A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY EXPLORING ADMINISTRATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF AND PERCEIVED ROLE IN THE INCLUSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING KNOWN AS CO-TEACHING

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A Collective Case Study Exploring Administrators’ Perceptions of and Perceived Role in the Inclusive Instructional Setting known as Co-teaching

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Abstract

This study explored administrators’ perceptions of and perceived role in the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching. In order to understand the participants’ perceptions of co-teaching, the interviews explored their perceptions of their overarching roles in reference to the following: the school change that has occurred through federal laws; how school culture was created in their schools; how they are an instructional leader; and how they manage their school. From these overarching roles of an administrator, the participants were then asked to explore how co-teaching fits into those roles. From those conversations many consistent and inconsistent themes were revealed about the roles of an administrator in today’s age of accountability through federal laws and regulations. The participants explained the increase in accountability, requirements for quality staff, the benefits and challenges of co-teaching, and the need for administrators as instructional leaders. They reflected on the decreases in provisions, the division between special and general education, and the limited local control of education. They elaborated on the role conflict and role strain they felt as an administrator. The inconsistent themes shed light on the lack of training about co-teaching for administrators and teachers and differences in expectations of co-teachers between the cases, so the evaluations of co-teachers are not consistent across Smith District. The administrators desired for a tiered evaluation tool for educators and more control over teacher salaries. The final inconsistency was the type of quality of teachers required primary verse secondary schools.
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“*I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.*”

Nehemiah 6:3
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Chapter One

Introduction

Administrators are the leaders for K-12 schools, which have been historically segregated by race, gender, ability, or socioeconomics (Shoemaker, 1981). The administrators’ role has been mainly focused around being the disciplinarian and building manager (Nevin, 1979); however, the roles for administrators have expanded far beyond these two roles since the federal government created laws that influence many aspects of education (Nevin, 1979). The All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 informed schools that they could no longer segregate students by ability and must include students who are handicapped (from here on out called students with disabilities) in their schools. Because of the legislation, administrators had to make room and adjustments in their school buildings and budget for a new group of staff and students. Many commonly refer to this placement of students with disabilities in the general education setting as inclusion (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989).

There are many instructional placement options that fall under the umbrella of inclusion, but for most students with disabilities, it has been a general education classroom with varying degrees of support. In 2010, more than half (60.5%) of students with disabilities were instructed in a general education classroom for more than 80% of their school day, a dramatic increase from the 31.7% of students with disabilities in 1989 who spent most of their day in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). For most of the students with disabilities, the most appropriate inclusion instructional setting has been placement in a general education classroom in which both a general and special education teacher cooperatively lead the classroom (Cook and Friend, 1995). This inclusive instructional model is known as co-teaching.
The influx of new students and staff because of inclusion, especially co-teaching, provided administrators’ with new roles and role-sets (Copland, 2001; Nevin, 1979; Praisner, 2003; Wilson, 2005). One new role for the administrator was the vocation of “compliance officer,” which ensured that their schools were changing enough to be in compliance with federal laws (Boscardin, 2005) and any other initiatives that supported students with disabilities.

Another role for the administrator was creating a school culture that accepted the inclusion of students with disabilities (Dipola, 2003; Hoppey, 2010; and Ryan, 2006). This type of culture was inclusive of all students that believed all students were valuable members of the community. An administrator, who was charged with being the instructional leader for all, was now confronted with learning how to manage a new population of students who required specialized instruction, specialized equipment and transportation, plus the recruiting and hiring of staff for students with disabilities (Dipola, 2003; Hoppey 2010). When looking at management of the school, the administrator was also faced with the task of allocating funds and resources to support students with disabilities. These were just a few of the changes in an administrator’s responsibilities that occurred in order for the inclusion of students with disabilities in their local school to take place.

These new facets of an administrator’s already overloaded roles have become even more significant with the advent of recent federal laws, including No Child Left Behind in 2001 (NCLB), Individuals with Disabilities Act in 2004 (IDEA), and the competitive grant program, Race to the Top in 2010 (RT), which was a part of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These federal mandates created even more new roles for administration by holding them accountable for placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, rating teacher performance, hiring highly-qualified teachers, ensuring
teachers were instructing with scientifically-based research methods, and supervising all students’ mastery of general education curriculum through their performance on high-stakes standardized tests (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; US Department of Education, 2007, 2012). The increased accountability for students with disabilities' mastering general education standards of core academic subjects began with NCLB and led to modifications of IDEA in 2004. IDEA stressed the importance of placing students in the least restrictive classroom environment possible, which for many students with disabilities had been the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching (US Department of Education, 2007). Co-teaching classrooms have both a special and general education teacher in the classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995). The accountability from federal laws, beginning with NCLB in 2001 and then the improvement of IDEA in 2004, appeared to be the impetus for the increase in schools utilizing the co-teaching method (Bessette, 2007; Cook & Friend, 2004; Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010; Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain & Shamberger, 2010; Harbort, Gunter, Hull, Brown, Venn, Wiley & Wiley, 2007; Magiera, Lawrence-Brown, Bloomquist, Foster, Figueroa, Glatz, Heppler, & Rodriguez, 2006; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005; Zigmond, Kloo, Volonino, 2009).

This study applied the theoretical framework of role theory (Biddle, 1989) in uncovering the administrators’ perception of the inclusion setting known as co-teaching, their role in co-teaching, and their perception of their roles as administrators with all the expectations and requirements of their position. The two areas of role theory that were utilized for this study were organizational and cognitive role theory. Organizational role theory examined how the participants fulfilled their roles within the expectations of the educational system. While
cognitive role theory explored the ideas behind the roles carried out by the participant within the system. Specifically, this study examined what administrators understood about their role as resources managers and instructional leaders with regard to facilitating school change, creating a school culture, being an instructional leader, and providing provisions by leading co-teaching while also complying with federal laws.

**Statement of the Problem**

A review of the literature suggested that there were seven requirements for effective co-teaching: quality teachers (Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010), administrative support (Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005), pre-co-teaching training (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010), continual professional development (Embry & Kroeger, 2012; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Villa, etc., 2005), designated planning time (Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Tannock, 2008), compatibility of co-teachers (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005), and use of the approaches to co-teaching instruction (Embry & Kroeger, 2012; Friend & Cook, 2010; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005). However, even though it has been documented how to co-teach effectively, the researcher’s personal experience revealed that there were barriers in place to co-teaching. Based on the researcher’s own experiences as a general education teacher (three years), a special education teacher (12 years), and a co-teacher (15 years), she noticed that teachers were not able to implement many of the requirements for effective co-teaching. For example, an administrator had told two teachers that they would be co-teaching with each other the next year without ever asking if the teachers were willing to co-teach or if they had prior knowledge of co-teaching. School administrators, not teachers, controlled most requirements for the phenomenon known as co-teaching. Therefore, for
successful co-teaching to occur administrative leadership and support are essential (Bessette, 2007; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010).

Based on the researcher’s personal experiences as a special education teacher, she noticed how an administrator approaches co-teaching can have a huge impact on how effective co-teaching could be. For example, she had been placed in general education teachers’ classrooms that had the opposite pedagogy as her; they preferred a very quiet room where every student sits silently in their seat while listening and taking notes during a lecture. On the other hand, she preferred students in groups collaborating and solving problems together. As a special education teacher in many co-taught classrooms, she was often seen by the general education teacher as their assistant, only present to deal with the students who had behavior issues, to make copies, and to grade papers; rarely was she allowed to teach. When the researcher approached an administrator for help in the co-teaching relationship, they informed her that she should be able to work it out between the other teacher and herself. That administrator left the next year and the incoming administrator felt very different about co-teaching. He had an understanding of co-teaching and things within the school culture changed and along with that co-teaching became a totally different instructional strategy where both teachers were seen as equals, at least by the administration and some of the general education teachers.

Purpose of the Study

This collective case qualitative study (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) explored school administrators’ perceptions of and role in the inclusion instructional setting known as co-teaching. This study attempted to grasp administrators’ perceptions of and their perceived roles as administrators and co-teaching. It also sought to ascertain the expectations and requirements of their role as an administrator since co-teaching gained traction and became a phenomenon in
public schools. Co-teaching has become the prominent inclusive instructional setting for students with disabilities.

**Significance of the Study**

In the 1989-1990 school year, 31.7% of students with disabilities were in the general education classroom for the majority of the school day, whereas in 2010-2011, it increased to 60.5% (US Department of Education, 2012). The majority of the students placed into the general education classrooms were in a co-teaching classroom because it was considered one of the least restrictive environments for students with disabilities (Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010). The instructional setting of co-teaching allowed students with disabilities exposure to general education curriculum from an instructor whose education was based on the subject (Friend, et al., 2010; Kamens, Susko, & Elliott, 2013). When students with disabilities were placed in the general education classrooms, they also socialized with a variety of students and were less likely to feel different than their peers (Hang & Rabren, 2009). Understanding the perception and role of administrators in the phenomenon co-teaching revealed how administrators can become more supportive and more comfortable with their role in co-teaching and thus making co-teaching a more effective instructional setting for students with and without disabilities.

For teachers, co-teaching often allowed a previously isolating job to become one of collaboration. There was someone there to split the workload and to bounce ideas off of in order to maximize instruction. Another benefit of co-teaching found in research was that the student-teacher ratio was reduced (Friend, et al., 2010). Administrators should know the benefits of co-teaching for teachers in order to help facilitate and create policies about this collaborative environment they evaluate. As research and the researcher’s personal experience have shown,
when teachers know their administrators’ perception of co-teaching and feel supported by administrators, then teachers were more likely effective co-teachers because they had a leader who was leading and supporting them in this inclusive instructional setting (Kamens, et. al, 2013). This study explored the culture an administrator created to determine if it promoted a collaborative and supportive environment for co-teachers.

Finally, administrators had an inclusive instructional setting that they must staff, support, finance, and evaluate: two different teachers who were working in the same classroom with a mixed group of students. Understanding the administrators’ perceptions of the co-teaching model and their role as school building leaders in reference to co-teaching created new insight for co-teaching research. Identifying administrative knowledge of co-teaching filled in some gaps of research and provided information to assist schools in implementing effective co-teaching programs in school systems and schools.

**Positionality**

This researcher conducted a qualitative analysis of a co-teaching program in the school system where she has been employed and, therefore, must explain possible biases toward the study. As Fennell and Arnot (2008) state, “the opportunities provided by the principles of reflexivity and positionality to undertake such a journey are numerous, but the researcher must be prepared for the personal and professional consequences of turning one’s gaze within” (p. 533). The researcher reflected on her biases toward the research on the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching and administrative roles in reference to co-teaching.

This researcher was first exposed to co-teaching during her special education master’s program. From the first time she experienced co-teaching, she was hooked, because she saw the benefits co-teaching for herself and her students. The day she was interviewed by the school
principal for a job in special education, the principal asked the researcher where she wanted to be in her career in five years. The researcher’s answer was that she would have helped the school system ensure that the majority of the special education classes were co-taught classrooms (it took three years for all the researcher’s classes to be co-taught). In her first class as a co-teacher, the researcher was asked by the general education teacher to just make sure those kids (the students with disabilities or SWD) did not interrupt the class for the rest of the students. This meant that the researcher acted as an assistant to the general education teacher for the year. The researcher was next paired with the same teacher and another teacher for a different subject the next year. Neither of these general education teachers had a planning period with the researcher or previous experience as a co-teacher, so for another year the researcher was a teacher assistant, but this time it was for two different teachers. The lack of planning with the general education teachers made it almost impossible for the researcher to make the modifications and accommodations needed for the students with disabilities. During this time the researcher mentioned the stress she was feeling with the special education team leader and then eventually spoke with her administrator, the principal about the lack of collaboration with her and the general education teachers. The administrator explained that the researcher needed to speak with the teachers and figure out how she could collaborate and take on more responsibility with the teachers while I was hoping the administrator would intervene for me as I had already had those conversations with the teachers. These experiences made the researcher not as fond of co-teaching as she was in graduate school.

Eventually the researcher did have some positive experiences with some general education teachers who were knowledgeable about co-teaching and really saw the researcher as a colleague and not an assistant. At that time, she also gained the support of administrators who
also understood co-teaching. During those glorious years, co-teaching was a joy and a benefit to the researcher, the general education teacher, and students with and without disabilities. One time during those glorious years, an instructional coach for the school system gathered some of the special education teachers whom she had observed, critiqued their co-teaching practices, and created a co-teaching leadership team. This group of co-teachers, including the researcher, would act as instructors and support for the co-teachers in the school system. There were many meetings after that, but to her frustration nothing ever came to fruition.

The researcher spent eleven years as a special education teacher and then she was transferred to the role of a general education science teacher with co-taught classes. Now the tables were turned as the researcher was in the role of the general education teacher who had one of the special education teachers paired with her to be co-teachers; again, neither teacher was asked by administration if they wanted to co-teach. Determined to make changes for the better, the researcher made sure to meet with the co-teacher during pre-planning in order to set up roles and responsibilities and to begin planning for the year. For the first time in a very long time, the researcher was able to utilize the instructional approaches of co-teaching she had learned about, created by Cook and Friend in 1995, on a consistent basis and to try to make sure the students saw both teachers as equal as possible. The co-teachers realized how much planning was required to make co-teaching more effective, so they met during their planning at least two times a week and would check-in with each other every morning before school. It was not perfect, but it was an improvement from the previous years.

The next year a new special education teacher was assigned to be the researcher’s co-teacher. This new special education teacher had never taught science and had only been a co-teacher for one year in elementary school. The researcher then had to mentor or teach the new
teacher the curriculum and how to co-teach in middle school since secondary education and primary education have differences. During this year of mentoring a new teacher, the researcher reflected on the past classes where she had been more like an assistant. She realized how many students seemed not to need any more differentiated instruction than what was provided in the general education class or than what a co-teaching class should provide and, therefore, she concluded that the SWD’s should have been placed in a different inclusive instructional setting, such as supportive instruction, consultative, or collaborative. When the researcher suggested this to other special education teachers, the special education teachers joked that they would be out of a job if they placed the students with disabilities in one of those inclusive instructional settings.

The following year, the special education teacher the researcher had mentored and co-taught with the previous year moved positions to a new school so she could have instruct all small group classes. The summer before the next school year, the researcher was informed in an email from her administrator that co-teaching would not be on the researcher’s roster. However, three weeks into the school year, the researcher was suddenly given a co-taught class. The administrator had placed six students with disabilities into her first period class and paired her with a special education teacher. This special education teacher had never taught science. The special education teacher showed and eventually explained to the researcher that they preferred to sit with one group of students during the class instead of using any of the other effective co-teaching instructional models. So while all the special education teachers in the district are highly qualified because they passed a state test, it does not mean that they have the content knowledge of the subject they are co-teaching and therefore may not have the ability to teach the content. As a result of the new influx of six students with disabilities and a special education co-teacher who did not know the content, I was left with all the responsibilities of the classroom. I had to make
accommodations to instruction and materials for all the students with disabilities and provide specialized instruction. There were a handful of moments where the special education teacher would add a fact about a topic, but because of their lack of content knowledge they took on the role of paraprofessional.

There were plenty of times throughout these years of co-teaching when one of the teachers was taken out of the room in order to be in a meeting with administration or to cover a teacher who was absent. When administrators consistently pulled one of the teachers from a co-taught classroom, it showed the researcher that the administrator might not understand the purpose behind the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching and that they might not support the idea that the students needed two teachers in the classroom at the same time. The role the administrator played in co-teaching was mentioned throughout this positionality statement since the administrators, not the teachers, controlled many aspects of co-teaching, such as who the researcher co-taught with, if they had planning time together, if they were trained to co-teach, if resources were provided for co-teachers, if they had the same pedagogical ideas of instruction, if they were highly qualified, and if both teachers knew the content.

As someone who has seen how magnificent and beneficial co-teaching can be, the researcher has sometimes been a frustrated co-teacher. Therefore, the researcher would love to understand how administrators perceive co-teaching and their role in co-teaching. Do administrators see that co-teaching cannot support or benefit students or staff the way it is being implemented at this time? Are there so many other issues for administration that they are just doing the best they can? Are they really in control of the school building or is there more top-down leadership (from the district, state or federal) occurring than known by teachers? This was a relevant research study since for as long as research has been conducted regarding co-teaching,
administrators have been called a crucial part of effective co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995; Lehr, 1999; Rice, 2006; Tobin, 2005; Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1998). The researcher used these biases in order to enhance the research conducted and to add to future knowledge on the topic of co-teaching (Maxwell, 2005). The goal for analyzing the researcher’s biases was to make sure they do not seep into the study. In order to contain the researcher’s biases, the researcher implemented checks and balances throughout the research.

**Primary Research Questions**

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are administrators' perceptions of the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching?
2. How do administrators perceive their role within co-teaching?

**Theoretical Framework**

Role theory has been emerging from research involving complex organizations such as the educational system since the 1930’s. Biddle (1989) and Wilburn (1989) suggested role theory evolved from the research conducted by the behavioral scientists Simmel, Mead, Moreno and Linton (Biddle, 1989; Wilburn, 1989). These researchers began speculating on the idea of using the metaphor of theatre for explaining human behavior. Biddle suggested there was confusion about different aspects of role theory because of each of the founding fathers of role theory proposed slightly different applications of metaphor of theatre and, therefore, different terms and applications of role theory evolved from each seminal researcher. Within the confusion of the differences in role theory from seminal theorists, one thing that has come forth
and been agreed upon was the notion that actors, administrators in this study, are “thoughtful, socially aware human actors” (Biddle, 1986, p. 69).

Getzels and Guba (1954) contend role theory analyzes how, “an actor’s behavior may be best understood as a function of role and personality” (p. 164). Three main terms are used when describing role theory: actor, role, and personality (Getzels & Guba). According to Getzels and Guba, an “actor [is] the individual considered in abstraction from his personality and roles” (p. 164). For example, in this study, the actors were the administrators who were credited evaluators of co-teachers. Getzels and Guba suggested that “role [is] the set of complementary expectations regarding the actor in his interaction with other individuals” (p. 164). This study explored administrators in reference to their perception of and perceived role in co-teaching.

Finally, Getzels and Guba described “personality [as] the system of need-dispositions reacting to the alternative presented by the existence of the different roles” (p. 164). This study delved into learning how administrators perceived co-teaching in reference to four main overarching roles as an administrator to see if the actions of the actor were consistent in reference to their perception of co-teaching across all the roles an administrator plays. Since this study looked at the way administrators, the actors, perceived co-teaching, one must also acknowledge the others involved in the setting. The others in the setting were known as the role-set (Merton, 1957a). The role-set of an administrator was, but is not limited to, “pupils, colleagues, the Board of Education, professional associations, and, on occasion, local patriotic organizations,” (Merton, 1957a, p.111) along with the superintendent, associate superintendent, and parents. The role set described by Kahn (1964) created the different role personalities one must play based on the positions one was placed in during the day and was based on who they
were currently interacting with at a particular moment. Actor, role, personality, and role set were terms consistently used across all sectors of role theory.

Biddle (1986) explained five sectors of role theory that were developed from the seminal role theorist: 1) functional (Linton, 1936), 2) symbolic interactionist (Mead, 1934) which has dramaturgical (Simmel, 1920) within it, 3) structural (also Linton, 1934), 4) organizational (Kahn, 1964), and 5) cognitive (Moreno, 1934). Organizational role theory examined the hierarchical aspects of social systems (Kahn, 1964). Cognitive role theory examined the relationships between role expectations and the behavior (Biddle, 1986). As such, organizational role theory and cognitive role theory informed the theoretical framework of this collective case study.

**Organizational Role Theory**

Organizational role theory focused on “social systems that are preplanned, task-oriented and hierarchical” (Biddle, 1986, p. 73). Within social systems, actors within social positions have normative expectations related to their role. Normative expectations, how people should behave relative to a social position, may differ to descriptive expectations (i.e., how people make choices or how it is). As an administrator they expect that their teachers treat them with respect based on the fact that teachers are the subordinates, but the administrator may also expect that certain teachers will not treat them with respect based on those teachers’ previous actions. The normative expectation was the assumption that because of the position the administrator holds, they would expect teachers to show respect. While the actions of teachers allow the administrator to know that some of the teachers do or do not respect them was the descriptive expectation. The normative expectations that an administrator must follow stem from their previous experiences and multiple actors or people known as the role set. The administrator was placed in a role that
was asked to placate all the others in the role set. The administrator was expected to appease those in the role set, such as the associate superintendent, while at the same time keeping everyone who worked in his or her building content. These expectations play a part in how a school functions on a daily basis since there are multiple actors the administrator must placate.

Wilburn’s (1989) review of role theory research revealed the myriad way leaders in education, such as university deans, superintendents, and principals, have been involved in changing roles, role-sets and role conflict, which make them truly the “man in the middle” (p.2). As the “man in the middle,” they were asked to appease both those who are their superiors and their employees. Getzels and Guba suggested that this difference in expectation may lead to role conflict and role strain. Role conflict emerged for individuals because of three primary sources: role personality; role conflicts are mutually exclusive, contradictory or inconsistent; and personality conflicts (Getzels and Guba, 1957, p. 432). If an actor’s personality was in conflict in any of the ways above and with the expectations of the role he or she was asked to play or the need-dispositions, then the actor felt conflicted with playing out the role. This conflict may have caused role strain for the actor. If role conflict was found, then organizational role theorists apply role conflict resolution to the system in order to resolve the conflict and bring order back to the system. Role strain occurred when efficiency of expectations or needs were not met. Getzels and Guba (1957) explained efficiency as “the relationship between needs and behavior” (p. 434). When behavior meets or exceeds the needs of an individual, then no strain occurs, but if there was a gap between the needs and behavior, then role strain or a sort of angst was felt by the individual holding the expectations of the desired behavior. This study kept in mind the possibility that an administrator may have experienced role conflict and, therefore, inquired if this was the case as the administrator oversaw the inclusion setting known as co-teaching.
Organizational role theory in practice. The leader was the one who should explain the roles and responsibilities for the follower or actor. If roles were explicitly laid out, then the follower can carry out those roles in an appropriate manner. This study explored how the administrator perceived himself or herself as “the man in the middle.” It inspected how the administrators followed the guidelines provided to them in reference to co-teaching and how they disseminated this information to their role set. While examining this role of the administrator, co-teaching norms created by the administrator were discovered. The study also inquired if the administrators had experienced any role strain or role conflict in reference to their role as an administrator or in reference to co-teaching.

