional help. The teachers felt this gave the students

ownership into their educational learning experience. All three teachers worked directly with the

special education students. For instance, one of the teachers gave a writing assignment and she

allowed the student with special needs to pick a prompt and the student appeared to need help

and the class was going to recess. The teacher asked the student if she needed help and she

nodded her head (Flores, 2012, p.38). When the classes were observed by the researcher, she

noticed how well the general education teacher and special education teacher worked together in

this study. Another demonstration of teacher and para-educator effective collaboration was when the researcher was observing the class and the teacher was working one-on-one with a student the para was roaming around the room helping any student who needed help (p. 39). They collaborated with each other about the presentation of lessons to be taught to the students during the inclusion class. Also, when a special education teacher was not in the class and a paraprofessional was used, there was still communication between the teacher and paraprofessional to show co-teaching was still present. The results showed a strong sense of unity among the classes in the study.

The common qualities of general education teachers that enhanced their attitude towards inclusion of all students with disabilities were identified as a result of the in-person interviews, classroom observations, interviews of special education inclusion support teachers, and collection of artifacts. The most prominent aspect of the results was the general education teachers all had a sense of ownership of the students with significant disabilities in their classes. They all saw the students as their students who were supported by the paraeducator as well as the special education support teacher (Flores, 2012. p.94,).

Another result of this study was the importance of collaboration between general education teachers, special education support teachers, and paraeducators. Without the collaboration of these educators, the students with significant disabilities would not have had their needs met.

Another common theme that emerged from this research was planning and collaboration taken from case study two and case study three. In order for students to achieve academic success, the planning of lessons, activities, and assessments must be organized from beginning to

end. The teachers must work together in teaching lessons, and they must also be knowledgeable of the content material.

Adaptations

Case Study – 3 (Mackey, 2012)

The teachers did not make any adaptations for the students with special needs for their assessments, and assignments. The eighth grade teacher stated in her pre-observation interview that she gave students with special needs shorter assignments. When the researcher observed her class, she found no evidence of this occurring in the classroom. The sixth grade teacher, in her interview, stated she made modification for students with disabilities and this way she would meet the needs high achieving students. It was noted during the course of the study, she never modified the assignments or assessments for the students with disabilities. The seventh grade teacher did use adaptation for his assignments and assessments. He believed if his class average was a 60%, then he had not done a good enough job teaching them.

Case Study – 2 (Flores, 2012)

The data collected gave the researcher eight themes, 1) classroom community, 2) choices, 3) engaging activities, 4) high academic expectations, 5) personal experience, 6) intentional teaching, 7) collaboration between the general education teacher and the special education teacher, and 8) the relationship between the pareducator and the general education teacher. Now we will discuss the results of these eight themes.

Choices

It was evident that every teacher had given the students choices. The teachers felt this would give the students a since of ownership in their own education. The teachers had unique ways to give the students choices in the classroom. The students were allowed to spread out and

make their own space in the classroom. An example of this would be, students can be doing the same lesson, but not the same activity.

Engaging activities

One cornerstone principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is engaging, interactive activities. UDL was developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) as a way for teachers to plan lessons that are differentiated for many different types of learners (Flores, 2012, Spencer, 2011, p.51). Some of the engaging activities included physical activities, such as movement. They also used popsicle sticks and wrote the name of the students on them and the student picked would pick the music.

High academic expectations

Teacher three exhibited high expectation for her students and the researcher would see this every time she would observe the teacher with her students. This is a description of her teaching style:

> I would say, I'm a pretty strict teacher. I have high expectations of all my students no matter if they have special needs or don't have special needs. Um, and I hold them to that. And I don't, uh, because of the school where it's located, or whether they come from low-income families or anything like that. I don't water down my expectations I guess you could say and um, it translates into the children know my expectations. They know when I'm here what I expect of them. They know when I'm not here what I expect of them. And um, positive rewards and negative rewards for those behaviors.   And that they also see themselves grow and learn (Flores, 2012, p.54).

The other two teachers had high expectations for their students, as well. They would make sure they would remind the students, when they saw them off task.