Cognitive Role Theory

Cognitive role theory recognized the relationship between role expectations and behavior, while discovering the actor’s perceptions of expectations and effects of those perceptions on the actor’s behavior (Biddle, 1986). Cognitive role theory analyzed how the actor’s mind perceived the roles they were given and the behaviors of the actor based on those perceptions. Cognitive theory indicated how complex each person’s life was because of the position in life he or she was born into, the jobs taken, the education received, and who he or she interacted with throughout life (Biddle, 1986). Cognitive theory illustrated how the role one played in a job, such as an administrator, had many more influences than just the roles and responsibilities of the job. The administrator had both the people who oversee them and people they oversee and, therefore, an administrator may have found themselves between diverse expectations. Lynch explained that the “diverse expectations associated with different roles were seen as resulting in role strain for the individual who must come to terms with their diversity” (2007, p. 379). As expectations materialized from different roles at one time, then the result was role conflict or strain.
Cognitive role theory in practice. Cognitive role theory provides a lens for analyzing how administrators, the actors, perceived or thought about their role in working with and leading the inclusion setting known as co-teaching. All principals in this study were in the same school system or district and have the same superintendent and associate superintendent as their bosses, but they did not have the same personality. They also had the same general roles and responsibilities. Using cognitive theory, this study observed how each principal carries out his or her role in reference to co-teaching. It revealed the similarities and differences in each administrator’s role in co-teaching. This study uncovered how, if at all, the administrator’s previous training, experiences, and personal beliefs influenced his or her role in co-teaching.

Linton provided the foundation for this study in his 1936 book on role theory: “Every individual has a series of roles deriving from the various patterns in which he participates and at the same time a general role which represents the sum total of these roles and determines what he does for his society and what he can expect from it” (p. 113-114). The administrator was given a set of roles, but was also given choice on how to carry out many of those roles. The perceptions of the administrators influenced their perception of and role in co-teaching. Therefore, each school had very different ways of implementing co-teaching. This study was guided by this thought.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are essential to clearly understanding this study:

Administrator: a person who is a credited evaluator of educators and holds the position of a principal or assistant principal

Co-teaching: “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space” (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 2).

Credited evaluator: a school leader who has been trained in the current teacher evaluation tool and whose evaluations is a part of the teachers’ formal evaluation.
Full inclusion: all students educated alongside their peers in general education settings with an elimination of separate classes, schools, and facilities (Cook & Friend, 2004).

General Education students: students in a school who do not receive special education services.

General Education teacher: teachers who are highly qualified (certified) for the subject they teach.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: IDEA; enacted in 1990 with amendments in 1997, and 2004, this law provides the educational rights and types of services a school must provide for students with disabilities from ages 3-22.

Individualized Education Plan: IEP: a federal document created by a team of specific and relevant teachers, staff and parents that document which services will be needed for the least restrictive educational environment for academic success for a student with disabilities.

Inclusion: an educational philosophy or approach in which students with and without disabilities are educated in the same classroom. Depending on the needs of the student with disabilities, the student would have support services or direct special education services in the general education classroom.

Inclusive Instructional Setting: the placement options for students with disabilities that are within the general education classroom and provide direct special education services (i.e. consultative, collaborative, co-teaching, or supportive services)

Least restrictive environment: "To the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as 'supplementary aids and services,' along with their non-disabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's individualized education program (IEP) requires some other arrangement” (Wright & Darr Wright, 1994).

Perception: the way someone understands or interprets something

Race to the Top: “In 2009, the Race to the Top program (RT) offered hefty financial grants to states and, later, to school districts if they were willing to adopt aggressive school-reform strategies- including more demanding teacher-evaluation procedures” (Popham, 2013, p. 34).

Role: how an administrator acts in given situations based on the interactions and expectations of themselves and others in the setting (Merton, 1957b).

Role conflict: “emerges when diverse expectations impinge simultaneously, resulting in dissonance for the individual who attempts to actively combine dissimilar roles” (Lynch, 2007).
Role set: “pupils, colleagues, the Board of Education, professional associations, and, on occasion, local patriotic organizations” (Merton, 1957a, p. 111); anyone in recurring contact with the administrator.

Role strain: tension that occurs within a role.

School building leader: someone who is a certified evaluator of co-teachers: principal, assistant principal, or school improvement specialist.

Special education teacher: a teacher who is highly qualified in the subject they teach as well as special education.

Student with Disabilities: students who receive special educational services through an IEP.

**Organization of the Thesis**

There are five chapters in this thesis. The first chapter provided an overview of the study by explaining its background, problem, and significance, along with the theoretical framework and research design. It also provided the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter Two provided a detailed overview of the topics relevant to this study through the lens of role theory. It reviewed studies pertaining to the immense research on co-teaching, which were mostly from the eyes of teachers. Then, the research used four overarching categories of leadership to explain in great depth the six “P’s” of leading effective co-teaching. The review of literature perused through studies on co-teaching and revealed the changes administrators have faced in their role and role set due to federal laws. Chapter Three broke down the methodological review for the study. Chapter Four provided the full scope of the findings in this study, while Chapter Five presented this study's conclusions based on the findings. Chapter Five also presented connections from the study's findings to previous research, whether it supports or challenges other studies' findings. Finally, the study concluded with suggestions for future research and how administrators and school district administrators could apply this study in schools and school systems.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Administrators have a plethora of roles they much juggle while attempting to appease everyone who they work for, who works with them, and for them; not forgetting the parents, the community, and students. In the past decade, federal laws have increased the amount of school accountability from the federal government and whom the administrator oversees (United States Department of Education [USDE], 2001; 20007; 2012; 2014). One of the results of the federal accountability is increased inclusion in schools, especially the instructional setting known as co-teaching (Cramer, et al., 2010; Davis, et al., 2012; Embury, et al., 2012; Friend, et al., 2010; McDuffie, et al., 2008; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). This literature review will provide a foundation for the study by first providing information about the progression of co-teaching and effective co-teaching. Then to conceptualize the never-ending roles of administrators, the researcher identified four overarching administrator roles (school change, school culture, instructional leader, and management) from the findings of a study conducted by Crum and Sherman in 2008. Finally this literature review will expand upon the administrators’ ever evolving role and role set that are specifically relevant to co-teaching.

Co-teaching

Progression of Co-teaching

Public education became more progressive and diverse in 1975, when the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was ratified. This law required public schools to provide students with disabilities (SWD) all the resources needed for them to attend their home public school, thereby accessing free appropriate public education (FAPE). The responsibility for incorporating children with disabilities in public schools, known as inclusion,
now shifted to administrators. One way schools included students with disabilities was to have two teachers in a classroom working with all the students. This was initially called team teaching. Team teaching was a new approach that was used in education to include students with disabilities but was not prominently utilized by many schools (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989) as shown in a study of public school administrators’ implementation of Public Law 94-142, Nevin (1979) which found that administrators needed more training in order to “maintain current knowledge of research, trends, and programs for the effective education of handicapped learners” (p. 364). This was consistent with the findings of other researchers.

Then, in 1990, IDEA was enacted, which required schools to not only provide FAPE, but also allowed students with a disability to learn in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for their educational success. The LRE setting requires SWDs to consider placement in a general education setting first, and then add support or change placement as needed (McCarthy, 1994).

School administrators are responsible for the education of all children in an environment with as few restrictions as possible and, therefore, they must adjust classes to integrate SWDs. As SWDs move into general education classes, some teachers’ settings for instruction will also change. There are different forms of instructional service delivery options for SWDs. The traditional form is a small group class in which the special education teacher instructs a small group of SWDs.

There are many forms of inclusion found in the research that can provide a LRE for a student with disabilities, as follows: cooperative teaching (now commonly called as co-teaching), collaborative consultation, supportive resource programs, instructional assistants, and peer collaboration (Idol, 2006; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Administrators create classrooms with different levels of inclusion to meet the needs of SWDs by providing them with their LRE (Cook
& Friend, 2004). Even though there was a push for inclusion of students with disabilities in the 1990’s through educational large scale reform and federal legislation, a study conducted by McLeskey, Hoppey, Williamson and Rentz (2004) found that “few states moved toward educating students with learning disabilities in less restrictive settings” (p.113) during the 1990’s.

In 2001, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) called for more rigorous academic accountability for students with disabilities (SWDs) and highly qualified (HQ) teachers in all subjects (USDE, 2001). In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) followed suit and called for the least restrictive environment (LRE) for SWDs, in which teachers instruct using scientifically based research methods (USDE, 2007). Administrators now had another parameter to use when hiring and assigning personnel. The years following NCLB schools saw an increase in the number of special education teachers co-teaching and students with disabilities learning in general education classrooms. This increase of students and special education teachers in the general education classrooms fulfilled NCLB requirement of students with disabilities being held accountable to taking high stakes standardized tests, while also IDEA’s requirements of least restrictive environment (Bessette, 2007; Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010; Friend, Cook, Harley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Harbort, et. al., 2007; Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

In 2009 President Obama made his footprint on education by allowing schools to bypass NCLB requirements, which did not provide funding to schools, and receive federal funding through a competitive grant program called Race to The Top (RT). RT created a way for states to get out of the stringent requirements of NCLB through a reformation of the Early and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (USDE, 2014). While Race to the Top (RT) took the pressure off
students from NCLB’s requirement of having 100% proficiency in reading, math and science, it did not take the focus away from increasing student achievement and improving teacher effectiveness (US Department of Education, 2014). This reform allowed states with waivers to apply for competitive grants in order to achieve the educational goals presented in the application for the waivers; these waivers focused on reforming teacher compensation and evaluations (Meyer et al., 2014; Popham, 2013). Because of this measure of student performance and to obtain RT funding, many states altered their school personnel evaluation systems and linked the mastery levels of students to teachers' and administrators' end-of-the-year evaluations (Meyer, Trohler, Labaree, & Hutt, 2014). These laws de-emphasized state control of education and highlighted federal government control (Meyer et al., 2014). As Meyer et al. (2014) suggested, the focus for schools is now to keep all students from “falling behind” the rest of the world. Administrators are in charge of leading their schools in meeting all of the federal requirements in order to raise achievement of students with and without disabilities.

In 2010 more than half (60.5%) of SWDs were instructed in a general education classroom for more than 80% of their school day; this represented a dramatic increase from 1989, when 31.7% of SWDs spent most of their day in general education classrooms (USDE, 2012). Most of these students’ LRE is a co-taught classroom (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Idol, 2006; Kamens et al., 2013; Nierengarten, 2013). This means that more and more general education teachers are responsible for differentiating their instruction for a more diverse population of students, while special education teachers are asked to individualize or specialize the instruction for students with disabilities. This change was occurring in a new instructional setting as both special and general education teachers were asked to set aside their separate classrooms for a co-taught classroom (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010).
They now must collaborate with another teacher in order to provide instruction for a diverse group of students.

**Effective Co-teaching**

Just as the history of co-teaching has evolved with the passage of laws and new requirements, so has the understanding of what it means to effectively co-teach. After more than 20 years of co-teaching in schools, research has found many critical components of effective co-teaching. Co-teaching is a partnership between a special education teacher and general education teacher who are working in the same classroom with a diverse group of students (Cook & Friend, 1995). Sileo's study on co-teaching compared the relationship between the general education and special education teacher to a “marriage” in which teachers “share responsibility for all students” (2011, p. 32).

In order for the partnership to work, research has shown there are critical components of effective co-teaching that should be present. Researchers studying co-teaching for the past 20 years have created many lists of factors needed for effective co-teaching, such as support from administration (Lasky & Karge, 2006), strong leadership (Lasky & Karge, 2006), training of teachers (Gerber and Popp, 2000; Bessette, 2007; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007), designated roles and responsibilities for co-teachers (Austin, 2001; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Scruggs, et. al., 2007; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Nierengarten, 2013), collaborative planning time (Bessette, 2007; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Gerber & Popp, 2000; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Nierengarten, 2013; Sileo, 2011), voluntary placement into co-teaching (Gerber and Popp, 2000; Simmons & Magiera, 2007), content and co-teaching knowledgeable teachers (Harbort, et al. 2007), choice of who teachers co-teach with/compatibility (Mastropieri, et. al., 2005; Sileo, 2011), different evaluations (Simmons &
Magiera, 2007), and the use of the six models of co-teaching instruction in the classroom (Bessette, 2007; Cook & Friend, 1995; Harbort, et. al., 2007; Magiera, et. al. 2006; Mastropieri, et. al., 2005; ). Even though there are multiple factors in various lists, analysis of the lists reveals overlap amongst the factors needed for effective co-teaching. Overall, there are seven components of effective co-teaching found within these lists: administrative support, quality teachers, compatibility of co-teachers, pre co-teaching training, continued professional development, designated planning time, and use of six approaches to co-teaching instruction. Research has shown that these components create a path for effective co-teaching.

**Administrative Support.** In 1995 Cook and Friend, who are seminal researchers on co-teaching, created a guideline for effective co-teaching, which provided three suggestions for administrators to show support for co-teaching. The first suggestion for administrators was in reference to planning and scheduling the co-teachers, and the second recommended incentives and resources for the co-teachers. Finally, they suggested the need to protect co-teachers’ time so they can be effective co-teachers. The protection of co-teachers time refers to the fact that many times special education teachers are taken out of the co-taught classroom in order to fill other roles in the school.

Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston (2005) suggested a need for strong leaders who promoted co-teaching and had high expectations for students with disabilities along with evenly distributing them. Nierengarten & Hughes (2010) found similar findings and the participants stated that administrative support was the number one concern for co-teachers. The support from administrators the co-teachers felt they needed was planning time, creative scheduling, financial support, moral support, more proportionate classrooms, and feedback on their collaborations. Administrative support is in general an expressed need in the metasynthesis of qualitative
research conducted by Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007. Whereas, Bessette (2007) clarified in the conclusion of the study that administrative support meant schools leaders help provide professional development prior to co-teaching so the teachers would be prepared, offer continued support with resources as co-teaching was implemented, and then visually showed their support for the co-teachers.

**Compatibility and Quality of Co-Teachers.** It is up to an administrator to pair co-teachers and pairing teachers appropriately is another way they show support of co-teaching and making sure that the teachers are quality teachers (Bessette, 2007). As the educational system has evolved, so has the definition of a quality teacher. When referring to a special education teacher as a quality teacher, typically it meant the teacher was knowledgeable of how to specialize instruction for each student with disabilities and behavior management (Gerber & Popp, 2000). After NCLB in 2001, a quality teacher general education teacher was highly qualified in a subject of instruction by acquiring at least a bachelor’s degree, holding a certification or license in a subject or passing state tests to prove knowledge of the subject he or she was instructing. In 2004, IDEA required that special education teachers were highly qualified in special education and the general education subject they were instructing. For elementary teachers the teachers must pass a state test for basic knowledge in school curriculum whereas middle or secondary teachers must pass a test for the subject they teach or have a college degree in the subject they teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). In 2004, IDEA (Title 1, part A, section 602, 10) required that special education teachers are highly qualified in special education by obtaining a bachelor’s degree in special education, obtained state certification as a special education teacher or passed state special education teacher licensing exam. If a special education teacher does not
feel comfortable instructing the whole general education class with the academic content then it will be difficult for the partnership to be an effective co-teaching partnership.

This difficulty in pairing teachers is often seen in middle school and high school when academic content is more in-depth. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001), Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, and McDuffie (2005), Nierengarten and Hughes (2010) and Simmons and Magiera (2007) supported this notion in their studies of co-teaching in middle and high schools that not only did the co-teachers need to be highly qualified, but the specific academic content knowledge of the special educator was imperative for effective co-teaching to occur. In co-teaching classrooms where the special education teacher did not know the content in these studies, they acted more as an aide to the general education teacher than a classroom instructor.

Along with the teachers being quality teachers, the teachers also should be compatible (Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010). Cook and Friend (1995) explained that in order for the partnership of co-teachers to be successful, teachers should have the same pedagogy. Gerber and Popp (2000) concluded after their study that teachers in a co-teaching relationship should have similar “philosophy and teacher style” (p. 232) and should be volunteers. Mastropieri, et al., (2005) expressed the notion that one aspect needed for co-teachers to be compatible, was respect and trust that the other person in the partnership could carry out the duties and responsibilities of their role in the co-teaching partnership. The study also revealed similar findings to the previous studies mentioned in stating that the teachers should have the same pedagogy in order for co-teaching to be an effective instructional strategy.

**Multiple Forms of Training.** In order to be effective, co-teacher research has revealed that co-teachers need multiple forms of training. They need a good foundation of knowledge about co-teaching prior to being in a co-teaching partnership. They would obtain this knowledge
in pre-co-teaching training at their university, through their school system or at their school prior to becoming a co-teacher (Austin, 2001; Cook & Friend, 1995; Gebber & Popp, 2000; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). Then once a teacher is in a co-teaching partnership, both teachers need continual professional development (Austin, 2001; Cook & Friend, 1995; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Gerber & Popp, 2000; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Villa, et al., 2005) in order to effectively co-teach. One of the topics research suggests for the continual professional development should be how the co-teachers use the six approaches to co-teaching instruction (Cook & Friend, 1995; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Friend & Cook, 2010; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005).

**Designated Planning Time.** In order for each teacher in a co-teaching partnership to show they are compatible and have content knowledge in a co-taught classroom, it is vital that they have designated planning time (Bessette, 2007; Cook & Friend, 1995; Gerber & Popp, 2000; Lehr, 1999; Mastropieri, et al., 2005; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Tannock, 2008; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). This designated planning time is one way for teachers to build trust and respect for each other by figuring out the roles and responsibilities for each other during the class (Bessette, 2008; Mastropieri, et al., 2005). They can determine which of the six co-teaching instructional approaches is best for each day’s lesson (Cook & Friend, 1995). Another aspect of the planning is figuring out which type of specialized instruction is needed for each student in the classroom during each part of the lesson. Nierengarten and Hughes (2005) found that when co-teachers had common planning time, they were more effective co-teachers because they could use it for “relationship building, lesson planning and problem-solving” (p.14).

Tannock (2008) suggested that common planning time allows teachers the time to work on the intangible aspects (i.e. common vision, mutual respect, time to listen to colleagues) of a
co-teaching partnership, which are needed for effective co-teaching. If teachers do not have respect and trust in each other, then co-teaching will not be an effective instructional setting. An example of non-effective co-teaching was seen in Weiss and Llyod (2002) study. Their study found that not all of the co-teachers had common planning time and, therefore, little effective co-teaching was occurring. The special education teachers in these classrooms were either removing the students with disabilities to teach them in another manner or would just take the students with disabilities to another area of the room to give them separate instruction.

**Six Approaches to Co-teaching Instruction.** In any co-teaching training, the approaches of co-teaching instruction created by the seminal co-teaching researchers Cook and Friend (1995) will be explained as a must in the co-teaching classroom. The approaches are 1) one teaching, one assisting, 2) station teaching, 3) parallel teaching, 4) alternative teaching, 5) team teaching, 6) one teach, one observe (added in 2004). These six approaches allow the co-teachers flexibility in how they present the content to students while utilizing both teachers in a designated role. They also require different amount of planning and knowledge from the teachers. The co-teaching training materials created by Cook and Friend (2004) explain each of the approaches to instruction in co-teaching classes.

One teach, one observe requires little planning because as one teacher (usually the general education teacher) instructs the whole class, the other teacher (usually the special education teacher) observes the class for something specific that was agreed upon by the teachers. The observing teacher could be gathering data by monitoring a student’s behavior or looking for cues of understanding from a student. One teaching, one assisting or drifting also requires little planning and means that one teacher provides instruction to the whole class while one teacher assists students and the teacher on an on-needed basis. Team teaching occurs when
co-teachers take turns delivering instruction. Even though Cook and Friend (2004) present this as needing a high level of planning, the researcher’s personal experience would suggest that it requires a medium amount of planning.

The other three approaches the researcher suggests require a high amount of planning for co-teachers. Parallel teaching is used when co-teachers are teaching the same content, but changes need to be made to the instruction for the level of students to comprehend or be challenged by the information. Station teaching allows for students to move between different tasks in the classroom and the teachers will place themselves at different tasks. Alternative teaching would be when the class is split into two groups and one teacher instructs about one topic while the other instructs another topic. When the instruction ends, the groups then switch teachers to hear the lesson from the other teacher. Even though these six approaches to instruction have been repeated as one of the elements of effective co-teaching, research has found that most co-teaching teams utilize one-teach, one instruct, or team teaching, as the most observed approach to instruction in co-taught classrooms (Bessette, 2008; Cramer, et. al., 2010; Embury & Kroger, 2012; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Harbort, et. al., 2007; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005).

These aspects of effective co-teaching all have one thing in common: teachers have little control over them. Whether or not an administrator shows support of co-teaching is in the hands of an administrator. Administrators are the ones who hire teachers and place teachers in their assignments, so the administrator handles the quality of teachers and the compatibility of teachers needed for effective co-teaching. The school-system administrators and the school-building administrators determine the training teachers receive while an employee of the district. The designated time of a teacher's planning time is controlled by the schedule he or she is given
by the administrators. The knowledge of the six approaches of instruction for co-teaching is something that would be taught in a training session; while the ability of co-teachers to apply them would occur during a planning time. These factors are also controlled by an administrator. Teachers do not have the power to make the school changes, create the school culture, be the instructional leader for the school or manage the building and personnel needed in order for co-teaching to be effective.

The following sections of this literature will reveal the studies that indicate how teachers are at the mercy of administration for most aspects of effective co-teaching. These four all-encompassing administrative roles create a path for the research on administrators’ roles. The literature review then digs deeper into those roles and specifically looks at the what research reveals are the roles of the administrator in co-teaching.