Experience

The teachers all found the training they received from school was not adequate for they experience with teaching students with disabilities, nor was the classes they took in college. According to teacher three, they did not receive the right tools or strategies for teaching special needs students. Two of the teachers had personal experience with special needs students, because they had family members with some form of disability. This was teacher one and two and this helped them be able to work with students with disabilities. During the interview teacher one said;

> I know for me, I had a cousin who was paralyzed from waist down. At my school, we didn't have a full inclusion program. If you grow up knowing people, then it's more the norm. I really enjoy working with [the special ed teacher] who is always an advocate for the kids and can see the possibility in kids. There are different takes depending on who I've worked with. The special ed teacher is looking out for both having a sense of belonging and can this child read, write, more than just what we might perceive them. It's helped me to see that there is so much more to it (Flores, 2012, p.63).

Intentional teaching

Another theme that emerged was that all three teachers were "intentional" in their teaching methods and practices. "Intentional teaching" included being reflective about their teaching and making adjustments to lesson plans in order to meet the needs of the students in addition to being organized, systematic, and thoughtful when preparing structured lessons (Flores, 2012, p.68).

The teachers used everyday situations that occur in classrooms for teachable moments for the students. For example, following classroom rules; two students were talking while the teacher was talking and a young lady asked them to be quiet and they continued to talk. The teacher heard them and said, did you hear her ask you to stop talking, because she could not hear what I was talking about. The young men agreed and stopped talking, and this was a teachable

moment. The teachers did things for a specific reasons and purpose. They wanted the students to

understand there are differences in people and they have to learn to have compassion for people.

Collaboration

Teachers/Paraeducator relationship

      The teachers and the paraeducators worked well together. They had to have open

communication about what they expected from each other to meet the needs of the students in

the classroom. Some good examples of them working together were when the teacher would be

doing whole group the para would be putting together homework packets. Also, they would both

go around and check students' work, or they would both do small group instruction.

    In order for inclusion to be successful, teachers have to have great attitudes, training,

experiences', and good collaboration with the special education teacher and paraeducator in

order for it to be a good learning environment for all students.]

     In case study one (Young, 2005), the goal was for the behavior students to be able

to transition from the behavior setting to the inclusive setting with no behavior issues, and no

failing grades. The students were given all kinds of support systems to reach this goal. For

example, the teacher always would give positive feedback, "Mrs. G. always told us as long as

we've been together-it should be like a family" (p.76). The students were given peer support by

being able to work with their peers during class. So, if the students couldn't understand the

directions from the teacher, their peers would re-explain the directions. Some students were

given Behavioral Interventions to change negative behavior toward students and adults based on social interaction. Teachers did a lot of planning and working together with parents.

Case study two (Flores, 2012) found that inclusion was only effective when the teachers had good collaboration skills with each other. The research showed that the climate of the school had a lot to do with the success of the students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. The type of supports the students were given in the inclusive setting also made a difference. The teachers made their classroom environment feel like a community. Students were given the opportunity to work in groups sometimes or with partners for support. "The classroom is set up so they feel like they are in a safe environment and they have a sense of belonging and that they are able to take risks and try things (p.35)." Another example would be:

> I'm really big on natural supports. So, for instance, at the beginning of the school year, I didn't sit down with the kids and have a whole conversion about differences…My thought about that is, kids will make their own observations and naturally come to certain conclusions about things and people and situations and so in here, a lot of the support systems are formed naturally, but then I do use very specific and intentional buddying. My one student does not communicate orally… I gave him a buddy who was very helpful (p. 35).

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion contributed to the success of the students with disabilities reaching their goals.

Case study three (Mackey, 2012) showed the success of students with disabilities in a regular education classroom was based on several factors. The first would be the willingness of the student to work hard, be positive, have positive behavior, and the strategies and adaptations put in place for the students. The regular education teachers, special education teachers and paraprofessionals must have a good working relationship. They must also have a good working relationship with the students.

4.5 Common Goals

The goal for each case study was to take students with disabilities and place them in the least restricted environment so they could maximize their academic success. I studied the characteristics of classrooms, teachers, and students where inclusion was successful so that teachers and school leaders will learn from these studies and introduce successful practices into their classrooms.

4.6 Summary

All three studies employed case study methodology. Although their methods differed, all three researchers utilized interviews to gather information. They all focused on inclusion of students with special needs, but the strategies employed differed among the three case studies. Although the populations studied in all three case studies were quite small, they were able to develop themes for consideration. Students generally felt better about themselves and their ability to learn in inclusion classrooms. Teachers who successfully modified instruction and collaborated with other teachers and paraprofessionals in their classrooms, and who planned together were better able to meet the needs of students. Most teachers felt their classes were enriched by having students with special needs in their classrooms. Bandura's Social Learning Theory is supported by the observations on student behavior in inclusive classrooms and learning from their peers.

Chapter 4 provided a summary of the findings of each of the three case studies examined in the foregoing chapter. It compared and contrasted methods, settings and findings, and analyzed emerging trends that were found in the case studies. A chart was used to visually display the similarities, differences, and trends found in the three case studies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the academic growth of students transitioning from a non-inclusive setting to an inclusive setting as documented through the exploration of three case studies which examined the inclusion of special education students into the regular education classroom, the strategies employed, and the overall changes in the students' academic achievement and their transition experiences when moving to inclusive classrooms. The finding of each case study presented for analysis offered a specific element for transitioning students from a self-contained setting to an inclusive setting.

5.2 Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework was used to structure and support the qualitative case study. The following theories were selected to help frame, support, and strengthen the research.

Albert Bandura, as quoted in Psychology History (Moore, 1999), combines both behavioral and cognitive philosophies to form this theory of modeling, or observational learning. He sees the human personality as an interaction between the environment and a person's psychological processes. Bandura says that humans are able to control their behavior through a process known as self-regulation. This process involves three steps:

> 1.   Self-observation - Humans look at themselves and their behavior and keep track of their actions.

2.   Judgment - Humans compare these observations with standards. These standards can be rules set by society, or standards that the individual sets for him or herself.

3.   Self-response - If, after judging himself or herself, the person does well in comparison with the set standards, he or she will give him or herself a rewarding self-response. If the person does poorly he or she then administers a punishing self-response to him or herself. Self-regulation has been incorporated into self-control therapy which has been very successful in dealing with problems such as smoking (p.2).

5.3 Significance of Findings

There is a compelling need for this research. The number of students identified with special education needs continues to grow, while, at the same time, there is an increasing demand to ensure that all students have access to the general education curriculum. The achievement gap between regular education students and those identified with special education persists, despite decades of efforts to close that gap. Haycock stated in an article: "To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, we need to focus on what really matters: high standards, a challenging curriculum, and good teachers" (Haycock, 2001, p. 6).

This Comparative Case Study Analysis examined the methods implemented to determine which students were chosen for transition to regular education classes, the strategies employed to provide for their individual learning needs and the supports provided to ensure a smooth transition for students from a more restrictive setting to a more inclusive one. This Comprehensive Case Study Analysis explored the three case studies by Young, Mackey, and Flores.

The teachers used everyday situations that occur in classrooms for teachable moments for the students. For example, following classroom rules; two students were talking while the teacher was talking and a young lady asked them to be quiet and they continued to talk. The

teacher heard them and said, did you hear her ask you to stop talking, because she could not hear what I was talking about. The young men agreed and stopped talking, and this was a teachable moment. The teachers did things for a specific reasons and purpose. They wanted the students to understand there are differences in people and they have to learn to have compassion for people.

5.4 Implications for Teacher Preparation Programs

This research is important for educational leaders and their staff. This can be used as a tool for teaching inexperienced teachers how to effectively meet the needs of all students in an inclusive setting. New teachers need manuals to help them with different strategies for lesson and assessment preparation. Also, helping the teachers relate to the students need and making their classrooms welcoming environment. This helps the transition of students with specials needs to meet success in the inclusive setting. Teacher educator preparation programs should consider ensuring that all prospective teachers have a thorough grounding in understanding students with special needs, how to modify instruction to meet the needs of all learners, and how to collaborate with teachers and other adults in their classrooms.

5.5 Implications for Educational Leaders

Principals will be able to have professional development for their staff that would ensure that inclusion is being facilitated correctly across the school. Paraprofessionals would get the proper training they need to provide effective help in the classroom. All educators would be knowledgeable of the content areas taught and academic achievement would increase for all students. This is why it is important for continued research on transition from self-contained classes to inclusive classes. There are more best practice strategies for special education students with respect to successful transition that have not been shared across the education world.