**Administrative Roles**

**School Change**

When schools switched from phonics reading programs to whole-language programs, schools were going through a large-scale school change. School change occurs when large-scale initiatives occur because of education trend, federal law, and new schools system or school building leader policies. Many federal laws have led to changes for administration in order to keep American children from falling behind the rest of the world (Meyer et al., 2014), such as inclusion and standards-based reform (Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002). Inclusion is a term that is not defined in any federal laws, but is “an educational philosophy based on the belief that all students are entitled to fully participate in their school community” (Friend & Cook, 1993). Another change that occurred because of federal laws was the massive increase in inclusion, especially in the instructional setting known as co-teaching. According to Cook and Friend
(1995) co-teaching is one example of an inclusive instructional setting for students with disabilities. In 1989, only 31.7% of SWD were in the general education classrooms for more than 80% of their day, but in 2010, over half of SWD were instructed in the general education classroom (USDE, 2012). Implementing inclusion is massive school change that needs a leader who understands the moral purpose and the reason behind the change. The leader must be able to make relationships in this new change successful, knowledgeable about the change, and committed to the change while being open to others (Fullan, 2001).

School Culture

Studies have shown that the school leader is the one who sets the tone for the school (Fullan, 2001; Furney, Aiken, Hasazi, & Clarke-Keefe, 2005; Lasky & Karge, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). In order for administrators to create a culture of inclusion in their school, they must buy into it themselves and promote it to their staff, students, and community (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Lehr, 1999). In 2001, the NCLB legislation’s requirements began unfolding before school administrators, and their roles pertaining to special education were placed on the front line. Therefore, school administrators need to show how much they value and support inclusion in order to create a school culture that does the same (Furney et al., 2005; Lasky & Karge, 2006).

Co-teaching represents a change in the norms and values on which education is founded. In “re-culturing the norms, values, incentives, skills and relationships in the organization [a leader must] foster a different way of working together” (Fullan, 1998, p. 9); Fullan (1998) articulates that a leader acts in managing the culture of the work environment for staff in an emotional sense as well as a rational one. Research has revealed three areas of culture that support an environment where co-teaching is effective, as follows: attitudes of administration
(Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran, & Walther-Thomas, 2004; Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Praisner, 2003), administrative support of co-teachers (Bessette, 2008; Gerber & Papp, 2000; Lehr, 1999; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Scruggs et al., 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997), and promoting a collaborative climate (Bauwens et al., 1989; DiPaola et al., 2004; Rice, 2006).

**Instructional Leader**

The roles of administrators have been evolving over time, and one that has become more prominent is being an instructional leader (Fullan, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2000; Lynch, 2012; Praisner, 2003). One of the newest aspects of being an instructional leader for administrators is the focus on special education teachers and SWDs, as these two aspects of education traditionally fell under the auspices of a leader in the special education department (Lasky & Karge, 2006). However, in order to bring about successful inclusion, the administrator must now take charge of leading everyone in the building (DiPaola et al., 2004). Biddle (1986) explained that others’ expectations have a great effect on professional roles. Since the passing of NCLB in 2002, which required SWDs to pass the same high-stakes standardized tests as their peers, and IDEA in 2004, which required the least restrictive learning environment SWDs, it has become apparent that school administrators have not only an ethical but also a legal obligation to lead all areas of their school (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Lynch, 2012; Zigmond, Kloo, & Volonino, 2009). Staff members are looking to their administrators to guide them through the new inclusive environment.

National Association of Secondary School Principals queried school building leaders in a reoccurring national survey through the National Study of Leadership in Middle Level Schools about their roles and responsibilities. Petzko et al. (2002) used the most recent results from the
2000 study to compare and contrast the findings with similar decade studies conducted in 1965, 1980, and 1992. One of the findings was that school-building leaders would prefer more time to act as the instructional leader, even as most of their time was allocated to more administrative and managerial tasks. Eighty-nine percent of the leaders in the 2000 survey confirmed that one aspect of professional development essential for administrators was instructional leadership and 84% said they needed training on special education issues. When Idol (2006) asked 120 educators to state whether their principal was an instructional leader or administrative leader, there was a mixed response from all respondents. Most teachers viewed their school building leader or principal as an administrative leader. However, as an instructional leader, an administrator sets the bar for staff members and can facilitate a collaborative climate in which teachers use research-based practices and data-based decisions for instruction (Fullan, 2001; DiPaola et al., 2004).

**Management**

If an administrator takes an active role in being the instructional leader of their school, then they will be more aware of the needs of the staff. This closeness with the staff could help the administrator be a more efficient manager of the school building, resources and professional evaluations. Since schools became more than just a one-room schoolhouse, the principal has been in charge of these components of the school (Valentine, Maher, Quinne, & Irvine, 1999). As control over the schools swings more under the control of the federal government, administrators lose more control over the management of their school building. Administrators have many stipulations on where and what educational funding can be used for, so some of the management of the school is taken away from them (USDE, 2015). For example, one way schools could acquire more federal money recently was to apply for a competitive grants under
Race to the Top (RT). Many schools revamped their evaluation systems to include student performance in teacher evaluations in order to gain funding (Meyer, et al., 2014). For schools who won this grant, the states went under a total overhaul of the evaluation system for all school employees. When this occurred, it was a large school change within the management system.

As this large school change continues to occur, the educators of students with disabilities, low socioeconomics and English language learners feel even more pressure. Parts of their evaluations, as well as administrators’ evaluations, are now dependent on how their students perform on high-stakes tests (Lynch, 2012). With this emphasis on student performance on high-stakes standardized tests, administrators are refocusing their management of the school’s resources and hiring practices (Lynch, 2012). Administrators are being evaluated in new ways and they are evaluating teachers with new evaluation tools. All of this change in how administrators manage the school’s resources is a form of school change and can influence the culture of the school along with how the administrator acts as the instructional leader.

Within the four-overarching roles of the administrator, there are specific roles and responsibilities for administrators related to co-teaching. In the following section the first overarching role for administrators of school change will be addressed. The new roles and role sets administrators find themselves in because of education reform will be expanded upon. Then the school change within co-teaching section will review what research has suggested are roles for administrators in co-teaching and how they should create policies to support co-teaching. Next the literature review will describe how administrators can facilitate an inclusive school culture. Then, this literature review will examine the role of the administrator as the instructional leader for co-teachers. Finally, how the role of management plays a part in co-teaching will be explained.
Administrator’s Roles within Co-teaching

School Change within Co-teaching

Federal laws, such as No Child Left Behind, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, and Race to the Top, have required massive school change which added to the ever-increasing list of roles and role sets for administrators since the majority of students are held to the same academic standard. While school change has added more to the administrator’s plate, nothing has been taken away (Copland, 2001; Kafka, 2009). As schools began to implement the requirements placed upon them by NCLB, one massive school change occurred: inclusion through the instructional setting known as co-teaching (Austin, 2001; Graziano & Navarrete, 2012; Hines, 2008). Co-teaching places students with disabilities into the general education classroom where they are exposed to the same academic rigor as their general education peers from the general education teacher but are also provided with the specialized instruction from the special education teacher (Bessette, 2007). Co-teaching required special and general education teachers to forgo their independent classrooms and work collaboratively to instruct a mixed group of students in a joined classroom. This increase in the instructional setting of co-teaching now creates new roles and role sets for administrators who previously had very little involvement in special education.

New Roles for Administrators. A review of research on school leadership analyzed how principals can be effective leaders for teachers in their new settings while influencing student learning. It stated that their level of success “depends on how well these leaders interact with the larger social and organizational context in which they find themselves” (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, Wahlstrom, & Service Educational Research, 2004, p. 23). Administrators are facing the organizational challenge of leading change from the old approach to public education where
each teacher was assigned to his or her own classroom with general education students to
inclusive education with two teachers instructing one classroom comprising a mixed group of
students (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998).

Educational leadership studies have found that the school administrator has the primary
responsibility for leading change in a school (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Huling, Hall, &
Hord, 1982). It is up to administrators to lead the change from one-teacher classrooms to co-
teacher classrooms. Lasky, Karge, Robb, and McCabe (1995) interviewed special education
teachers and inquired about what they needed to receive from leaders in special education
initiatives, such as co-teaching; the following suggestions were given:

1) obtain training in supervision so they have better observation and communication
   skills;
2) work with teachers to develop a common language;
3) give teachers time to engage in collegial interactions during the school day; and,
4) familiarize themselves [administrators] with characteristics of students with special
   needs and appropriate instructional and management techniques (p. 10)

All of these requested components for successful co-teaching are controlled by administration.
Administrators should take charge of the transformation from non-inclusive to inclusive
education, since they represent the leaders of school change and the “essence of leadership is the
articulation of transforming vision to the followers” (Morford, 1987, p. 43). According to
Morford (1987), if administrators lead, then teachers will follow.

In a seminal study on co-teaching, Lehr’s (1999) participants expressed the need for
administrative support for co-teaching. They noted that administrative support is “essential to
accomplishing their [teachers’] collaborative teaching goals and made frequent references to the
connection between administrative support and the degree of success or struggle they experienced” (pp. 107–108).

Many studies have claimed that administrators can assume the role effectively leading and showing administrative support for co-teaching. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) concluded in their study on the effective instruction of co-teaching that potential barriers for the success of cooperative teaching (co-teaching) were as follows:

(a) lack of time for teachers,
(b) lack of planning time,
(c) inability for two teachers to develop cooperative working relationship, and
(d) increased work load for teachers.

Similar findings emerged a year later in a qualitative study conducted by Gerber and Popp (2000). This study generated a long list of general recommendations when co-teaching is a service delivery model in the school. The list was separated into three clusters of recommendations: 1) delivery of services, 2) administrative issues, and 3) training recommendations. Delivery of services cluster suggested that collaboration needed to be defined, there is a realization in the limits to any model, and that schools must recall that there are multiple service delivery options for students with disabilities, not just co-teaching. The administrative issues cluster focused on scheduling, planning for co-teachers, voluntary participation of teachers, program evaluation, and communication to parents, faculty and public. The training cluster stressed the importance of continually training everyone (teachers, administration, counselors, and any other relevant staff) involved in co-teaching from the moment they volunteer for it until they stop co-teaching. Gerber and Popp (2000) also suggested
that parents should be trained about co-teaching and that universities should play a bigger role in preparing future teachers.

Studies have revealed barriers to co-teaching and issues surrounding this instructional strategy shed light on new roles for administrators. These previous studies revealed recurring themes related to the roles administration could play. These studies on co-teaching have suggested that administrators are key players in the successful implementation of co-teaching as an instructional strategy for students with disabilities. The role administrators play in co-teaching could be the factor that makes effective co-teaching possible in their schools since research has exposed the many aspects of co-teaching administrators control. The next step is for administrators to understand which teachers will be involved in the new roles. Then, the administrator should determine which roles of co-teaching teachers are willing to take on. Once the role for the administrator is understood, then the administrator could create new policies and procedures in order to show support for the predominant instructional setting of co-teaching for teachers and SWDs.

*The Six P’s of Leading Effective Co-teaching.* The research has suggested many roles the administrator could take on in order to lead the school change of co-teaching. In order to consolidate all the suggested roles for administrators, which were in predominate in the research (Cook & Friend, 1995; Cramer, et. al., 2010; Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort, et. al., 2007; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Mastropieri, et. al., 2005; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Scruggs, et. al., 2007; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Tobin, 2005), this list of categories was named and organized by the researcher to synthesize and simplify the multiple descriptions of
roles for administrators to help facilitate effective co-teaching. The roles are referred to as the “Six Ps of Leading Effective Co-teaching” (Six Ps) and are as follows:

1) Policies and procedures

2) Promoting a collaborative climate

3) Preparation of administration and staff

4) Personnel pedagogy and quality

5) Provision of resources and planning time

6) Professional evaluation as co-teachers

Some of these categories have been mentioned in research since the beginning of its use as a service delivery option for students with disabilities and will be explained in detailed in connection with the four overarching roles of administrators throughout this literature review.

As previously mentioned, the four roles for school administrators encompass the responsibilities of an administrator in looking at a school in its entirety. Co-teaching is part of that responsibility. The Six Ps delineate what administrators’ responsibilities are in co-teaching, but it is important to place the Six Ps into the context of the four overarching administrators’ school responsibilities: school change, school culture, instructional leadership and management. The first Six P, school policies, would fall under the aspect of school change. An administrator’s promotion of co-teaching would be placed in the role of the administrator creating the school culture. As an instructional leader, the administrator would be preparing staff, hiring personnel and placing teachers to create effective co-teaching teams. Finally, the administrator would demonstrate good management by the provisions provided to co-teachers and the way he or she conducts professional evaluations.
This literature review examines the vast research on the school change created by co-teaching through the eyes of teachers and extrapolates recommendations for administrators in leading co-teaching. From the plethora of inquiries pertaining to co-teaching, the Six P’s of Leading Effective Co-teaching has been assimilated and will be elaborated on in the appropriate sections of the analysis of research on the roles of administrators. This section of the review unfolded the administrator’s role and role set in school change and will now evaluate how the administrator can create policies to facilitate this change. Then each of the six roles of the administrator in co-teaching will be explained in great detail within school culture, instructional leadership and management.

**New Role Sets for Administrators.** The role of administrators has been altered along with that of teachers, so an examination of this role set is in order. Referencing Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snoek (1964), Pajak, Cramer, and Konke (1984) defined a role set as “the set of other positions in an organization with which a given focal person interacts in the course of accomplishing his or her organizational role” (p. 3). Administrators have had their role set expanded to include a group of people they have never been responsible for leading before the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. Their role set now compels them to oversee “an array of roles” with special education students, special education teachers, parents, and the community of support providers, such as speech, occupational, and physical therapists (Merton, 1957b, p. 110). Then, with IDEA in the 1990s, co-teaching became a setting in which general and special education teachers began working in the same room with a hodgepodge of students, which added a new role set to administrators’ responsibilities: collaboration. According to Bredemeier (1979), one issue that educators face is that in order to play the appropriate role in their job, they must know their role set and “give the appropriate cues and
responses” (p. 14) to the people in the role set; since the administrator is the leader of change in creating the vision for schools, it is up to him or her to send out the correct cues for creating an environment conducive to co-teaching (Mendels, 2012).

**Administrators and Policy Change.** Not only have the policies described above changed the role for the administrator, but they have also changed the role of teachers. As noted above, federal laws (IDEA and RT) require administrators to make significant change in instructional settings, and administrators now need to focus on creating policies, which will make implementation as successful and seamless as possible. One way in which administrators could lead co-teaching is through the creation of roles and responsibilities for co-teachers (Bessette, 2008; Hines, 2008; Nierengarten, 2013; Scruggs et al., 2007; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).

Research has shown that if administrative policies do not state the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers, then many times the special education teacher has the role of an assistant teacher in the co-taught class, while the general education teacher has the role as lead teacher. When the general education teacher is “doing all the work” while the special education teacher “sits and observes,” resentment builds between the teachers and collaboration is less likely to occur. General education teachers will begin to wonder why there is even another teacher in the room if they are not going to do anything. When administrators create roles and responsibilities, which allow parity for the co-teacher, then it can be a successful instructional strategy (Austin, 2001; Friend, et. al., 2010; Sileo, 2011).

Weiss and Lloyd (2002) observed special education teachers who taught in co-taught classrooms and found that “teachers with master’s degrees were doing the work of paraprofessionals” (p. 68), as their role in the co-taught classroom mainly involved observing students, managing behavior, and presenting very little content. On the other hand, Harbort et
al.’s (2007) study focused on the role of the teachers in two co-taught classrooms and found that there was no variation in their teaching roles. The researchers suggested that one of the key components for effective co-teaching practices is “parity between the roles of educators” (Harbort et al., 2007, p. 22). One of the discussions brought up by co-teachers in Friend et al.’s (2010) study was the need for the roles and responsibilities of the teachers in the co-taught classroom to be determined, as it is no longer just one teacher in the room.

When Davis, Dieker, Pearl, and Kirkpatrick (2012) analyzed more than 750 co-teachers’ lesson plans over a three-year period, they found that the predominant role of the special education teacher was an assistant to the general education teacher. If administrators were to clarify the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers, then administrators would be able to lead teachers in their role change from isolated classroom teaching to co-teaching. Research on roles has suggested, “when roles are defined then interactions between individuals run more smoothly” (Piliavin, Grube, & Callero, 2002, p. 471); such a definition of roles will clarify administrators’ expectations of teachers (Billingsley, 2004).

**School Culture within Co-teaching**

**Promoting a Collaborative Climate.** Administrators can create a school culture in which co-teaching thrives by establishing a collaborative climate in the school. Fullan (1998) suggested that there are “very clear research findings that student achievement increases substantially in schools with collaborative work cultures” (p. 8). In 2003, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty’s meta-analysis of school leadership demonstrated a direct correlation between school leadership and student achievement. The five areas of leadership that were most important were the leader’s ability to (a) be aware of situations in the school, (b) keep the school’s culture current in educational theories and practices, (c) promote change, (d) involve teachers, and e)
foster “shared believes and a sense of community and cooperation” (p. 4). Administrators are challenged with the role of leading teachers into collaborative co-teaching relationships, which are dependent upon both teachers’ mutual cooperation and belief in what they are doing. Administrators should be cognizant of the beliefs of their teachers so they can involve teachers in co-teaching whose pedagogy pulls them towards a different and new way of instruction.

Austin (2001) interviewed 12 co-teaching teacher teams about their perception of co-teaching. One of the conclusions had to do with the importance of administration in developing and promoting a collaborative climate. According to Mendels’ (2012) article, sponsored by the Wallace Foundation, a collaborative climate is the second most important factor of the five pivotal practices essential for effective principals. A collaborative climate among staff members will also assist teachers in using best practices with the diverse student body in today’s educational system (Friend et al., 2010). Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) reviewed the literature on successful school leadership and found that one of the top attributes of leaders is building collaborative cultures while restructuring the organization. As co-teaching becomes the most used placement for SWDs and, therefore, many teachers, administrators should facilitate and promote the change to an inclusive culture that emphasizes the need for collaboration between teachers.

Administrators could create this inclusive culture and collaborative climate by promoting the benefits research has shown teachers believe come from co-teaching. One of the benefits found in research involving co-teaching is that teachers no longer work in isolation, but they instead have a collaborative partner (Friend et al., 2010; Rice, 2006; Ryan, 2010; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Walther-Thomas (1997) investigated co-teaching and found benefits and problems related to the service delivery model. The teachers who participated in the study made
three main points in reference to a collaborative climate, as follows: “working with someone was the best professional growth opportunity of their careers” (p. 401), teachers enjoyed not being alone in the classroom, and the increased amount of professional collaboration was the most obvious benefit for co-teachers in this study. In one study about the effects of administrative turnover, Mascall and Leithwood (2010) found that when an administrator distributes leadership and establishes a collaborative climate in schools, teachers can maintain the collaborative climate no matter how frequently turnover of administration occurs. On the other hand, if administration does not encourage a collaborative climate and take a leadership role in this vein, teachers will continue to work in isolation and the collaborative climate will not continue when administrators leave.

If administrators do not lead the change to a collaborative climate, then there is little hope for successful co-teaching. Research has revealed ways in which administration can learn about special education practices and apply this knowledge to create an inclusive school culture, which in turn promotes a collaborative climate for effective co-teaching. Rice (2006) conducted a qualitative study involving two administrators and nine teachers involved in the beginning stage of co-teaching in a high school and found that the lack of a collaborative climate was one factor that kept the school from creating an inclusive culture. The study was carried out during voluntary planning sessions at the school. At the end of the study, fewer and fewer teachers attended the planning sessions, and the researcher concluded “without an established culture that invited dialogue” (Rice, 2006, p. 99); the change to an inclusive culture was not likely to occur.

When an inclusive culture does not exist in a school and teachers are not taught how to collaborate, it is less likely that co-teaching will be a successful instructional setting. In 2007, Harbort et al. found in their study of co-teachers that co-teachers acted more independently from
each other than as a collaborative pair when teaching a heterogeneous group of students. This was linked to their lack of training in how to work collaboratively. Furthermore, Davis, Dieker, Pearl, and Kirkpatrick (2012) studied lesson plans for co-taught classrooms over a three-year period and found a lack of necessary, specialized instruction for SWDs. This lack of specialized instruction was attributed to a lack of planning among co-teachers. The study showed that 29% of the time lesson plans exhibited a lack of collaborative planning. In the collaborative climate required by the diverse student population of today’s schools, the administrator of the 21st century must fill the new role of instructional leader for teachers and SWDs (Praisner, 2003).

**Attitudes of Administrators.** When staff members see, hear, and feel administrative support for co-teaching, they are more likely to accept the idea, since staff members perceive administration as the leader of change (Block, 2003). Moreover, according to Leithwood et al. (2004), “The chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work” (p. 4). When administrators have a positive perspective of inclusion then it creates an inclusive culture that shows the staff, students, parents and community how their school will be one that provides purpose and resources to support co-teaching. Additionally, when administration believes in inclusion, then it can be successful in a school, yet if they do not, then it will fail. In another study, Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) conducted a quantitative study to examine principals’ knowledge and attitudes related to inclusion. The researchers asked the participants to evaluate leadership statements that either supported or did not support inclusion, and only 30% of the participants selected the statement that promoted inclusion. The study revealed that the administrators did not consistently define inclusion in the same manner. In addition, there was no correlation between the amount of time in a leadership position and a positive or negative
attitude towards inclusion. Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) concluded that for administrators to lead inclusion successfully, they needed to understand all aspects of inclusion, which would allow them to fully and efficiently create the change in their schools toward effective inclusion culture.