Based on the research of self-contained students transitioning to an inclusive setting, and findings of three different case studies, transition with the correct supports in place was successful. The students' needs were best meet by effective communication between teachers and support staff, good community environment, planning, collaboration all teachers.

5.6 Collaboration

A benefit of collaboration among regular and special education teachers is using different instructional techniques to meet the needs of all students. The teaching team uses planning time to find different tools for assessing what students have learned and assessing the progress of all students. This also helps the teachers when placing students in groups for various assignments because they have to make sure groups are divided fairly. These are the benefits that should be included to make a successful inclusion environment and all students benefit from the opportunity (Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007).

5.7 Importance of Parental Support

Parental support was found to be an important indicator of student success in the transition process. This finding is supported by the research on parental involvement, as cited in Chapter II. Students who had a supportive, involved family tended to be more successful as they transitioned to inclusive classrooms, as families supported the efforts of the inclusion process.

5.8 Recommendations for Future Research

It was the intent of this case study analysis to show that transition of special education students into full inclusion classes is more favorable when the following parameters are in place: positive teacher attitude towards inclusion, adequate professional development, student

preparedness, and effective strategies in which to meet student needs. Students participating in this study self-reported the more prepared they felt for the transition the smoother the process to be.

What could use further research is what school districts need to do in order to get teachers and staff members to expend the time, effort, and energy necessary to develop those collaborative relationships. Furthermore, once teachers have bought into the development of those collaborative relationships, there is a need for research pertaining to the sustainability of those collaborative efforts and its resulting impact on inclusive classroom.

Additional recommendations for further research are to include a formative student self-assessment of classroom strategies, goal-setting, and advocacy skills in order to broaden the understanding of attitudes and precepts of participants. Implementation of the proposed inclusion transition process at the elementary and high school levels may decrease academic achievement gaps between regular and special education students. When beginning the transition process at the elementary level, schools will be able to close the achievement gap between regular and special education students. The social- emotional component will decrease, due to the fact the students will be in class together starting in elementary. Teaching strategies for teacher collaboration and co-teaching lessons would change. Causing a positive climate in the classroom and the interaction between teacher and student is not based on special education or regular education teacher, but teacher- student relationship.

5.9 Final Thoughts

As a final point I conclude, as a special education teacher who has an in-depth understanding of the inclusion and self-contained environments at multi-grade levels, I support

slow transition from self-contained to full inclusion as the best process, yielding the greatest outcome for success. Over the years, I have watched the success of transition from one to two classes at a time and the failures of speeding up the process, thereby impacting student behavior which impedes the transition process. Slow transition affords students the opportunities to gain necessary strategies to achieve academic and social-emotional goals. When teachers are able to collectively collaborate and co-teach lessons, the overall climate of the classroom has a widespread impact on the school climate.

For too many years, students with special education needs were relegated to substandard education. The advent of P.L. 94-142 provided many more opportunities for the appropriate education of students with special needs. However, many students continued to be segregated from their non-disabled peers, and were frequently taught a less rigorous curriculum, which contributed to a persistent achievement gap. Including students with special needs in general education classrooms, led by teachers and other professionals who are thoroughly trained in effective teaching strategies for all students, and who have a thorough grasp of differentiating instruction and creating a climate that promotes success for all students, will raise achievement for all students.

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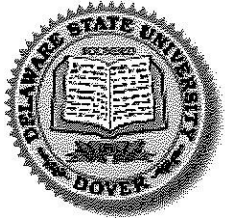
DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Protection Committee

March 16, 2017

Dawn Harmon

Department of Education

Delaware State University

1200 N. DuPont Hwy

Dover, DE 19901

Dear Dawn,

Delaware State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB)-Human Subjects Protection Committee has reviewed your project "Transitioning Middle School Special Education Students from A Resource Setting to an Inclusive Setting". After review of application, the Committee has granted an exemption from the IRB as it meets a Category of Exempt Research specified in 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at 302-857-6834 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian Friel

Chairperson, Human Subjects Committee (IRB)

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