Later, Praisner (2003) conducted a quantitative study exploring the attitudes of school principals’ toward including SWDs; while one in five attitudes were positive, most participants were uncertain of the movement towards inclusion as found in Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998). Harpell and Andrews’ (2010) paper suggested ways for administration to promote inclusive education that is commonly defined as the inclusion of all students in the general education curriculum. One way that administration can create a culture for inclusive education is by promoting a humanitarian philosophy, since this compels people to accept diversity. Harpell and Andrews (2010) also found that an administrator’s positive attitude is key for effective inclusive classrooms, as previously stated by Lehr (1999) and Rice (2006) and also found in Nichols and Sheffield’s (2014) study on inclusive practices for administrators.

**Administrative Support.** Along with the attitude of administrators, administrative support has been repeatedly mentioned as a key for the success of inclusive programs with effective co-teaching teams (Bryant & Land, 1998; Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend & Cook, 1993; Lehr, 1999; Nierengarten, 2013; Rice, 2006; Tobin, 2005; Villa et al., 2005). Studies on co-teaching have repeatedly indicated that teachers must believe they have administrative support in order for successful co-teaching to occur. In 1993, Friend and Cook, two pioneering researchers in the field, interviewed teachers who were co-teaching and asked them what it takes for inclusion—and specifically co-teaching—to be successful. The first thing mentioned was the amount of
planning time by administration and co-teachers that inclusion requires while the second was that “support from the principal is crucial” (Friend & Cook, 1993, p. 55).

In Friend and Cook’s (1993) study, along with many others, the term administrative support was not specifically defined; however, some studies have focused on what qualifies as administrative support. The support needed from administration covers all aspects of co-teaching. In 1995, Cook and Friend wrote an article titled “Co-teaching: Guidelines for Creating Effective Practices,” where they mentioned specific ways in which administrators can support co-teachers, such as the following: modeling traits that promote collaboration, providing incentives and resources, offering professional development and shared planning time, listing distinct responsibilities, and assisting co-teachers in co-teaching.

The guidelines for administrative support found in Cook and Friend (1995) have been supported throughout co-teaching research. In 1999, Lehr’s case study revealed the importance of the administrative role in collaborative partnerships (co-teaching). He argued that administrators should develop policies for collaboration where co-teachers must collaborate voluntarily and have high visibility, as well as being provided with training and shared planning time. When other teachers hear and see the success and benefit co-teaching brings to the teachers and students, then they are more likely to volunteer themselves to co-teach. Lehr’s participants also expressed the importance of administrators’ positive attitudes and taking an active role in co-teaching. Tobin’s (2005) qualitative study, in which she was both the researcher and participant, made a general statement about the need for administrative support along with the need for planning time and professional development for co-teachers. Moreover, Nierengarten (2013) expressed the difficulty of creating effective co-teaching teams and stressed the importance of leadership and support for co-teaching in order to ensure its success.
Instructional Leader within Co-teaching

Preparation of Administrators and Teachers. Preparation of administrators and teachers is crucial for the success of co-teaching. In order for administrators and co-teachers to be knowledgeable about co-teaching, there must be trainings about co-teaching. The foundation for knowledge of co-teaching should begin in the pre-service training in college or alternative teaching certificate programs. As administrators and teachers are hired, school districts should be training on co-teaching. Research on co-teaching has discovered administrators should also provide training and collaborative planning time for co-teachers in order to create a collaborative culture in their school (Cook & Friend, 1995; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010). Administrators and teachers should be continually receiving training on co-teaching in order to be effective leaders and co-teachers (Gerber & Papp, 2000; Cook & Friend, 1995; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Tannock 2008).

Preparing Administrators. In order for administrators to provide instructional leadership in special education, they must be prepared to be an instructional leader by becoming knowledgeable about aspects of special education, such as support of staff, professional development, involvement of parents, involvement in IEP’s, instructional strategies, resources, behavior management, collaboration, evaluate effectiveness of special programs, and evaluation of teachers (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006). Yet many studies have shown that administrators lack the knowledge required to adequately lead all aspects of special education (Friend et al., 2010; Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007; Lynch, 2012; Praisner, 2003). Administrators have not been prepared for leading inclusion either in their pre-service program or professional development.
Through a survey of 400 elementary principals, Praisner (2003) discovered that they had been provided with only a minimum amount of background knowledge in special education in their pre-service and, therefore, might face difficulty in effectively leading inclusion. “The majority of principals had taken four to six of the 14 identified topics” needed for administration to be prepared for leading inclusion (Praisner, 2003, p. 142). In 2006, Cruzeiro and Morgan surveyed 255 rural school principals to gain insight into their roles and responsibilities in special education. The study revealed that only 21% of their time was spent on special education. The researchers stated that “the extent to which administrators without formal knowledge and/or course work in special education can be supportive of and actually lead schools and their faculty in today’s inclusive environment was of concern to the researchers” (p. 576).

Lasky and Karge (2006) conducted a quantitative study of 205 principals to assess their amount of formal training in special education and found similar results to those of Cruzeiro and Morgan (2006). The study disclosed that administrators only spent an estimated 25% of their day with issues related to special education. Of the respondents, 78% of them noted that they do not believe that SWDs in the inclusive setting are receiving the support they deserve. According to the researchers, “78% of the principals reported their university training did not prepare them to support the teachers they work with who have children with disabilities” (Lasky & Karge, 2006, p. 29). Meanwhile, Garrison-Wade et al. (2007) audited the program at the Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies program at the University of Colorado by surveying and asking questions in a focus group of 124 current and former students. They found that students “called for more training in a variety of special topics including: (a) special education law; (b) strategies for organizing a school to best utilize the special and general education teachers; (c) concrete strategies and resources about the variety of diverse needs; and (d) managing discipline issues
with students displaying special education needs” (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007, p. 127). Lynch’s (2012) article on the current role of principals revealed not only the importance of administrators acting as instructional leaders, but also the lack of preparation they receive in administrative programs to do so given the diverse population of schools.

**Preparing Teachers.** Just as research has shown that administrators are often unprepared to lead inclusion, teachers are not always prepared for the role of co-teaching (Friend et al., 2010; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). The case study conducted by Lehr in 1998 showed that teachers had little initial training in reference to co-teaching and only occasional professional development on how to collaborate as co-teachers. Over two years, Gerber and Popp (2000) studied schools that had implemented collaborative teaching or co-teaching; they found that in order for co-teaching to be effective, co-teachers needed training on how to collaborate with another teacher in the classroom. After surveying co-teachers, one of the recommendations was for the school system to create in-service training programs to better support co-teachers (Austin, 2001). According to Villa et al. (2005), not only should training prior to co-teaching occur, but on-going professional development is also needed for effective co-teaching in order to assist the teachers in successful collaboration.

When school systems or building administrators train and support co-teachers before, the training is helpful not only for more effective co-teachers, but also is an instrument for bringing together teachers who have previously worked alone. Co-teaching research has revealed how isolating a profession teaching is; when teachers are asked to co-teach, they must learn new roles and responsibilities in order to succeed (Bauwens et al., 1989; Cook & Friend, 1995; Hines, 2008; Lehr, 1999; Scruggs et al., 2007; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). Similarly, Weiss and Lloyd’s (2003) recommendation in their case study was for teachers to have “professional preparation”
(p. 38) before co-teaching because the teachers in their study had none. One effect of the lack of training, which can be easily solved by implementing the co-teaching model of instructions, is that educators do not draw on the expertise of the second adult in the room, (Cook & Friend, 1995). As a result, the special education teacher acts more as an assistant than a teacher in a model where one is teaching and one is assisting (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Bessette’s (2008) study of co-teachers recommended that administrators collect information on the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers and then disseminate this information to teachers before they begin their co-teaching relationship. Meanwhile, Nichols et al. (2010) came to the same conclusion about preparing co-teachers as found by Lehr in 1998. The participants from the 24 school districts surveyed that were implementing co-teaching disclosed that there was a lack of preparation of co-teachers for co-teaching; therefore, co-teaching was still not as effective as possible as an instructional setting.

The importance of pre-service training is evident in research for success in co-teaching, along with the need for involvement of administrators and co-teachers in on-going professional development. The next task suggested by research is for administrators to assign highly-qualified (HQ) teachers and to clarify the specific roles and responsibilities of co-teaching for them.

**Personnel: Pedagogy, Quality, Roles, and Responsibilities.** Over time, administrators have been given more control over who they hire and which assignments they give to each teacher. Before NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004), each teacher was placed in his or her own room. Each general or special education teacher controlled every aspect of his or her classroom and how students were held accountable for mastery of the subject content. General education
students were focused on mastery of state or national curriculum standards, while special education students mastered individualized educational goals, which sometimes included state or national standards. Typically, special education teachers had been teaching students individualized lessons in the small group special education classroom setting using some general education curricula but only as they saw fit and in accordance with each student’s individualized goals. On the other hand, general education teachers instructed general education students based on the state curriculum in the general education setting.

In 2001, however, accountability for mastery of content changed for everyone; the federal government made clear that the education provided for students with disabilities (SWDs) was not in fact separate and equal, so students receiving special education also needed to learn the state or national curriculum in order to be successful in higher education and their careers (Bessette, 2008; DiPaola et al., 2004; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; USDE, 2002). No Child Left Behind required all students, minus 10% of a school’s population, to master 100% of the state standards by 2014 (Bessette, 2008; USDE, 2002). The focus on SWDs mastering the same curriculum as their peers required a massive switch for education. Many roles were altered in order for schools to comply with this law. The first role, as previously mentioned, was the administrators’ new role of overseeing more aspects of special education in the school. The next was the placement of special and general education teachers in the same room as co-teachers. Then, with the enactment of IDEA in 2004, special education teachers were now required (along with all teachers as stated in NCLB) to be highly-qualified (HQ) in the general education subject they instructed and were identified as the teacher of record (Bessette, 2008, Davis et al., 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010), along with incorporating specialized instruction for students with disabilities. If a teacher was not highly
qualified, the administration must ask the teacher to become HQ in the subject or change his or her teaching assignment unless the special education teacher was not the teacher of record. If the special education teacher was not the teacher of record, then their special education degree or state certificate made them highly-qualified (Bessette, 2008; NCLB, 2001; USDE, 2002). The studies exposed the difficult task of creating effective co-teaching pairs that administrators’ faced when many special education teachers had not been previously required to be content specialists and now were given the role of co-teaching a general education class where content knowledge is imperative for effective instruction (Bessette, 2008, Davis et al., 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010). The fact that special education teachers are still not required to also be highly qualified in the content they are instruction while in a co-taught class is what Bessette (2009) suggested may be what keeps special education teachers in a supportive role in the co-taught class. Harbort, et. al. (2007) also suggested that even when teachers met the HQ requirements, it did not mean that they would specialize instruction for students with disabilities in a co-teaching classroom (Harbot, et. al., 2007).

**Pedagogy.** As administration was faced with the task of pairing teachers to work together throughout the day, research has disclosed the importance of the relationships between the teachers. One way in which administrators can assist in helping to create effective co-teaching pairs is by matching teachers together who have similar pedagogical ideas and are truly HQ in the subject area content they are instructing. *Pedagogical ideas* refer to how each teacher instructs his or her class and what he or she believes about the ability of each child. As Cook and Friend (1995) argued, “if partners for co-teaching do not agree on their beliefs about the ability of all children to learn, the rights of children to experience success in their classroom, regardless of their ability level, and their own role in student learning, they are likely to
encounter difficulties when they share a classroom” (p. 14). In their study of teachers’ perceptions of co-teaching, Nierengarten and Hughes (2010) discovered that co-teachers’ philosophy of instruction was one key component in their compatibility, as similar philosophies would encourage effective co-teaching to occur.

At a minimum, co-teachers should be on the same page in terms of how instruction of the curriculum will be carried out and how teachers will facilitate students learning. Co-teaching research has shown that one way in which co-teachers should instruct students is by using instructional approaches that have been designed for co-teaching. The first set of teaching arrangements created by Bauwens et al. (1989) became the foundation for a set of five approaches created by Cook and Friend (1995), which have become the most prominent methods for instruction in the literature. These are as follows:

(a) one teaching, one assisting,
(b) station teaching,
(c) parallel teaching,
(d) alternative teaching, and
(e) team teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995).

These approaches to co-teaching exemplify different arrangements for co-teachers to use when instructing a heterogeneous mixture of special and general education students. Prior to co-teaching, administrators should determine whether a teacher’s pedagogical ideas allow multiple forms of instruction, as some teachers may prefer direct instruction and would be less open to implementing the co-teaching approaches (Cook & Friend, 1995). Moreover, each approach requires different levels of planning to execute, varying roles for co-teachers, adaptability to different goals, and supports for students. Cook and Friend’s (1995) approaches have been
specifically used to distinguish what a co-teaching class—in contrast to a general education or small group special education class—should look like; however, they are rarely consistently used in co-teaching classrooms (Bessette, 2008; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Magiera et al., 2006; Nichols et al., 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Zigmond et al., 2009).

Some researchers have adapted or created their own version of the co-teaching models of instruction (Cramer et al., 2010; Tobin, 2005), since having two teachers in a classroom allows for unique instructional models compared to a traditional class with one teacher.

**Quality.** In order for co-teachers to utilize the unique instructional models listed above, both co-teachers in a classroom should be able to carry out all necessary roles and responsibilities. If the special educator is not highly qualified in the general subject, then he or she might have difficulty leading instruction in a way that is helpful for four of the five co-teaching models, namely parallel, team teaching, station teaching, and alternative teaching. If the special education teacher does not have the qualifications to instruct the students in the subject content, then co-teachers will be more likely to utilize the one teaching, one assisting instructional approach. Many studies have indeed found that the most common instructional approach in co-taught classrooms is one teaching, one assisting. Austin (2001), after examining the findings, indicated that the general education teacher controlled more aspects of the classroom and that the one teaching, one assisting model was most common.

One deterrent for secondary schools’ use of co-teaching is the lack of HQ special education teachers when it comes to complex academic content such as math and sciences; this was the case in Mastropieri and Scruggs’ (2001) study. In one study in the literature, the co-teachers were both dual certified. The secondary co-teachers in Cramer and Nevin (2006) were both HQ because they were certified in both the content area and special education. Harbort et
al. (2007) videotaped two secondary science co-teaching teams and found that one teaching one assisting was the most frequent model of instruction. When students in a middle school class were interviewed about their perceptions of co-teachers, they believed that in the pair of co-teachers who most often used the one teaching, one assisting model, the special education teacher was an assistant for the “real” or general education teacher (Embury & Kroeger, 2012).

In order for both teachers in a co-teaching class to be seen as the lead teacher, administration should confirm that each teacher feels comfortable in that role and has the ability and desire to instruct the classroom.

**Roles and Responsibilities.** One way administrators can confirm teachers feel comfortable as the instructor of all students in a general education classroom would be to confirm with a teacher the roles and responsibilities required of co-teachers before they begin co-teaching. Research has suggested that administration should create roles and responsibilities for co-teachers so that parity occurs and each teacher understands the requirements of his or her position. Weiss and Lloyd (2002) found that the roles of special education teachers in their own classrooms where they provided specialized instruction varied greatly from their role in the co-taught classroom in which they acted as an assistant. Keefe and Moore (2004) interviewed teachers (three general and four special education) who were new to co-teaching, and found that they struggled with their roles in the classroom. The teachers had not discussed what each person’s role was in the classroom, and, therefore, each co-teaching classroom was different. Some teachers divided roles between the special and general education teachers, which led to parity in roles. However, the special education teachers were generally seen as having a lesser role in the co-taught classroom. One of the four key concepts of effective co-teaching found by Harbort et al. (2007) was “the need for parity between the roles of educators” (p. 22).
Hang and Rabren (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study in which the researchers observed co-teaching classrooms and also found a need for clarity in the roles for teachers in a co-taught classroom. They also had the participants complete perspective surveys. The groups of co-teachers in elementary, middle and high school believed that students were benefiting academically, socially, and behaviorally from being in a co-taught class, yet when the data was analyzed in terms of SWDs, no increase in their academic performance or decrease in the number of behavior referrals was observed. When the general and special education teachers reported which teacher dealt with student behavior more, both teachers expressed that they had more responsibility. Hang and Rabren (2009) suggested that there should be more clarity between teachers concerning each teacher’s responsibility in the classroom. Similarly, Nierengarten and Hughes’ (2010) suggested that a “clear definition and responsibility are essential elements for compatibility” of co-teachers (p. 7).

**Management within Co-teaching**

**Provisions: Resources and Planning Time.** One clear role for an administrator, which has never changed, is overseeing the management of resources and staff. Since the principal or head of school became a formally recognized position in the 1920s, this individual has been in charge of provisions and professional evaluations (Valentine, Maher, Quinne, & Irvine, 1999). In comparison with the results of a survey from 1965, school building leaders now have more control over the school building’s budget, discretionary funds, and the hiring of staff than ever before (Petzko et al., 2002). Administrators ensure the more effective implementation of co-teaching when appropriate resources are provided to co-teachers. Some of the resources an administrator can provide are funding and planning time (Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996). Since Public Law 94-142 (the Education of All Handicapped Children Act), NCLB
(2001), and IDEA (2004), what has changed is the focus on the management of resources and staff.

**Resources.** For compliance with IDEA, the federal government requires funding for schools to provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students. It is the administrator’s job to give evidence of how the school qualifies for certain types of funds from the government. Each type of funding comes with very specific guidelines for how the funds can be used in the school. Therefore, in order for administration to have grants written to obtain funding, they must be knowledgeable in all aspects of co-teaching. For example, of the $11.6 billion in the Grants to States program, $100 million was for the Results-Driven Accountability Incentive; these funds can only be given to “states to identify and implement promising, evidence-based reforms that will improve service delivery for children with disabilities while also building state and local capacity to continue to improve outcomes for those children in the long-term” (USDE, 2015, p. J-15). One evidence-based practice is “instructional coaching to improve effectiveness of teachers and leaders” (USDE, 2015, p. J-21). One way that a school can qualify for this funding is through professional development for administration and staff members in relation to co-teaching as many schools systems believe co-teaching is an evidence-based practice to raise the academic achievement of students with disabilities. Research has shown the need for professional development in co-teaching, so states would easily find research to support the need for the funding.

Praisner (2003) researched administration’s attitudes toward inclusion, because if an administrator has a positive outlook on inclusion, then they are more likely to fund initiative to support an inclusive environment. One suggestion Praisner extracted from Nanus’ book *Visionary Leadership* is that the administrator can communicate his or her philosophies through
the allocation of resources. According to McLesky et al. (2004), the implications for practice in the trend of inclusion are that “the changes that are necessary to develop, implement and sustain an inclusive school program involve not just special education, but entail changes in the entire school and require a substantial investment of time and resources” (p. 114). The more resources an administrator provides the more the administrator demonstrates to the staff the vision for and full support of the change.

**Planning Time.** One of the most important resources that research has found for effective co-teaching that is completely controlled by administrators is protected planning time for co-teachers. The need for consistent planning time for co-teachers is one of the most significant findings in co-teaching research. Administration manages the schedule for teachers and is, therefore, responsible for allocating planning time for co-teachers. Another guideline stated in Cook and Friend (1995) based on their study in 1993 is as follows: “An administrator needs to recognize the importance of shared planning time and provide it for co-teachers” (p. 14). In 1996, Walther-Thomas et al. published an article about a case study they had conducted, stating that multileveled planning is the key for effective co-teaching. They suggested that effective co-teaching begins with the plans created by the school district, then school building administrators, and finally the planning time given to co-teachers. In a qualitative study in which co-teachers were interviewed, one of the four suggestions given by Lehr (1999) was that co-teachers must be given adequate planning time in order to do their jobs effectively. One of the issues found during a qualitative study conducted by Gerber and Popp (2000), however, was that administration did not provide enough planning time for co-teaching to be successful. They suggested that if the teachers cannot have the same planning period, then they could be freed up from other duties in order to have some time for collaboration.
There are many other studies that support the notion and importance of protected, adequate planning time for co-teachers. Harbort et al.’s (2007) discussion supported the findings of Dieker and Murawski’s (2003) study, which demonstrated that administrators should provide co-teachers with “assigned planning time” (p. 22). Co-teachers need planning time to be scheduled so that they can figure out their roles and responsibilities, apply the co-teaching models of instruction to their lessons, and reflect on the impact of their co-teaching on student achievement. If planning time is not provided, then most co-teachers will inevitably use the one teaching, one assisting model of instruction (Bessette, 2008; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Magiera et al., 2006; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Nichols et al., 2010; Scruggs et al., 2007; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Tobin, 2005).

The co-teaching pairs in Sileo’s (2011) study expressed the importance of planning to address all the “issues related to curriculum planning and instruction” (p. 35). According to Sileo (2011):

Critical topics to discussion include concerns such as who a) plans and teaches the lessons, b) prepares and organizes instructional material, c) chooses co-teaching structures that complement the lessons ad students’ abilities, d) identifies assessment processes that determine students’ acquisition of knowledge and ability to demonstrate skills and competencies, and e) grade assignments. (Sileo, 2011, p. 35)

Davis et al. (2012) studied three years of lesson plans for three cohorts of middle school co-teachers and raised the concern that 29% of the teachers’ lessons were not planned together. However, they suggested that one limitation of their study might be that written lesson plans do not reflect what is actually occurring in the classroom and that teachers naturally implement certain effective co-teaching strategies instead of writing them all down in their lesson plans.
Professional Evaluation. After allocating proper resources, ensuring a highly qualified teaching staff, and protecting planning time, an administrator must next focus on conducting regular professional evaluations of co-teachers. In order for administration to determine what is occurring in co-teaching classrooms, it is imperative that they visit such classrooms. Evaluation of teachers as they are co-teaching is vital for the success of this method. As seen in a study conducted by Weiss and Lloyd (2002), which compared teachers in a general education classroom, special education classroom, and co-teaching classroom, evaluation must occur so that the administration can determine whether there is a difference in instruction occurring in classes with two teachers versus classes in which there is only one. The special education teachers in the study provided support to the general education teacher in the co-taught classrooms, whereas in “instructions in the special education class the content was at a lower level, broken down into smaller units, delivered at a slower pace, and individualized more than in the general education classroom” (p. 65). One of the reasons for having co-teaching classes is for SWDs to access individualized instruction in a general education class; thus, during evaluations administration must examine whether this is actually occurring. Peterson (2004) suggested that administrators should collect multiple sources of data in order to evaluate teachers. They could use lesson plans, formal evaluations, walk-through evaluations, student surveys, and documentation provided by the teacher to accomplish this.

One issue that might arise with administrators evaluating co-teachers is that the administrator may lack the knowledge required to adequately perform such evaluation. As of 2005, there were “virtually no guidelines or research studies addressing supervision of collaborative efforts from either the special or general education vantage point” (Wilson, 2005, p. 272). Therefore, Wilson facilitated “a collaborative project between a university, school
district, district central and building administration, and special and general education supervisors” (p. 272) to create a co-teaching observation tool for administrators. One discovery from this study was that when teachers and administrators have a guide to use, they can both be more confident in their co-teaching role.

Murawski and Lochner (2010) concluded that administrators should be looking for differences in a class with one teacher in relation to a class with two teachers. Moreover, according to these researchers, “Many supervisors also have not received sufficient instruction on what they should be seeing in the effective co-taught classroom—despite the fact that their role is to observe, document, give feedback, and be instructional leaders” (Murawski & Lockner, 2010, p. 176). Consequently, they created multiple checklists for use in preparing teachers to work in a co-teaching classroom and for administrators to know what they should observe when evaluating such a classroom. Furthermore, in 2013, Kamens et al. reported the results of a quantitative study conducted in New Jersey in which one objective was to investigate how 65 administrators evaluated co-teachers. The researchers found that since there was “inconsistency in observation practices, it was no surprise that there would be inconsistency in the study findings with respect to the evaluation of co-teachers” (p. 96).

Many researchers have argued that one way to ensure more consistency within schools is through connecting performance with salaries. In 2002, “12% of the principals surveyed stated that their salaries were linked to some sort of school performance” (Petzko et al., 2002, p. 8). Revamping administrator and teacher compensation and evaluations were a major focus of the competitive grant program in 2009 for the most recent reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), namely Race to the Top (RTT). Federal funding is provided when a state is awarded grants and given waivers for the unattainable goal of 100% proficiency in
reading and math for all students by 2014, as required in NCLB. The grants are provided to the state and then to specific school districts that radically change their teacher evaluation and/or compensation (Popham, 2013; Meyer et al., 2014; USDE, 2014).

One controversial aspect of revamping the teacher compensation plans for many states is that a teacher’s final ranking and compensation is linked to improvements in their students’ performance on high-stakes standardized tests (Popham, 2013; Meyer et al., 2014). Administrators might find that general education teachers are not as willing to be co-teachers if their salary is tied to their students’ test scores, since, on average, special education students do not perform as well on these tests (Friend et al., 2010).

**Conclusion**

In order for effective change, research has revealed that a leader must be at the forefront of the change. In this ever-changing world of education reform, administrators are the most essential key players. In order to be key players, administrators must understand their roles. The four main roles, which framed this literature review, were the following: school change, school culture, instructional leader, and management. Each main role has a plethora of roles underneath them that have become more diverse since the age of federal laws (Lynch, 2012) that catapulted education into major reform. One gap found through this literature review was that most studies looked at inclusion focus on all instructional settings, even though only one, co-teaching, was creating the most change in education. Using role theory as the foundation for this study, the research questions allowed the researcher to uncover what administrators perceive about the federal or system guidelines provided to them about their new roles and roles sets and how they have followed those guidelines in specific reference to co-teaching. These new roles and role sets
created by co-teaching for administrators lent themselves to discovering the perception
administrators have of the changes and how they behave based on these new roles and role sets.

No Child Left Behind (2002) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)
were the agents of change promoting the increase in co-teaching as an instructional setting for
students with disabilities that forever altered the role and role set for administrators (Bessette,
2007; Embury & Kroeger, 2012). Now, administrators must navigate within the four overarching
roles new specific roles in order to lead co-teaching, known as the Six “P’s” of leading effective
teaching. These new roles and role sets for administrators place school change as one of the
most important roles for an administrator. One of the changes research suggested to
administrators for smooth transition into co-teaching is to create policies specifically in reference
to co-teaching (Ryan, 2006). These policies will assist administrators in creating the change in
schools needed to meet the requirements of NCLB and IDEA and be the foundation for building
an inclusive and collaborative culture (Gerber & Popp, 2003). If an administrator is proactive in
promoting the new culture, then the employees will be more inclined to have a positive outlook
about the change (Block, 2003). One way research explained administrators could show they are
proactive about a change is to take on the role of instructional leader. As the instructional leader,
research suggested that the quality and placement of the personnel in the co-taught classroom is
essential for its effectiveness. Many studies in this literature review recommended that
preparation of staff is key for effective co-teaching to take place. Educators, including
administrators, should have training about co-teaching prior to implementation and continually
while co-teaching. The final overarching role for administrators is management and within
management of co-teaching falls provisions and professional evaluations. Administrators have
the responsibility of allocating resources from the federal funds in order to support the change
occurring in schools. Administrators also have to lead the management of the new evaluation systems for educators required by Race to the Top (2012).

These conclusions about the new roles and role sets the administrator is now in charge of is grounded in research and can be applied to change schools faced with co-teaching as the most prominent instructional setting for students with disabilities. This literature review has uncovered that without administrators knowledgeably leading co-teaching, it will not represent an effective instructional placement for students with or without disabilities. Administrators must be aware of the federal policies that drive education reform in order to create local policies to help create the changes needed to improve the quality and outcomes of the education system (Roach, et. al., 2004). Unfortunately, research disclosed that 78% of administrators are not prepared to be administrators of special education because they are not knowledgeable about leading special education (Lasky & Karge, 2006). Once again, the research conducted by Lasky and Karge (2006) and most other researchers focused on inclusion in general. This study would like to uncover what administrators’ perceptions are of co-teaching along with that they perceive is their role in co-teaching. If we can learn where administrators are in leading co-teaching, then previous research can be utilized to help them take the next step of their leadership in co-teaching.
Chapter Three

Methodology

In order to understand and explore each individual administrator’s unique perception of and role in co-teaching, the use of a qualitative research method was most appropriate (Stake, 1995). Implementing a qualitative method for this study allowed the thick, rich personal data to emerge from the participants, which was required in order to fully discover ideas in the minds of the administrators. The need for individualized data does not lend itself to quantitative research, since there was no way to measure a person’s perception, so a qualitative method was most appropriate for this study (Mertens, 1998). As the researcher pursued to understand and explore administrator’s perceptions of and role in co-teaching, she began by asking the following questions:

1. What are administrators' perceptions of the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching?

2. How do administrators’ perceive their role within co-teaching?

Paradigm

The research paradigm used as the framework for this qualitative study was constructivism- interpretivism (Ponterotto, 2005; Mertens, 1998). The constructivist paradigm evolved from the philosophy of Husserl and Dilthey’s hermeneutics, which is “the study of interpretive understanding or meaning” (Mertens, 1998, p. 11). The reason for the researcher choosing this paradigm lies in Ponterotto’s (2005) explanation of how this approach relates to the idea that each behavior or thought of an individual was unique based on his or her “lived experiences” (Erlebnis) (p.131). Constructivist studies recognize that every person, including the researcher, has subjectivity that they bring to a study (Mertens, 1998).
Each participant in this collective case study brought with him or her different perspectives of co-teaching and experiences of the roles in co-teaching since he or she has been an administrator. This study attempted to empower administrators by allowing them to share their different perspectives and lived experiences and let their knowledge of the phenomena of co-teaching be shared (Creswell, 2013). Praisner (2003) found that “the more positive the experience an administrator had with students with disabilities the more likely the administrator would be to choose a least restrictive [instructional setting]” (p. 139-140) for the student with disability. Administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching were unique in the way each administrator described, explained, and interpreted co-teaching, which stemmed from his or her personal experiences. Finally, the researcher has been a co-teacher for 15 years. As such, her own lived experiences and perspectives regarding co-teaching informed this study. Therefore, the research design of this study lent itself to a qualitative constructivist study.

**Research Design**

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research explores phenomena at particular research sites. Consequently, this qualitative study explored the administrators’ perceptions and role in the phenomenon of co-teaching in Smith District (name changed for anonymity). The research design for the vast majority of studies focusing on co-teaching are qualitative, but the participants in these studies were usually teachers or fewer than two administrators (Austin, 2001; Bessette, 2007; Cramer, et.al, 2010; Davis, et.al, 2012; Embry & Kroger, 2012; Harbort, et. al., 2007; Lehr, 1999; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Sileo, 2011; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Tobin, 2005; Villa, et. al., 2005). The research design for the few studies that utilized administrators as participants and focused on co-teaching and not inclusion in general were qualitative (Walther-Thomas, 1997; Gerber & Popp, 2000) or quantitative
There were four other studies that explored and discovered administrators’ perceptions and roles in inclusion, but they were not specifically co-teaching and the research design varied between them: qualitative (Rice, 2006), quantitative (Praisner, 2003) and mixed methods (Idol, 2006; Lupart & Loreman, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). This study attempted to focus on uncovering the administrators’ perception of and role in co-teaching.

The key to qualitative research was exploring topics with participants (Creswell, 2012; Neuman, 2006; Mertens, 1998). The requirements of personal contact and individualized data were practical reasons for this researcher choosing a qualitative research design (Mertens, 1998). In order to gain the full scope of administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching, the researcher needed to have in-depth dialogue take place with each participant. As stated above, even though the majority of studies on co-teaching are qualitative, a small number of them focused solely on the perspective of administrators or asked them to give their input on their role in the instructional setting, even though many studies on co-teaching stated the vital importance of administrative support for effective co-teaching. Most of the studies, like the one conducted by Lupart, Loreman and McGhie-Richmond (2010), did not specifically ask about the instructional setting of co-teaching but explored the perceptions of inclusion in general. This researcher solely focused on the instructional setting of co-teaching since it is the primary instructional model for students with disabilities in Smith District.

The manner in which a researcher conducts qualitative research allows him or her to delve deep into the minds of the participants in order to explore the research topic (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Neuman, 2006; Yin, 1989). Since this study looked for the in-depth, personal perspectives of a small group of participants of which the researcher was a part, the qualitative research design was more appropriate than the detached nature of cause-and-effect relationships.
with massive amounts of participants found in quantitative research (Neuman, 2006).

**Research Tradition**

A case study was the strategy chosen for research looking to explore how and why people are doing what they do (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1998). A case-study approach was also used as the research tradition because case studies look at complex issues by exploring people’s experiences of the phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin, 1989). Co-teaching has been a complex educational issue that must be understood since it was implemented in almost every public school and some charter and private schools in the United States. This study gleaned information about co-teaching in order to assist leaders in education with implementing effective co-teaching in schools, as this study focused on only one instructional model of inclusion instead of all the inclusive setting options for students with disabilities. Case studies also pull data from multiple sources in order to triangulate the data that was revealed in the study (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989). This study collected data from interviews, observations of participants, documents, and archival records.

This researcher explored the phenomenon of co-teaching through the eyes of multiple administrators. A case study that incorporates multiple cases is called a collective (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) or multiple (Yin, 1995) case study. When a case study draws the data from multiple perspectives, Yin (1995) suggests that there is logic of replication (p. 53). This logic of replication requires the researcher to carefully pick the cases so that each case “(a) predicts similar results or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons” (p.53). This study was a collective case study conducted on three sites in order to reveal each administrator’s perception (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). The case focused on administrators’ roles and perceptions of co-teaching in Smith District, along with how administrators perceived their role in co-teaching. By
using a qualitative collective case-study approach, the researcher focused on the purposeful sampling needed to expand the research about co-teaching and fill in a gap in administrators’ perceptions of and perceived role in co-teaching.

**Participants, Recruitment and Access**

**Participants**

The sampling was a purposeful homogeneous population. The purposeful, also called purposive, sampling method allowed the researcher to select the participants, who could provide data useful for the research questions of this study (Neuman, 2006; Orcher, 2005; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The purposeful sampling included one administrator from both an elementary and middle school and two from the high school in Smith District. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe a homogeneous population as a group that was composed of a focused group of participants. Since this study was focused on the perspectives of administrators, they were the only appropriate participants. A small sampling method was recommended for case studies in order to “collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied” (Creswell, 2013, p.157). By interviewing a smaller sample size, the researcher “provided ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis” (Creswell, 2013, p.157). Criterion sampling was also utilized in this study in order to narrow down the possible participant pool and obtain the most appropriate participants to answer the research questions. Criterion sampling requires that each participant meet certain requirements in order to be involved in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There were two requirements or criteria for the administrators in this study: 1) must be active administrators of co-teachers and 2) currently in at least his or her second year of being a credited evaluator of co-teachers. These criteria helped the researcher find participants who were knowledgeable about their role as an administrator and had experience leading and
evaluating teachers who were co-teaching, therefore, providing rich data for this study.

**Recruitment and Access**

After the study was approved by the IRB at Northeastern University (see IRB approval in Appendix D) the collective case study occurred in a Title I school district located in the southeastern region of the United States. This collective case study was composed of multiple research sites in order for “logic of replication” (Yin, 1989, p. 53). The multiple sites allowed the researcher to compare and contrast beliefs of administrators about co-teaching within those multiple sites (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 1989). Yin (1989) suggests that multiple sites in a case study could present more convincing and vigorous data. The research sites were accessed with the approval of the associate superintendent of Smith District. Through an email in the fall of 2015, the researcher shared the research proposal and approval of the IRB letter with the associate superintendent. The associate superintendent’s assistant provided the researcher with a list of the administrators in the school district who met the criteria for the study. The reason for choosing this site was that the researcher has worked in this school district for the past fifteen years. This district has also increased the number of students and teachers placed in co-teaching classrooms over the past decade due to a state inclusion goal, and, therefore, the number administrators in the role of overseeing co-teaching also increased. The elementary school that partook in this study became a full-inclusion school in the past few years, while the other seven elementary schools, the middle, and high schools in Smith District have multiple options of inclusive instructional settings for students with disabilities.

Once permission from the associate superintendent was given to conduct the research in Smith District, the researcher emailed the recruitment letter to the possible participants who were identified by the assistant superintendent as meeting the requirements for the study (Appendix
B). Once the email was sent to the list of potential participants, the researcher waited for responses. The researcher immediately had two administrators respond stating they would participate in the study. Then, the researcher directly emailed potential participants with a note from the researcher and the recruitment letter attached. A total of four administrators responded with a desire to participate in the study. As the potential participants confirmed they would be in the study, the researcher emailed them a copy of the participant consent form (Appendix C) asking them to review it and ask any questions or concerns about their participation in the study. The participants signed the consent form prior to the first interview session beginning. Once the researcher confirmed all participants, they had no questions about the consent form or the study, so then the collection of data commenced.

Data

Data Collection

This qualitative collective case study was conducted in a southeastern school district in the fall and winter of 2015 and 2016. The researcher was the sole collector of data for this study but utilized others in the district to help obtain documents. The participants were four credited evaluators: one from an elementary school, one from a middle school, and two from a high school. The reasoning for selecting this approach was so the researcher could explore different leaders’ perceptions within and between all the levels of education in Smith District during the interviews (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher gathered data from multiple sources to triangulate data. The main source was the four semi-structured interviews with each participant, which each lasted for at least forty-five minutes. The researcher also observed the participants during the school day. The researcher obtained archival records from each of the participants in the form of numerical descriptions of the staff and students participating in co-teaching. Finally,
the researcher analyzed documents created by the school administrators, district, and state in order to determine if administrators had been prepared by the state and/or Smith District to lead co-teaching. The researcher used these three data sources to compare and contrast the information gathered on administrators’ perception of co-teaching and listen as they explored how their roles and role sets may have been altered since co-teaching has become the prominent instructional setting for students with disabilities.

**Interviews.** The interviews were conducted in the winter of 2015 and 2016. There were four interviews with each participant that each lasted for at least forty-five minutes. The first interview acquired basic information about the administrators, their role theory, and the administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching. The second explored how each administrator creates and maintains the school culture, leads school change, and takes on the role as the instructional leader. The third and final interview ascertained management aspects of the school, such as hiring and placing personnel, evaluations, and providing resources and provisions. The participants were given multiple options of where they would feel more comfortable for their interviews (Creswell, 2013). The location options included, but were not limited to the office of the interviewee, a study room in the local library, or the researcher’s classroom. Each participant chose their office for the location of the interviews.

These interviews were conducted using the responsive interviewing technique (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This type of interviewing allowed participants to answer based on their personal knowledge of co-teaching and how they perceive their roles as administrators in co-teaching. Four sets of open-ended questions lead to a broad picture of the roles of the administrator, revealed co-teaching as seen through the eyes of each administrator, and will also helped gather background information on each participant (Appendix F, G, H and I). The set of questions also
helped participants explore the possible changes in their roles and role set since the federal government implemented more mandates guiding the focus of schools. Responsive interviewing allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions in each interview based on each participant’s responses to the open-ended questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). An app on the researcher’s phone, REV.com, recorded each interview while the researcher took shorthand notes during the interviews.

**Documents and archival records.** Along with in-depth interviews, this study attempted to collect evidence through reviewing documents created by or to administrators and/or Smith District, along with obtaining archival records. This use of this data assisted the researcher in exploring the written attitudes, beliefs and knowledge, and amount of exposure to co-teaching of the participants and the district in which they are employed (Orcher, 2005). The documents and archival records collected were gathered in hope that they would aid the researcher in answering the research questions and providing context for this study. The documents analyzed were meeting agendas (school board, faculty and leadership), evaluation manuals, professional development or training options for Smith District and each building (pre school year, during school year, post school year), and training materials. These documents, or lack thereof, provided the researcher with insight that confirmed findings from the interviews and observations. The researcher followed the suggestion of Miles and Huberman (1994) and analyzed documents using a document summary form (Appendix K). This study only collected documents that pertained to information mentioned in literature on role theory and co-teaching as well as the interview questions for this study. The questions were created prior to field study in order to obtain documents that added to the breadth and depth of the data collected.

The researcher learned from the list of possible participants for this study that all credited
evaluators who are administrators in Smith District, except for the alternative schools, oversee co-teaching. The researcher also collected archival records for each site participating in this study: the number of teachers co-teaching and the number of students (with and without disabilities) in co-taught classrooms. These archival records are displayed in Tables 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 located in Chapter Four. The researcher discussed the records from previous years to the current years with the participants in order to establish any trends that may be present (Orcher, 2005). The trend found was that schools in Smith District consistently utilize co-teaching as the instructional setting for students with disabilities. The amounts of co-taught classes depend on the needs of the students and were determined during the student’s Individualized Education Plan.

**Observations.** In order to uncover the administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching, one must observe them in their natural setting and learn the perspectives that informed their perception (Gillham, 2000), so each participant was observed carrying out his or her role as an administrator by the researcher. The researcher was a nonparticipant observer (Creswell, 2012) with at least one observation per administrator. The observations looked for any sign of the administrator’s perception of co-teaching, his or her role in co-teaching or role as an administrator. The researcher utilized an observation checklist (Appendix J) created by the researcher (Orcher, 2005), which focused the field notes on general observations that pertained to the study (Stake, 1995).

**Data Storage and Management**

As the interviews occurred, one way of maintaining confidentiality was using an alias for each participant (Creswell, 2013). These pseudonyms for each participant (Barry, John, Jesse and Iona) were used in all note-taking and writing during the course of the study, and only the
researcher knew the participants’ real names. A professional transcriber at the Rev Voice Recorder Company transcribed the interviews and followed all recommendations of the IRB for anonymity and confidentiality. The transcriber only knew the aliases and not the actual names of the participants of the study. Hard copies of the transcriptions and shorthand notes were kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher’s house. No one but the researcher had access to the data once the transcriber sent the transcriptions. The transcriber did not keep a copy of the data.

All data collected during this study was locked in a file cabinet or stored in a password-protected phone and computer only accessible by the researcher. All meetings and deadlines for the study were recorded in the journal of notes that were also stored in the file cabinet. The journal the researcher mentioned was used to keep detailed records and helped create an informal audit trail for this study (Orcher, 2005). The interviews were recorded using an app on the researchers phone called Rev.com and then transcribed by the company in order to analyze the data gathered in the interviews. The transcriptions were printed out and kept in an accordion folder. Each participant’s information was kept in a separate section of the folder and locked in the file cabinet. As stated previously, pseudonyms (Barry, John, Jesse and Iona) for participants were used on all documents, the journal, and records. The data collected in this study will be kept for three years in case the researcher needs any of it for future academic publications. The security maintained substantiated that the data was not tampered with by any outside source and, therefore, confirmed the trustworthiness of the data collected in this study.

**Data Analysis**

The data was coded in multiple cycles as Saldaña (2009) recommends. The researcher allowed for adequate time for coding in order to create a trustworthy analysis through a repeatable and verifiable process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Cycle one included the first few
steps of coding; the second cycle of coding were the final steps of coding each individual interview, and the last cycle was cross-case analysis. The first step was initial coding while the second step of data analysis was theme pulling. Each school’s interviews and observation field notes were analyzed using these steps of coding methods. The data from each school were collected and coded as collected since “qualitative research depends heavily on the ongoing analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 66). The next step was within-case analysis in which themes for each participant were extracted based on the data revealed in the previous data cycle, the literature, and theoretical framework. The final cycle in data analysis was cross-case analysis where the researcher compared and contrasted the results from the different participants in order to find the consistent and inconsistent themes that emerged from the data, literature, and theoretical framework.

There were multiple steps in the first cycle of coding for the interviews and field notes. For each interview and the observation field notes, the next steps in the first cycle of coding by hand occurred after the researcher had read the transcripts or notes twice, which involved underlining or highlighting the main words or phrases that stood out. This type of coding is referred to as literal or initial coding and requires the researcher to write down the participants’ phrases or words verbatim line by line of each interview question (Gillham, 2000; Saldaña, 2009). Then columns were created to place the codes of words and phrases that the researcher extracted from each interview and the field notes. During this process, the researcher realized that “coding is analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56).

The second cycle in coding was for the interview transcripts and observation field notes. The first step required the researcher to look at the statements in response to each question from the four different interviews and field notes, pulling out the themes that emerged from the data.
for each participant (Saldaña, 2009). These themes found in the data summarized what the participant is undertaking, how something is occurring, or why something is done. This process created a visual map for the researcher that divided the interviewees’ responses and field notes while pulling themes from the data for each participant within the study. The themes for each participant were placed in Tables 3, 4, 7 and 10 in Chapter Four.

The third and final cycle of data analysis was the cross-case analysis, since this is a collective case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within-case analysis assessed the interviews, observation field notes, and documents to determine consistent themes (Tables 3, 4, 7 and 10). All the participants were administrators in the Smith District and had the same guidelines to leadership, so the researcher compared the notes to see how the individuals carried out their roles. This final step compared and contrasted the themes found in the interviews for each participant and the field notes to the information from the literature review and the theoretical framework. Cross-case analysis occurred between the interviews, observations, and documents made by the district or state in order to discover consistent and inconsistent themes revealed in the data (Tables 11 and 12). From this analysis, the summary of major findings through the lens of the theoretical framework and connections to the literature, conclusion, implications of practice and research, action plan, and the researcher’s reflection emerged.

Trustworthiness, Quality and Verification

Creswell (2003, 2013), Lincoln and Guba (1993), Mertens (1998) and Yin (1989) explained the importance of creating quality research that proves the trustworthiness of the study through verification of the research process. These researchers suggested multiple areas of data collection to ensure trustworthiness, quality, and validity of study. Creswell (2003) suggested “there are eight primary strategies, organized from those most frequently used and least to
implement to those occasionally used and difficult to implement: triangulate; member-checking; rich-thick description; clarifying bias of researcher; negative or discrepant information; prolonged time; peer debriefing and external auditor” (p.196). In 2013, Creswell placed these eight into four overarching categories: internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Mertens’ (1998) “criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research” (p. 180) were similar to Creswell’s and were created based on Guba and Lincoln in 1989 and Stainback and Stainback in 1988. Mertens used the term credibility in place of internal validity, transferability for external validity, dependability for reliability, and conformability for objectivity (1998, p. 181).

The researcher discussed how incorporating different forms of criteria in this study improved the trustworthiness, quality, and validity of the study. This study used multiple forms of internal validity in order to credit the study by conducting a high quality qualitative research study. In order to create internal validity, this study incorporated triangulation, member checks, and peer debriefing. External validity was more prevalent in quantitative research since generalizing studies was not as pervasive in qualitative research (Neuman, 2006), but there were two ways this study utilized external validity. Giving thick, rich descriptions and conducting the study with multiple cases provided the external validity or transferability for this study. Finally, objectivity or dependability provided through creating a “chain of evidence” (Yin, 1994) or audit trail secure the quality of the data collected and ensures verification of the study (Creswell, 2013).

**Internal Validity**

**Credibility.** Addressing internal validity enhances the credibility of a study. The researcher in the present study has a history with the district where the research was conducted and, consequently, discussed the possible bias the researcher holds towards the topic of the study.
and site of study (Creswell, 2003). The researcher has been an employee in the district for the past 15 years and currently works as an enhanced and general education science teacher with one of the instructional settings utilizing the co-teaching model. The researcher has also held the position of a special education teacher in which the researcher instructed small groups and co-taught classes. Possible biases were explained in more detail in the following sections of the first chapter of this dissertation: assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The researcher understands the culture of the school system and knows that the superintendent and associate superintendent of the district encourage employees to participate in educational research whenever possible, as they have both obtained their doctorates of education since working in Smith District. The researcher used multiple forms of data collection to validate data from this qualitative case study (Creswell, 2013, Gillham, 2000; Yin, 1989). The researcher utilized four of the six sources of evidence Yin (1989) suggested for case studies. This study interviewed each participant four times for at least 45 minutes, examined documentation, reviewed archival records, and directly observed the participants while taking field notes.

**Triangulation.** “By measuring something in more than one way, researchers are more likely to see all aspects of it” (Neuman, 2006, p. 149). Therefore, this study triangulated data by collecting it from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, which assisted in validating the data collected (Creswell, 2013; Gillham, 2000; Mertens, 1998). The first two forms of data for triangulation were the transcriptions from the semi-structured responsive interviews and observations. The researcher transcribed, coded, and analyzed themes in the interviews as well as the field notes from observations. The third form of data that was used for triangulation was the documents and archival records. The documents gathered explained the professional development (in individual schools and in the district), special
education policies, evaluation tools, trainings, and anything else the research could gather to shed light on or further explicate the administrator’s perception of co-teaching and his or her role change since co-teaching became a prominent instructional setting for students with disabilities. By comparing multiple sources of data, this research determined if the administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching match their actions when dealing with co-teaching. “A common discrepancy is between what people say about themselves and what they actually do” (Gillham, 2000, p.13).

**Member Checks.** After participants were interviewed and the transcriptions of those interviews occurred, the participants were given the opportunity to conduct member checks (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 1998; Orcher, 2005). Only one participant, Barry, choose to check all his transcriptions. Member checks allowed the participant to read the transcript to confirm that what was transcribed from the interview accurately captured what was said in the interview. During the interview, the participants clarified or expanded on any of their responses. Creswell (2013) explained that when the participants confirm the data collected that the data is validated even further. The participants were given an opportunity to meet with the researcher in order to learn the findings of the study when the data analysis was completed.

**Reliability**

Reliability can be established when a study’s data is confirmed by a peer according to Creswell, 2013 and Orcher, 2005. This process is called peer debriefing. Mertens (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1993) would categorize peer debriefing as a form of internal validity, but this researcher categorized it as a form of reliability and a way to show the dependability of the research by allowing the audit of the study with uninterested peers. There was one peer who participated in peer debriefing. The peer who conducted the debriefing in the present study was
a former colleague of the researcher and a former teacher who is well-versed in all aspects of education. The peer debriefer assisted the researcher in “confronting his or her own values” (Mertens, 1998, p. 182).

**External Validity**

**Thick Description.** Thick description as explained by Guba and Lincoln (1993) and or rich, thick description as explained by Creswell (2003) was one way qualitative researchers could provide external validity in studies. “Extensive and careful description of the time, place, context and culture is known as thick description” (Mertens, 1998, p. 183). This study utilized thick description of the study while also protecting the participants and site by using pseudonyms. When a researcher expands on the study, the researcher can allow the reader to see him or herself in the study and create a “shared experience” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). The thick description of the study could create the ability for transferability or generalization of the results to other situations (Mertens, 1998).

**External Auditor.** There were two forms of external auditing for this study. Creswell (2003) suggested having an external auditor creates validity to the study but is often not implemented. At the conclusion of each step of data collection, the researcher shared the data and process of data collection with the dissertation advisor. As a doctoral student at Northeastern University, part of the process of validating the research was to share it with the advisor and a small group of professors. This sharing of information was done without identifying the participants or the research sites. The researcher utilized the pseudonyms for all aspects of data collection and the external auditor did not know the actual names of the participants. The second form of external auditing for this study was an audit trail. In order to confirm all the data collected in this study, the researcher created an audit trail, listed any tool used for data
collection, and indicated how that data was stored in a journal. There was no need for an explanation of inter-rater reliability since the researcher was the only observer in this study—an other example of the study’s strength.

Assumptions

There were a handful of assumptions for this study. One was that a qualitative collective case study was the most beneficial research design for this study to collect the perceptions of the participants. Creswell (2003) stressed the importance of selecting the correct research design for a study and provides “three criteria for selecting an approach” (p. 21). The first criterion was based on matching the study to the design since co-teaching is a phenomenon in education and the administrators’ perceptions are a gap in research. Thus, a qualitative study allowed the researcher to explore them more in-depth. The second criterion was about the personal experience of the researcher. This researcher prefers the way a qualitative study allows for “more creative, literary-style writing,” “advocacy of writers,” and how qualitative studies also let researchers “pursue topics of personal interests” (Creswell, 2003, p. 23). The final criterion the researcher analyzed to pick the most appropriate research design was the audience for this research. The research audiences are federal and state policy makers, leaders in school systems and school buildings, educator training companies, pre-service educator programs, leadership certification programs, as well as anyone involved in co-teaching. All three criteria were thoughtfully reviewed to confirm that a qualitative collective case study was the most appropriate research design for this study.

Another assumption was that each participant was highly qualified to answer the research questions because they hold the position of school administrator and are credited evaluator’s of co-teachers. The researcher also assumes the participants truthfully and accurately answered the
interview questions (Orcher, 2005). The researcher assumed the participants provided detailed answers that constituted a sufficient amount of information, so this study was relevant and added to the knowledge of studies on the instructional setting known as co-teaching.

**Limitations**

The limitations of this research revolved around the perception of participants, size of study, and location of study, along with the researcher's personal biases. The sample size was four school administrators, so it was a small sample size in comparison to quantitative studies. This sample was also only taken from a suburban area from one district. This study also did not ask for the perception of anyone else involved in the inclusion instructional setting known as co-teaching. All the participants were from the same southern school district, which may have limited their knowledge to the setting of their school district. The participants’ perceptions were their own and were based on their individual knowledge, experiences, and personal biases (Neuman, 2003). Therefore, the perceptions were limited to each individual and offer limited views in any generalizations (Orcher, 2005).

The researcher was a teacher in the school system of the participants. The researcher does have a strong personal connection to the topic of co-teaching since the researcher was a special education teacher and was currently a general education teacher with one class utilizing the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching. The researcher had a bias toward the setting of the study because it has been the place of employment for the researcher for the past 15 years.

**Delimitations**

The study was delimited to only four administrators. These administrators worked in the same school district in a southeastern state. There were two requirements placed on administrators: they must be active administrators of co-teachers and must be accredited
evaluators of co-teachers.

Protection of Human Subjects

Creswell (2012) refers to data collection as a “circle” of connected actions in which the researcher interacts with the research. Once a site and subjects are chosen, then the next step is to gain access and build rapport with participants. The site for this study was Smith District, located in the southeastern part of the United States. The letter for approval of the study was sent to the associate superintendent of Smith district (Appendix A). The participants in the study were administrators from three sites: Smith Elementary, Smith Middle, and Smith High School. In order to protect participants, the researcher followed three main suggestions made in the Belmont Report of 1979, which were explained in the IRB manual (NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF, 2008). The researcher always had in mind 1) respect for persons, 2) beneficence, and 3) justice while conducting research (NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF, 2008).

Respect for persons involves all aspects of informed consent (NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF, 2008). Therefore, participants in this study were given written information about the study in a recruitment email (Appendix B). When enough administrators who met the criteria decided to participate in the study, the researcher contacted them for a face-to-face meeting for consent and the first interview. The researcher sent the informed consent letter to each participant, so they were aware of the study, could pick where they desired for the interview to take place, and could ask any questions about it before interviewing began. During the first meeting, the researcher had the participant sign the informed consent letter (Appendix C). The researcher spent time learning about the participant’s history in school and education in order to establish rapport with him or her and began building trust (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Beneficence required researchers to do no harm and to make sure they were maximizing
benefits and minimizing harm to participants in the study (NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF, 2008). In order to accomplish this, the researcher maintained the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the study as suggested by Creswell (2013). For this purpose the researcher used pseudonyms for the site (Smith District) and participants (Barry, John, Jesse and Iona). The researcher also did no harm throughout the study by incorporating member checks by the participants to confirm anonymity and confidentially (Creswell, 2013).

Justice entailed using fair procedures and distribution of benefits and burdens to populations and participants (NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF, 2008). The participants were informed that they could leave the study at any point if they choose to do so with no consequences in order to lessen the burden of the study. The informed consent form included the details of the study so the participants could make an informed decision about participating in the study. Participants were exposed to minimal risk since they did not experience anything in the study that they would not experience in daily life.

All of the requirements of the institutional review board (IRB) were designed to further research while protecting populations and participants and, therefore, were followed by this study. An expedited IRB was approved for studies that involve minimal risk for participants as stated in the IRB training curriculum (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The researcher thus applied for an expedited institutional review board. A copy of the expedited IRB was included as Appendix D.

**Summary**

The methodology presented in this chapter was designed to outline the framework for research conducted to answer the research questions of this study of administrators’ perceptions of co-teaching and their role in co-teaching and as administrators since it has become the chief inclusion instructional setting in public schools. Recruiting administrators to participate in this
study in a specific site helped fulfill the requirements of a case study. The researcher followed guidelines in order to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Collecting data through responsive interviews, three sites, multiple documents and archival records provided the researcher the ability to validate findings suggested by Creswell (2003, 2013), Gillham (2000), Guba and Lincoln (1993), Mertens (1998), Neuman (2006), Orcher (2005), Stake (1995) and Yin (1998) for case-study research, which assisted in validating the findings of this study. The purpose of this case study was to understand how administrators perceive co-teaching and their perceived role in co-teaching.
Chapter Four

Research Findings

The purpose of this research study is to describe the perceptions of and roles in co-teaching. To obtain the information for this collective case study, three cases that included four administrators from Smith District (pseudonyms were used for the locations and participants) were interviewed about their roles as administrators. The interview questions were organized based on four significantly predominant administrative roles found in the literature that are relevant in today’s educational system. Within those roles, questions focused on exploring the administrators’ answers of the following primary research questions for this study:

1. What are administrators' perceptions of the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching?
2. How do administrators perceive their role within co-teaching?

In the first round of interviews, the administrators were asked about their history in education, their roles as administrators, and their beliefs about inclusion and co-teaching. The second interview round inquired about school change through policies, school culture, and instructional leadership. The third interview round continued to peruse the participants’ ideas about instructional leadership and the management aspects of administration. A follow-up interview was added to ask for clarification on certain answers and to obtain answers to “what if” questions about each of the four roles of an administrator. In each interview the administrators explained the role strain they experienced, and while they were explaining their role strain, it was obvious how much stress they experience by their body language. Many studies have analyzed the roles of administrators. However, few studies about inclusion or administrators’ roles have probed this many administrators in a qualitative manner while inquiring about specific questions,
their beliefs regarding inclusion and co-teaching, and their roles in these educational placements for students with disabilities.

**Smith District**

Smith District is located in the Southeast United States. It is a small school district with a total of eleven schools and one alternative high school program. The district is distinguished as a charter school district and an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School district. Nine of its eleven schools are designated as Title I schools. All participants in this study were administrators at Title I schools in Smith District. The demographics of the student population are similar with over 60% African American, around 15-25% Latin American, and the rest are a mix of nationalities. Since all of the schools where these cases occur are designated as Title I, the needs of their student populations are similar. There are approximately 10,000 students, 550 teachers, and 36 administrators in the district.

For administrators to be viable candidates for participating in this study, they had to be credited evaluators of co-teachers and have at least two years of experience as an administrator. Ten of the eleven schools practice inclusion and implement the instructional strategy of co-teaching. Two of the schools have improvement specialists who are part of the administration team but are not credited evaluators. There were also a few new administrators. Hence, six administrators were not viable candidates for the study.

There are four positions in which one could qualify as an administrator in the Smith District: principal, associate principal, assistant principal, and school improvement specialist. The associate superintendent evaluates principals, while the associate principals, assistant principals, and school improvement specialists are evaluated by the building principal. Two of the participants in this study were principals (Jesse and Iona), one was an associate principal
(John), and one was an assistant principal (Barry). The associate superintendent provided this study with access to the administrative staff meetings, which occur once a month, and the agendas of the meetings for the past two years. The meetings last almost a full day; all the principals of the school system gather for discussions at the principal’s round table with the superintendent and for professional development in the form of break-out sessions or whole-group instruction delivered by employees and leaders in and out of the school district. The principals then relay the information to their administrative teams. The school district in which these cases developed was explained in order to provide a foundation for the findings. In the next section the findings of these cases are presented.

Findings

There were three cases that provided findings from four participants in this collective case study. Each participant was interviewed four times in which the last interview was a follow-up interview for clarifications of their answers and a final opportunity to receive a copy of the interview transcripts. All the participants chose their offices as the venue of the interviews. During each interview, while the participants were discussing their roles, they expressed how role conflict and role strain play a huge part in their job. The different aspects of role conflict and role strain will be shared before the conclusion of each overarching role. The participants were also observed while they performed their duties. The elementary and middle school administrators were both observed twice: once during a faculty meeting and once during a school leadership meeting. The high school administrators were both observed only once in a faculty meeting, since their leadership meetings were closed sessions due to the discussion of staff evaluations.
An assortment of documents from the past two years was also analyzed. The documents that were analyzed included materials provided by the state for professional development about co-teaching, listings of professional learning at the district and building levels, board meeting agendas, faculty meeting agendas, building leadership meeting agendas, and district leadership meeting agendas. Since this was a collective case study, the findings on the participants’ roles as administrators and their perceptions of being administrators for the instructional setting known as co-teaching are presented case by case. After explaining the data from each case, the cross-case analysis will be discussed.

The findings of these interviews and documents helped answer the research questions that were presented in this study to explore administrators’ perception of and what they believe is their role in co-teaching. In order to uncover administrators’ perception of co-teaching, the administrators began by exploring their perception of inclusion and the laws that require inclusion. Then to understand the administrators’ perception of their role in co-teaching, the interview questions asked the administrators to reflect on and explain all the roles they experience as an administrator. Next, the interview questions explored how they envision they carry out the roles that are suggested in literature to lead co-teaching. The administrators were asked to explain any situations in which they found themselves as in the middle of either two people in their role set or if a situation placed themselves and their beliefs in conflict with their role as administrator. This conflict with their role caused role strain, and the aspects of their role that lead to this were explained. The context of each case is presented and provides insight into the school environment and educational background of the participants. The interview questions asked each participant to explore in depth their perspective of the phenomena co-teaching and the educational reform that promoted the use of this inclusive instructional setting. The themes
that surfaced during each participant’s interviews have been provided after the introduction of
the case. These themes for each participant were provided as a guide for the direction the
findings took in this study.

**Case One: Smith High School**

In this case there are two participants from one school, Smith High School. This is a high
school with over 2100 students (Table 1 and 2) and over 150 teachers on staff. There are a total
of seven administrators at this school and two of them volunteered. Therefore, both of their
perspectives are included. Each participant has similar yet different roles since John is the
associate principal, or second in command, and Barry is one of the assistant principals, or third in
command, at Smith High School. Since the high school is so large, the roles of the administrator
are divided amongst the administrators, so in order to get a more accurate picture of these roles
in a high school, multiple perspectives are beneficial.

The first participant in this case was John who is an associate principal, or “second in
command,” at Smith High. John has a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and taught all levels of
high school math for seven years. He was a general educator in a math co-teaching class for
many years. After seven years of teaching, he pursued degrees in leadership and a master’s in
education. Those degrees allowed him to acquire his first administrative position after 13 years
of teaching high school math. He has been an administrator for 18 years, during which he has
had multiple administrative roles as grade-level principal, athletic director, and senior-level
associate principal. He has been in his current position of associate principal for 13 years.

The second participant for this case was Barry who has two undergraduate degrees
(biology and microbiology), along with a doctorate in education focused on curriculum and
instruction. He taught at a college for four years and then began his teaching career at the Smith
District, where he taught science for 12 years before becoming an administrator. He has never had a co-taught class in his teaching career. He has been an assistant principal at a high school in Smith District for 12 years. Barry is a published author and leads a mentoring group, which he began in 1989. He is currently an assistant principal at a high school in the Smith District. The numbers for this chart were created based on

**Table 1. Number of teachers supervised who co-teach in Case One.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Core Content Teachers</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers</th>
<th>General Education Teachers Instructing a Co-Taught Class</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Teachers Instructing a Co-Taught Class</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers Instructing a Co-Taught Class</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Teachers Instructing a Co-Taught Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith High School</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Number of students enrolled in Case One.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Students</th>
<th>Special Education Students</th>
<th>General Education Students in a Co-taught class</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Students in a Co-Taught Class</th>
<th>Special Education Students in a Co-taught Class</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Students in a Co-Taught Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith High School</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**John.** John has been in education for 31 years. In his 18 years of being an administrator, his roles and responsibilities have shifted. As the “role of government in education has evolved,” John has seen education transition from “a teacher walking in, closing the door, and teaching their lessons and an administrator just managing the building” to a time where “everyone must
collaborate” in order to support the diversity of students. John believes that the most important aspect of being an administrator is “being a leader who has a shared vision.” In order for an administrator to have a shared vision, John believes that he must know “what do your teachers, young and experienced, … see as beneficial.” As an administrator, this vision will help create the culture of the school, which is an aspect of his role that “affects everything in the school.” He thinks that his years as a coach and athletic director helped him be a better administrator because he learned how to “to set a framework for planning, preparation, [and] seeing things that are coming.” This ability to “listen to what people desire while managing and recognizing their strengths and weaknesses” helps him create the master schedule for the high school. Creating the master schedule is just one aspect of his role as a high school administrator, but it is probably the most important role he plays. In order to do this role well, John must know all the certifications of his teachers, but he believes “most importantly, [in] the needs of the students, such as students with disabilities and students in the International Baccalaureate program.” Once he has created the master schedule, he can focus on the managerial aspects of his job by “making sure teachers have the resources they require,” and then his job really is to “get out of the way of quality teachers until a red flag occurs and he must intervene as an instructional leader.” John’s roles as an administrator will be discussed in order of how his role has been affected by school change and how he has influenced the school culture. Then John will delve into how he acts as an instructional leader while he manages aspects of the building, staff, and students.

Table 3. Themes for John.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Administrators</th>
<th>Themes for John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School change</td>
<td>1. Strings attached to depleting government funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Increased accountability for schools and educators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School culture | 3. State constantly changing curriculum  
4. Role conflict and strain with increase accountability through an increase in high-stakes standardized testing  
5. Role conflict with laws surrounding the consequences for students with disabilities |
|---|---|
| 1. School culture begins with the perception students have of the staff  
2. Co-teaching provides higher expectations for students with disabilities  
3. Collaborative climate through professional learning communities who have department common planning  
4. Role conflict and strain surrounding co-teaching |
| Instructional leader | 1. Instruction begins with administrator’s vision  
2. Role strain because of lack of training for administrators and teachers in reference to co-teaching  
3. Role strain from the lack in preparation of new teachers |
| 1. Hiring and placing knowledgeable and caring teachers  
2. New educator evaluation tool  
3. Equal roles and responsibilities of co-teachers  
4. Special attention to co-taught classes when scheduling  
5. Role conflict and strain with the new evaluation tool  
6. Role conflict and strain placing and overseeing co-teaching |
School change. John said that school change occurs either when “a new policy occurs” or when “you have a new boss.” The change with a new boss is usually minimal compared to a new federal, state, or local policy. An administrator might change “who you evaluate or a minor role,” but in general they will not mix things up too much “in order to not change the culture of the team.” The administrative team at the high school is “at least 18 people if you include the 11 teacher leaders, who are our department chairs, and the 5 assistant principals,” so changing all the roles of the administrative team would be a bit much for a new leader. The school change that is occurring because of federal and state policies that “we do not have control over is the amount of testing which is now required.” This school change is based on federal and, more recently, state policies that “create accountability, but puts way too much emphasis on the testing itself while taking up too many calendar days.” In regards to these school changes, John also stated, “I don’t think anybody can prove to me that all the testing has improved our [America’s] educational status.”

Federal policies. John believes that education is “too much top down, strings attached, dependency that I think we have to get away from somehow.” He said, “What I see the federal government really has done is created a dependency, no-win situation sometimes. I don’t mean it to sound negative, … but we do spend a lot of money, time, and effort trying to acquire the government funds, such as free and reduced lunch funds also known as Title I.” It seems like “every aspect of education has some funds which could be obtained from the federal government and I think the federal government then, in turn, pulls the strings on the schools.” John explains what he means by “strings” in that, “if you get the money, then you can only spend it in certain ways. Nothing wrong with that, it’s just that sometimes you have an innovative idea and you find you can’t use any federal money to implement the idea.”
John understands why the federal government influences how schools spend the funds obtained from the federal government, but he seems baffled at why certain aspects of federal policies, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), became law. John thought, “It [NCLB] was good for schools to make sure they are trying to close the gaps and help all five, not just one, culture of students perform well in school.” John said, “It forced you to examine everyone in the building,” and so John thinks the staff began delving into analyzing groups, such as low socioeconomic students and even students with disabilities. “It wasn’t a bad thing for us to close the gaps; it’s just that I don’t know that sometimes we don’t spend so much time and resources just playing the game.” He explained that the provisions required to fully implement the requirements of the law have never really been provided and, therefore, administrators had to be creative with the funds the schools were given. With all the bells and whistles they added to their school in order to meet requirements of the law, he does not believe it has affected student achievement. “If you think the precursor NCLB or our current College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) has made instruction better, I think one is a fool. I don’t believe in my heart that teachers use better instructional practices, and [that] kids are smarter or more informed because of NCLB or CCRPI. I don’t believe that, and I don’t think teachers do either.” John stated that some of the accountability through high-stakes testing is good, but the “amount of testing required for schools is too much.” John explained that the school has always “looked at the kids that are unsuccessful” and provided “tutoring and made sure they had enough support to be successful in school.” John believes that real school change has been because of programs the school system has brought in, such as International Baccalaureate (IB) or advanced placement (AP) courses.
According to John, the IB and AP classes are the ones, along with all the classes for students with disabilities that have influenced his role in building the master schedule the most. As the master scheduler, John said that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is another federal policy that influences his role. He believes that “The pendulum has swung too far in which there is a culture out there that doesn’t hold kids responsible for their actions.” “For the average public, they think of a kid in a wheelchair when they hear special education, but that’s not what I’m talking about. When I say the pendulum has swung, I am referring to all the students who have 504’s or behavior disorders.” Before a test occurs, John has to make sure that all students have the correct testing environment as required by their 504 or Individual Education Plan (IEP), and the last test had “244 students taking it in which 52 of those students required accommodations.” As John explains, “it requires us to throw an enormous amount of resources just for testing that day, and I just don’t see how where most of them test really makes that big of a difference.” John also gave an example of how schools are held to unrealistic expectations for some students: “If a kid tells you to go jump in a lake and refuses to take their test, the school is held accountable for his score and their graduation rate, but it only takes a few of those situations to torpedo percentages.”

State policies. John then exclaimed that the state has more influence over schools and plays a huge role in schools. “In the past 10 years, they’ve had a big role in math, as they have changed our math curriculum three times, and within those changes, there might have been a few sub-changes as well.” John explained that every time the state tweaks the curriculum, it requires him to ask the teachers to come in during the summer to re-write their curriculum maps and lesson plans. John said, “this constant changing of the curriculum exhausts the teachers, because they re-write the curriculum and get into the flow of it and then all of the sudden we change
again and then we continue being forced to change it.” John explained that the fact that the math curriculum has been reworked so much should in itself explain why students are not graduating. He said, “The students have not had a consistent order of math curriculum for the past 10 years.” All of this change exhausts not only the teachers but the administration as well. John stressed that change is not a bad thing, but changing the curriculum so often does not allow for adequate data collection on how effective the changes are and if they are making a difference.

*New principal.* John says the change with a new boss will be based on their leadership style, as he has “gone through three principals.” “I would say my first principal was more focused on managing the aspects of the building so more operational, but the second one was much more instructional and very little operational. The third one has only been in the position for five months but is probably more instructional.” John believes administrative roles can be flexible in general, and some things change based on the principal, but he has not stopped making the master schedule in 13 years, since it is one role most people do not care to learn.

*Role conflict and strain in school change.* John showed by his body language and tone of voice that he experienced a few areas of role conflict and strain because of federal and state policies, but none when it came to the change to a new principal. Role conflict occurs when someone feels like they are torn between two different roles or they feel like they are caught in-between two people (Getzels and Guba, 1957). Therefore, this conflict may cause strain or stress for the individual. When John was recalling his role in school change, three areas of role conflict and three areas of role stress were noted. Role conflict and role strain were noted when John was discussing the number of high stakes tests and what he believes is right for kids versus what is required by federal or state policies. One part of his job in which he recognized role conflict but not strain is complying with IDEA in reference to punishment for students with disabilities.
The most conflicted and stressful aspect of federal policy since the implementation of NCLB has been the increase of high-stakes standardized testing. John said, “I believe it is about accountability for schools and that it is headed in the right direction and well-intended, but we spend too much time testing in the high school.” John said that, in other high schools he visited, they have created an administrative position that only focuses on testing. “The increase in testing has created role change for sure, and I’m not sure for the better.” The ability of a student to pass the end-of-course tests that are required by state laws have really affected schools like John’s because they keep students from graduating on time. John says that, if a student does not graduate in four years, it affects the school’s graduation rate. John believes some students require more time to graduate because of their academic levels when they arrived at the high school. Neither the student nor the school should be looked down upon because it took longer for that student to graduate, as the purpose of the school, John believes, is to support the students and help prepare them for the college or career readiness.

There were instances of role conflict when disusing state policies for John. It has to do with how “the transient population affects our school’s graduation rate”:

Our kids are going in and out…I think that affects so many other kids and so many other teachers, and the federal government doesn’t care. We enrolled six kids this week [December] and not a single one of them will pass a class. Three of those kids told me they’re going to un-enroll and drop out because they turn 16 soon. For us, that means we have captured that student and he will count against us for graduation. The other end of that mandate is if the kid moves and never re-enters a school, we were the last ones to capture him, so, therefore, we have to have graduated him.
John believes that if students choose to leave school, the high school should not be held responsible for them. As John says, “you cannot make a student stay in school” once they reach the legal dropout age of 16.

John experiences role conflict because he believes that some aspects of the federal policy IDEA have made “the pendulum” swing too far. “I think there’s a culture out there that doesn’t hold kids responsible for their actions. It is this disrespectful and insubordinate behavior that gets teachers and changes the school culture.” He explained his thoughts behind this statement with an example. He said that if two students were in a fight and one of them had a disability and, therefore, an IEP, then the student with the disability would be given consequences under different guidelines than the other student, even if the student did not have a disability that affected their behavior. This is because SWDs can only be suspended for 10 days without convening a meeting to review the students Individualized Education Plan. “Forget it if they do have a behavior disability,” was John’s response when asked how behavior was handled for students who have a behavior disorder. There was a strong sense of frustration coming from John during this aspect of the interview. He added that he believes that “teachers are even more frustrated with the inability for schools to discipline students who are not respectful and responsible.” In general, John said, “You probably got the feeling I don’t care for them [federal or state policies] too much.”

**School culture.** John believes that “the biggest influence on a school culture is how students perceive teachers, administration, school personnel [and] how they perceive if they care about them.” The next most important influence on a school’s culture is “for administration to establish a culture of expectations of being prepared, responsible, and respectful for both the staff and students.” Once administration established these norms, then it is up to administration to
“constantly reinforce those norms throughout [their] building.” The final influence John mentions is the importance of “rallying points in the high school.” He thinks you “need a good football team or something for at least two years to help the kids come together and do some things.”

John would describe the culture of his school as “a fun-loving place where kids want to be” and who “generally get along.” The kids are very inclusive at Smith High. It is a school with broad diversity, and John would “consider they get along with each other, and not just get along, but are inclusive, who don’t seem to notice their racial differences.” “I take it a bit for granted until I visit another school and see how different their school culture is.” John compared their group of students to a “melting pot and a really good cross-section of America.” He believes he has contributed to the school’s culture by “putting the infrastructure in place and getting out of the way.” He thinks he should “listen to what you want and then let [them] see if [they] can do it.” He helps the school culture through creating infrastructure by hiring good people and giving them the resources they need to do their job.

Inclusion. John explained that inclusion occurs when all students are a part of the school. When John discusses inclusion, he is referring to co-teaching classes, as “they have minimal small groups, and [he is] not aware of any other inclusive instructional settings.” He believes that inclusion has “helped [us] do a really good service for students by helping them transition into the world.” John explained that inclusion occurred when all students were a part of the student body and students with disabilities spent time in a class with their general education peers. He believes that inclusion helps prepare students for the real world, where everyone is included. John stated that students with disabilities should not be placed in separate classes because that is not how the world works. They need to be in the same classes with the same high expectations as
their peers. He stated that there are “federal guidelines that drive the committees and IEPs,” which place students into “their least restrictive environment (LRE); that could be inclusion or small group classes.” John explained that the instructional setting they used at Smith High to include students with disabilities into the general education was co-teaching.

**Co-teaching: Perception and purpose.** “I think co-teaching is as good as the personnel that I have in the classroom,” stated John after he was asked what his perception was of co-teaching. “I can show you classrooms where I believe those teachers are as collaborative as possible and are meeting the needs of the student as explained by their IEP.” He thinks that, if he can hire or place the right people together, then it is really good and benefits not only the students, but also the teachers. He admitted that, when he was a math teacher, he had some co-taught classes and he was not a good co-teacher. He said, “I had the special education teacher act like an assistant and not a teacher.” He works hard to make sure the right teachers are paired, so it can be successful and the teachers can be equals in the classroom.

He believes that when he walks into a successful co-teaching classroom that “the teachers have blurry lines in their roles and responsibilities”:

I would like for you to be able to walk into a classroom and see two co-teachers and not knowing who the regular education teacher is and not knowing who the special education teacher is, supporting a whole group of students so you would not know whether they’re special education students or not, unless you saw collaborative groups that you knew some of the students had disabilities.

One reason John hopes you could not distinguish between the two teachers at Smith High is that John does not hire a special education teacher without them having a general education content certification for the classes they are instructing, “especially in math or science class.” If both
teachers have certification in the content area, then his visual picture of “blurry lines” can occur with the teachers. It allows “those teachers to collaborate on all aspects of the classroom while meeting the accommodations of the IEP” at the same time. One key aspect of co-teaching John continued to address while repeating the “blurred roles” is that it is imperative that there is not a “relax[ation] in standards, but that they are working on the standards that we’re needing to revisit in those areas.” He thinks that if anyone walks into the room, they should not be able to tell a difference between the two teachers, and that “maybe even the students wouldn’t know it either.” He believes it so much that he has “taken general education math people and had them get a certification in special education so they could be the co-teacher.” John stated, “I think the goal [of co-teaching] is to transition them out or get them where they’ve overcome their disabilities.”

**Collaborative climate.** John believes the teachers and staff at Smith High have helped students overcome their economic disadvantages or disabilities by having a very collaborative climate. John has put the infrastructure in place to make sure that each department “has the time within the school day to be collaborative.” All math teachers have had “common planning here for 10 or 11 years now.” One of the ways he believes he contributes to the school culture is by making sure teachers are in on planning with their departments so they can share lesson plans, instructional strategies, and accommodations that are working for students. “I don’t think staff development or collaborative planning works before or after school because somebody’s always got to get to child care, coaching, or a doctor’s appointment, and those are all real-life things that must be done and allowed in order to keep your teachers happy.” The collaborative planning is part of the infrastructure he creates to support his teachers and help facilitate a collaborative climate at Smith High.
Support of personnel. John explained that how, in the collaborative planning time, he makes sure the departments have and are trying to incorporate all their professional development within the school day. This helps show the teachers that they are listened to by administration, who values their time. John stated that he “shows support [to] teachers who are being successful co-teachers, [and he] makes sure they are placed together again next year.” One of the main ways John shows his staff he appreciates them is by “cooking for them.” John is a grill master and he uses the grills in the courtyard to make food for the staff, just a department, or certain students. “It surprisingly is not that expensive to grill up some steaks for the teachers so we can celebrate.” “We have lots of celebrations when we make a goal or do well at something.” They will celebrate when it is needed, such as at the end of testing or in the middle of a semester, to bring folks’ spirits up. He also believes that “support for high school is different than elementary. There’s not as much hugging and kissing going on around here, not at least with staff. It’s just not a touchy-feeling environment.” At every faculty meeting and other times throughout the year, they write notes for teachers and put them in a box for prize drawings. Another way John shows his support for his staff is by letting staff work from home, such as being an administrative assistant or registrar. He says, “I don’t care about their geographic location. If they can do their job better at home sometimes, I’m fine with that.” There are also times when beginning times are different for teachers, such as during final exams, so if students don’t get here till 11, then we will let teachers show up at their own discretion or “we let them have a department get-together at someone’s house before they come to work.”

Role conflict and strain in school culture. When reflecting on the school culture, John expressed experiencing role conflict and strain in his job multiple times when dealing with co-teaching. There was also role strain when thinking of how limited he is sometimes in providing
resources for his staff. He expressed the strain he feels when creating the master schedule and
knows that he needs more teachers so the classes can be smaller, but has to make the classes
large because they do not have the funds for more teachers. Throughout the interview, John
revealed the stress that occurs for all educators in this age of accountability.

There are two main aspects of co-teaching he has dealt with as an administrator that
created role conflict and role strain: “special education teachers who are certified in a subject but
do not want to teach it” and “co-teachers who are not collaborating.” He has had multiple special
education teachers who, on their certificates, are certified in math or science, but have no desire
to teach the class. He explained it with this example:

A regular education life science teacher said she wasn’t getting anything out of the
special education teacher, and the special education teacher said it was because she didn’t
want to teach life science. The special education teacher said she was not here for
teaching, but for helping the special education students in the classroom.

So John moved the teacher into another subject area after the end of the semester in order to
eliminate the role conflict and strains occurring because the co-teachers were not collaborating.
He would have moved them quicker, but there was not another teacher who could take her place.

John explained another situation that creates role strain for him and the teachers involved occurs
when dealing with co-teachers whose pedagogy are not similar. He says, “I can show you two
personalities that don’t work together, because philosophically they don’t believe in maybe some
of the accommodations for kids for whatever reason, and it is the worst situation for everyone
involved.” That is when John must change personnel, and he will do it as soon as possible so it
can affect as few students as possible “[be]cause I can tell you students in a class can tell when
two teachers do not like each other and are not collaborating.”
Another way John experiences role strain that affects the school culture by lowering teacher morale and the belief from teachers that they are supported by the administrative team is when he “can’t provide the resources” or make classes the size they should be for more effective instruction. Sometimes John cannot provide resources for teachers even when there is a large influx of students or there are materials teachers’ needs in order to successfully instruct their classes. When John cannot provide the resources, then he is as “up-front about why it can’t happen” as possible about the depletion of funds the school has received from the federal government. He believes that honesty is the best policy, and that letting teachers know that he is doing everything he can to obtain the resources they request helps them know he is on their side and has heard their request. John continued on saying that he also cannot make the class sizes smaller as he wishes he could when they get an influx of students or numbers are higher than the previous year.

I think sometimes it is hard to convince the superintendent, associate superintendent a lot of times what you’re doing. You can gain 200 students and [make a] request for new teachers but not get them. They give you six extended days, which is equivalent to one teacher. But if it was an elementary school, they get one new teacher for every 25 students.

John makes it all work in the schedule, but it is obvious that he wishes he could hire more teachers as inflows of students occur.

He remarked throughout the interviews how “stressful teaching has become.” It is really “difficult to show enough support to your teachers” when they feel like they are not making a difference because students continue to struggle on tests:
I see it in the faces of teachers when they give a test and they’ve graded papers all weekend and they walk in here and you can see it just kills them. You empathize and you go listen to them, and they’ll say, “I thought Ron had it, and it’s a 64 on this test. I swore he should have had an 80 and above.” There are people that don’t believe it bothers those teachers, but it does. It’s tough.

John thinks it is really hard to be teachers and support them in this age of transparency and accountability when “all eyes can see everything you do” and “you get rated on your student’s performance.”

**Instructional leader.** John remarked, “Everything starts with being a leader, first of all. I think you must have a shared vision in your building of what you want.” He affirmed that you have to have asked your staff questions about what they want, asked what the community wants, and asked what the school wants, and then see if your vision connects with the needs and desires of the school. If it does, then you will be able to be true instructional leaders because you have heard the needs of your school, community, and staff before implementing change. The next step would be “to know what standards must be met.” For a high school administrator, this is more difficult because there is no way you can know the content of all the subjects, but “you can be a good listener, work with teachers, and help them with instructional strategies and analyzing data.” “You have to make sure your teachers are helping their students meet the standards, and if they are struggling, then they should know they can come to you for help.” John reiterated that if he “hires good people, provides resources, such as common planning, technology, professional development, then you get out of the way and let teachers be the professionals you hired.”

**Preparation.** In order to prepare himself for his job, John keeps up to date with “policies about coding, as [his] job is more structural than instructional.” He said, “I’ve got to make sure if
a kid has an IEP and he has an accommodation on a test that he receives that accommodation, and I have to pull all the resources to make that happen.” John declared that one thing that has helped him and teachers stay up-to-date is that “Our online grading program has an icon to inform everyone which students have an IEP, and when they click on the icon, it tells them the accommodations that student requires.” In the past few years, one important aspect of his job has been “making sure the technology for the new testing system is working so when a student needs the program to read to them, that it will since that accommodation is an aspect of federal legislation.” He mentioned that, at the beginning of the year, the school system provides him with some review of laws, and if he needs clarification on something, then he can call the assistant principal at Smith High who is in charge of special education. If she cannot answer a question, then he can call the people at their central office who oversee special education. He has not had any classes on specific topics of special education and definitely not co-teaching. The teachers, he thinks, “receive training about co-teaching every two to three years.”

Role strain as an instructional leader. John did not reveal any role conflict when discussing his role as an instructional leader, but he did mention two areas of role strain. He believes that “there is not enough preparation of administrators or teachers about co-teaching.” There are two main aspects of co-teaching he would like more training on for himself and his co-teachers: effective instructional strategies and roles of co-teachers. If John could “provide more professional development on effective instructional strategies,” then he would. He also thinks he should help the teachers with “looking at the roles of co-teachers and help them blur the lines so students don’t know which one’s which.” Knowing the roles each teacher and effective instructional strategies would also help guide administrators when they are evaluating co-teachers.
John ended the conversation about preparation of educators with a long explanation about how he is “disappointed in the preparation in educators.” He believes that schools should be providing future teachers with more time in the classroom as student teachers, so they can learn aspects of being a teacher that are more difficult to learn in a class. He wants new teachers to know more about “how to manage students, how to reach kids different ways, hard work in developing lesson[s] for real kids, along with how to manage grading papers and all the other aspects of being a teacher.”

**Management.** John stated that, in this “era of transparency” where all the “classroom information, grades, and evaluations are online, it is instant accountability,” and neither the administrators nor teachers have little ability to “close the door and work in their room without anyone noticing what is happening.” This transparency in education has allowed John more access to what is really occurring in the classrooms than ever before. As an instructional leader, he uses the information that is available to “support the teachers in any way possible.” John says that this transparency really helps you see which “teachers are collaborating and getting the support they need or are still trying to do it all on their own.” Then, as evaluations occur, you can have those “tough conversations about accountability and collaboration that are required as they are needed.”

**Hiring and placement.** John’s role in the infrastructure of the school puts him in a place to be one of the people involved in the hiring of staff. He is the one who is knowledgeable on who is needed in the building and is in charge of putting teachers in their positions. The first things John looks for in a new teacher is a “good knowledge base” and “how much they care about what they’re doing and who they’re serving.” During interviews, John prefers to ask questions about “how they manage their classroom, collaborate, and if they have learned from
any mistakes.” John believes that, “since these issues greatly affect the culture of the school, it is imperative that anyone hired has these qualities.”

Now, when hiring personnel who could be co-teachers, the “number one is [they] do not hire anyone that doesn’t have the content and degree.” When he made this statement, he was referring to the special education teacher, because John says, “Legally, special education teachers do not have to have a degree in the content to be the co-teacher, but I have not hired a special education teacher without both the special education certification and the general content area certification in a long time.” He, of course, also “thinks the teacher has to have that collaborative spirit and understand their side, such as the legal ramifications.” When saying legal ramifications, John is referring to the fact that special education does have a few roles they must fill that the regular or general education teacher does not have, such as the implementation of the IEP and meeting the accommodation of the IEP.

When placing the general education teacher in a co-taught class, John first asks for volunteers and then will approach teachers he believes will mesh with a special education teacher really well. When looking at general education teachers, he looks for someone who has opposite strengths as the special education teacher, but similar pedagogy. He explained that, seven years ago, he needed a general education math teacher for an inclusion class, and he knew exactly who he thought would be perfect for it, but she had never co-taught before. He said that the general education teacher was “very good with kids, outgoing personality, and has a ton of energy, whereas the special education teachers is pretty reserved, but has a calming influence on kids.” John told her, “I have a gut feeling that I think you guys can work together. Look, if you don’t, you don’t. Why don’t you give it a try?” She did, and after the semester ended, she came to him and said, “Give them all to me!” The two teachers have been co-teaching together since then.
That is one example of “probably five or six different co-teaching teams that have stuck together for a number years.” The co-teachers who work well together are placed into the schedule at a higher level so the scheduling programs make sure those teachers are together.

*Evaluations.* John believes that the new evaluation tool helps provide a “roadmap” for administrators and teachers even though it was a requirement to use from the state. He does believe that this new tool is “a better tool in comparison to the old tool.” As far as his evaluation goes, it is not much different than the last tool. They have three conferences throughout the year with the principal to make and review John’s personal and professional goals. Then John “just downloads the documentation into the platform in which I can overwhelm any principal with documentation if I want to.” He thinks “it keeps you grounded on what you hope to accomplish for your school first, and for your students, and then maybe professionally for yourself.”

As for the teacher evaluation tool, there are pros and cons, John believes. He does say, “It is a better tool. I do believe it is a little bit more detailed in providing information to teachers, and it allows teachers to have a lot more feedback if it is provided by the administrators.” This new evaluation tool has multiple avenues for evaluating teacher goals, with four walkthroughs, two formal evaluations, a measurement of student growth, and student surveys. In John’s perception, “I think it’s fairer, but there are way too many observations required for all teachers.” When he conducts his walkthroughs, he takes his computer with him, makes his comments, and finishes the whole evaluation before he leaves the teacher’s room.

If he evaluates co-teachers, then he evaluates both of them in the same period, so he will stay in the room for the whole period. When he is observing a co-taught class, he is looking to see if “there is a climate there that they (students) feel like both teachers care and there are standards for behavior and academics.” He wants to see what the teachers’ “pedagogy looks like,
on pace with other teachers in that subject, are they differentiating, have students in groups, and most of all collaborating.” John of course also pays attention to how “kids react to teachers…and the rapport between them.” While John wants to see “blurred lines when he is observing co-teachers,” he knows there are some roles that are not obvious in the co-teaching classroom that lend themselves toward either the general or special education teacher and those he addresses in their evaluations. For example, “the special education teacher is in charge of writing the IEP so you have to make sure they are meeting the needs of the IEP for their caseload of students,” whereas “the general education teacher is going to create the foundation for the lesson plans, and then the special education teacher will help create accommodations for those lessons based on the students in the room.” He thinks, “co-teachers know their separate roles and then as they work together, [they] figure out the rest.”

*Building and provisions.* John does not have precise roles that pertain specifically to managing the building, other than the placement of teachers in their positions. He does, however, believe that one of the most important aspects of his job is “trying to lower numbers in classes as much as possible, especially for the co-taught classes.” As far as material provisions, John believes “his door is always open to assist teachers in acquiring resources they need for their classroom.” He will try to provide everything he can, but if “I can’t, then I will be straightforward as to why I can’t make it happen.” This year, one of the provisions he gave to the special education teachers was “removing a geographic barrier by placing their office closer to their content teachers.” This would allow the teachers easier access to their office between the classes they co-teach.

*Role conflict and strain in management.* As administrators manage the staff and building, there are many forms of role conflict and strain in reference to management. The conflicts John
mentioned in reference to his role in management cited the new evaluation tool and the placement of teachers in co-taught classes. When discussing the roles within management, John had four areas that caused him role strain. John expressed feeling stressed in multiple ways in reference to the new evaluation tool and when co-teachers were not collaborating.

John seemed conflicted by the new evaluation tool because he had both very strong positive and negative statements about it. John mentioned many aspects of the evaluation tool that he would alter if possible and realizations about staff he has made based on the evaluations. The first thing he would alter would be the number of observations for each teacher. John believes that if certain teachers, “such as my teacher of the year,” have proven they excel at classroom management, instructional strategies, and their students continue to meet expectations, then he should not have to observe them as many times as a teacher who is not as effective. John explained that there should be “tiered evaluations for educators, so if a teacher really does need support, then he has time to give” it. When looking at teacher evaluations from an administrator’s perspective, an aspect that causes possibly the most stress in the management role for administrators is “the amount of time you’ve got to be in there all the time.” John thinks that some administrators might get into the “check-the-box mentality” with teacher evaluations because they are required to be in the classroom so often that the quality of the evaluations might suffer. They have 131 teachers and only 5–6 administrators who do evaluations. John’s school has 90-minute periods, so he tries to limit himself to 2 evaluations in a period, so he can complete a total of 8 walkthroughs (10-minute observations) at the most in a day, but he said that some administrators said they could do “16–18 walkthroughs in a day.” John cannot imagine how being in that many classes in a day does not turn into a “check, check, check” in which the administrator is focused on “quantity instead of quality because they have so many evaluations to
complete.” He believes that, in order for administrators to focus on the quality of their evaluations, there should be a tiered evaluation system for teachers. “Teachers who are highly ranked do not require as many evaluations as ones who might need real support in an area or two.” John gave an example of what he means: “Do I really need to go into the current Teacher of the Year classroom 10 times a year to evaluate them? Yes. But it is for different reasons, like what she is doing collaboratively or because she invites me.”

When looking at teacher evaluations, John expressed concerns he has heard from his teachers as they discuss the growth model aspect of their evaluations. “One of the criticisms a lot of times is we get students who come into high school reading at a fourth-grade level, but you’re expected to get them to pass a ninth-grade lit class. Even if you end the year with a two-and-a-half-year growth bubble on that young man or lady, they still aren’t going to be passing the class or ready for tenth-grade lit class.” John continues, “You as a teacher had great growth with that kid, and it is not your fault the kid couldn’t make up three, four, five years in one year. I don’t think it’s a fairer system.”

The aspect of rankings that John can give teachers is another aspect of the evaluation tool that has created conflict and strain for him. He does not agree with “you can only give a teacher a 0, 1, 2, or 3, and I want to give them decimal values.” His reasoning behind this was that if he was teetering between two numbers, then “if I give them a 1 instead of a 2 because I definitely don’t think they are a 3, then there is a 25% movement in that thought and statistically it makes it invalid to me. I want to give them a 2.2.” Remember that John has a background in math. So from his perspective, since he cannot give a teacher an incremental score, “from a qualifying standpoint…teachers could say there was subjectivity that goes into the instrument.” John believes “this is a weakness to the new evaluation tool.” John has created a formula based on
progressive weights and uses it in summative conferences with his teachers and has presented it to principal, but nothing has come of it.

As John reflected on evaluations of co-teachers and felt conflicted, his response was that he does not think he “has really been prepared to evaluate co-teachers.” He thinks it was “hard to measure a gut feeling for who’s doing what they’re supposed to.” He knows that some aspects of the special education teacher’s role in co-teaching require him to observe things such as making accommodations for students with disabilities, but what he “doesn’t want is a dog and pony show.” He did not want the special education teacher to hop up when he walks in the room. He wants to see what is really happening in the co-taught classroom and not what the teachers think he wants to see. John knows that “a teacher may be sitting and doing something like a behavior check, which is very valuable in the classroom. They don’t need to put on a show for me.” He would “appreciate more training on evaluating co-teachers, roles of co-teachers, and instructional support.” He would like to provide the teachers with more time to observe his star co-teaching pairs so they can see co-teaching in action.

If he observes what he believes is a dog and pony show or “can tell they are going through the motions and seem disinterested in being in a co-taught classroom,” then he feels role strain and will check back with them after the evaluation. John will inquire what the teachers believe are their roles, as sometimes teachers figure out “clear-cut roles for each other and not necessarily to our advantage in some cases.” John likes to point out that the increased stress for administration and co-teachers, because of NCLB and the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, none of the students’ scores in the class can be ignored, so he cannot have teachers who are putting on a dog and pony show or are not interested in being in a classroom. He will also talk with the special education administrator and the department chairs to see if either teacher has mentioned
conflict between the teachers and if either of the co-teachers have said any of the following statements: “I can’t work with the other person in my room,” “The special education teacher is lowering the standards,” or “The general education teacher is treating me [special education teacher] like a person who can only run copies.” In any of those cases, John will meet with the teachers and try to remediate, but he will also place them in different positions if possible the next semester.

**Conclusion for John.** Throughout these interviews, John explained his roles as an administrator with candidness. At one point, he wondered who would read this, and then he said, “I can say whatever I want because this is my last year.” John thinks that inclusion is the correct instructional setting for students with disabilities, especially in high school, because it prepares students for the real world. Co-taught classes expose students with disabilities to higher expectations and higher-achieving peers, both of which will help encourage students to reach for more. His reasoning behind this perception was that he thinks high schools should emulate college or the workforce, and neither of those places have a small group setting. John used the terms *inclusion* and *co-teaching* interchangeably, as it is the only inclusive instructional setting used. John stated that inclusion should help the students learn how they can overcome their disability and transition into general education.

For John, his role is about the infrastructure he puts into place. He agonizes over who is teaching what, with whom, and how students will be affected in the age of accountability. John expressed his strong opinion that co-teaching is as good as the people he places together. He now makes sure that the old days of special education teachers acting like paraprofessionals are long gone and that they are certified in the general education content so the lines can be blurred. He believes that if co-teachers can share most of their responsibilities, their relationship will be more
amicable and beneficial to all involved. If not, then it is his job in which to either intervene or help them restore their working relationship so they may collaborate once again or find them new positions the next semester. He would suggest that after the people are put in place, he must then confirm that they have all they need for success. Finally, he gets out of the way so he can watch the magic of teaching unfold.

**Barry.** Barry described the role of an administrator as “extensive” and “challenging.” He believes that the most important aspect of an administrator’s role is to “support the teachers by comforting them, listening to them, getting them equipment, and galvanizing their relationship because teaching is a hard profession.” The first role he mentioned was being an instructional leader; he also enumerated the tasks involved in that aspect of being an administrator. He then discussed his role in the school culture, the constant change that occurs in education, and the management of the building and personnel, including helping teachers understand all aspects of the teacher evaluations. These are the four main roles the data revealed, but the most important theme for this administrator was the role of school culture. The two aspects of school culture that stood out from Barry’s statements were his role behind the marketing of the school and building relationships with teachers by helping them feel comfortable with all aspects of their jobs.

**Table 4. Themes for Barry.**

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**School change.** School change can happen on a macro level through federal policies or on a micro scale through a change in leadership. As an assistant principal, Barry has had to deal with both types of change multiple times throughout his career. A less drastic avenue of change is a change in leadership in the school system, specifically when a new principal takes the reins. The more noticeable changes occurred after federal and state laws governing education were altered. Barry stated that since he became an administrator, federal and state laws have
significantly affected his role as administrator in this “age of accountability.” He believes that the federal laws have shifted focus to student performance on high-stakes standardized testing, which has “placed more pressure on schools to achieve certain quantitative standards of measurement.”

*Federal policies.* Barry explained the most prominent role played by federal policy in education is the role of funding. Schools acquire much of their funding through title policies based on the student population, such as Title I for students with low socio-economic status. These policies “dictate how those funds will be used,” such as “inside versus outside the classroom.” Barry stated that this makes the school even more accountable, which means that it has to meet certain requirements to receive funding. The accountability for how the money is spent limits the school’s ability to determine the best use of the money. Nevertheless, Barry does not believe that accountability is a negative thing but that “accountability in education is long overdue.” He also brought up the “inequity of funds” provided to general education students versus special education students. He thinks that all funds should be used for any student in need whether it is a student with disabilities or a student’s family who cannot afford to have technology at home. He cited the following example:

A student with vision impairment and I think a learning disability would receive a big screen with a computer at home, and it is paid for by the school system. Now, you take a regular education kid here: They don’t get those types of services, so you’re talking about an imbalance, an inequity of funding.

The other main influence of federal laws on education is the aspect of accountability, which was an aspect Barry thought was long over-due for education but also a concern. Accountability in education for students, teachers, and administration has been highlighted since
the No Child Left Behind Act took effect in the form of high-stakes standardized tests. Barry said that the accountability of the No Child Left Behind Act “made us focus the lens a little clearer, which is long overdue, because all professions have accountability.” The act made schools focus more because it made them “dig deeper into the instruction to make sure that the kids, most of them anyway, learn what they are supposed to within a certain amount of time” so that “every student can either go to college, military, [or] post-secondary endeavors of any kind.”

State policies. Barry stressed that the state regulates education even more than the federal government through the No Child Left Behind waivers and the Race to the Top program, both of which continue to promote accountability through high-stakes testing. The waivers give control back to each state over how they will make improvements in education, but the accountability through high-stakes testing has not changed; it is just wrapped in a different box. The state legislation and department of education determines “what to teach, how to teach, [and] when to teach, and they [politicians] don’t have any degrees in education.” The states control almost every aspect of public education yet still place the most emphasis on student performance in high-stakes tests. Barry believes that the emphasis on high stakes testing has placed pressure on schools to meet certain standards in test scores, causing them to lose sight of the tenets of education. While he acknowledged the importance of testing, he stated that school should also “use other procedures and measurement tools to decide whether kids are adequately progressing toward graduation or they have met a certain standard.”

Barry explained that with policies on education there are positive aspects, such as accountability through high-stakes testing:

The days are past where kids are administratively placed, or we’re just using assessments with no internal reliability or validity. I think that the age of accountability has changed
education for the better. I think it’s long overdue … it has created equity within groups, whether you’re talking about racial groups, social and economic groups, or cultural groups. No matter where they come from, what language they speak, if they’re in your school, they have to perform at a certain level, and I think that’s good. You just can’t squeeze special needs kids under the rug anymore and say, “Well, we’re just going to give them a diploma just for participating,” or just because a certain group is performing low, well, historically, they’ve been performing low. Well, we, as teachers and educators, know that’s a problem: What are we going to do to fix it? I think that accountability piece has held us accountable in a good way.

Barry emphasized the importance of “realistic expectations” in accountability and the need for change in how many high-stakes tests are required each year. He claimed that the federal and state laws are “driving education in a good direction,” in that education now focuses on the academic performance of all students by raising expectations, but the educational system must continually evolve in order to meet the needs of today’s society. The people who should drive this change are the educators, not the politicians or school boards, who are in local control of education.

Local policies. Administrators have some local control over education, but it is building specific. Barry stated that when a new principal assumes the position, he or she experiences role change. The roles and responsibilities will vary based on the leadership style of the current principal, his or her vision, the goals, the ways to accomplish these goals, and “what the other administrators on the A-team decide.” There are five other administrators on the A-team other than the principal and Barry. According to Barry, “typically we sit down at the beginning of the year and talk about duties and responsibilities that we as an A-team will look at and see if anyone
desires any changes to their list.” The drastic role changes do not occur through the local policies but through the federal policies in this “age of accountability.”

**Role conflict and role strain from school change.** For Barry, the areas in which he expressed role conflict and role strain were the emphasis on high stakes standardized testing and the lack of local administrative control over educational policies. The inclusion of certain students was one area in which Barry explained he felt role conflict, but he did not spend his time stressing over it. The fact that educators have multiple roles did not create conflict with Barry, although he did express stress he feels and hears from teachers.

The most evident source of the role conflict and role strain Barry mentioned that affects school culture would be the emphasis on testing in the high school. The tension or role stain Barry feels is the pull between times he could be spending on supporting teachers verses the time he spends focusing on organizing for high-stakes tests. Barry stated, “Here at the high school, we test most of the year.” There is a domino effect in the sense that the testing calendar is sent out and teachers must teach the standards by certain dates so that the students can take the test. In other words, teachers lose some autonomy in their classrooms because they are expected to teach the standards on the test and that does not allow teachers to follow the path of student discovery. Barry shared, “I think it’s too much emphasis on testing instead of other measuring techniques to, I guess, measure and to tell how much kids know. I think that’s bad. I think testing is driving us too much.”

Barry also brought up the fact that teachers are not only teaching standards required for the high-stakes tests but also act as “mom, dad, teacher, preacher, friend, [and] social worker to these kids, which is very stressful.” Consequently, this created role strain for many educators. According to Barry, the culture of our society has changed. Many of the parents at Smith District
are working multiple jobs and might even be very young themselves, so teachers and administrators take on multiple roles for the students. These “many hats” that administrators and teachers wear lead to the “burnout of teachers,” because teaching is only one aspect of education in today’s society.

Barry believes that “inclusion should be used as much as possible.” However, the “inclusion of students with limited mobility physically and mentally” he has been told by teachers, may also cause role strain for them, and, therefore, role conflict for administrators. Barry explained, “The students may have a very, very low thought stream level [low intelligence quotient], but we put them in class anyway, which I think is not giving them the least restrictive environment because they need more than just specialized instruction.” Barry believes that special needs students with low intelligence should be included in class “once a week to give them the exposure,” but the best environment would be one where “they have all the support, teachers, equipment, [and] computers they need one at a time on their level.” This would occur in a small group classroom where they have a special education teacher and a paraprofessional to support them on their own specialized curriculum.

The other source of role conflict and role strain mentioned by Barry in the interviews is the educators’ lack of control in policies and, especially, consequences. He stressed the frustration he feels because politicians, including the school board, control the most important aspects, such as the policies and funding of education. They are the “driving force of education and regulate everything.” For instance, Barry felt like he was caught in the middle when the zero tolerance policy was in place and he had to expel “a kid who was a Boy Scout and forgot to remove his knife from his backpack after a weekend camping trip.” He said,
I had to fulfill my role as an administrator, but at that particular time I wish I could have looked at an alternative because the law at that particular time didn’t differentiate between the intentions of why that kid had a knife.

Barry has taught in multiple levels of education and other school systems and believes that schools all over the United States experienced similar situations; eventually, the zero tolerance policy law was retracted.

School culture. Barry explained that the “administration sets the tone for the entire school.” He added that the “A-team can hold either high or lax expectations” for the teachers and students, and they will either step up or step down to meet these expectations:

You have to hold people accountable for their behavior, the inclusiveness and sensitivity of a multicultural, multifaceted student population. You have to treat people with respect.

You have to model that behavior not only with your faculty, but [also] with your students, because students look at us.

The administration and school staff has a “hidden curriculum” of character education for the students, which includes teaching them that “the world is not going to revolve around you” and that they must “acclimate to the world.” This hidden curriculum connects with Barry’s statement about the many roles of a teacher and administration. The character education teachers and administration teach along with all the academic standards could range from how they should respond to someone when they are upset to how they show respect toward other peers and adults while walking down the hallway. Barry helps a group of young gentlemen students learn this hidden curriculum in his mentoring group every year. Teaching them this creates a positive and inclusive school culture.
Barry said, “when people walk in the door, [they can] see the difference because you can walk into the infrastructure of a school and tell whether there is pride in that school or not.” Barry proudly explained that the school has many accomplishments; he made sure to point out that these are not all in academics or sports but include mentoring programs (Barry leads one for African American males), community programs, community service, and the arts. He stated that the school is a “microcosm of the world, and the students get along very well.” Barry thinks the inclusive culture of the high school and the students’ joy and pride is undeniable.

**Inclusion.** When Barry was asked how inclusion has changed education, he responded, “I think inclusion as we see it now has changed education in a good way and a bad way.” He does not believe inclusion is for everyone; in particular, it is not for those with “limited mobility, physically and mentally.” He suggested, “You may want to bring them [special needs students] in once a week just to give them the exposure of being a normal high school kid.” He said, “Our kids protect our special needs kids; they sit with them in the cafeteria and help them.” Barry believes that inclusion works for students with disabilities that can understand the lesson and just need some support. Barry suggested focusing on the right environment for the students to function at their highest level, rather than focusing on their inability to do certain things or be in a certain class just because placing a student in a team-teaching class helps the school’s ranking. He stated that students with disabilities simply need more support than other students and that should not be seen as a bad thing; it is just reality.

When asked about the types of inclusion classes at the high school, Barry said that there are multiple instructional settings for students with disabilities, such as regular [general education classes], inclusion or team-teaching, self-contained with some inclusion classes, full day self-contained classes, and modified day in which students only take core classes. Barry also
believes that for many students with disabilities, we “need to be more realistic in that these kids
might not graduate high school and go to college, and we need to prepare them to function in the
world, to be independent.” Barry believes that high schools should revert to career readiness
paths in areas such as customer service, mechanics, and plumbing.

**Co-teaching: Perception and purpose.** According to Barry, “Co-teaching is a good thing
if done correctly” that produces “effective change.” He mentioned that co-teaching is called
“team teaching” in their school. He explained co-teaching as follows:

They, the special and general teachers, are at the same level: colleagues. They plan and
design assessments together, take turns teaching, have the same responsibilities, and
should do everything the same. … They are both instructors at the same level and just as
important.

Barry stated that co-teaching requires more time and that it is important because some of
the students “can definitely benefit from it.” However, he cautioned, “no blanket technique
covers everything.” Barry said that in a co-teaching class “the inclusion kids get specialized
attention, individualized one-on-one instruction with a maybe modified lesson, but not to the
point where it is watered down.” He explained that co-teaching is based on educational research.
He mentioned that a co-teaching class does not cost extra because “the regular education teachers
are going to have all the equipment, support, and resources that they need in order to get their job
done.”

The administrators use the evaluation tool “to make sure the regular and special
education teachers are addressing the standards in an appropriate way, using correct teaching
strategies, assessments, differentiation of instructions, classroom environment, and
communication,” which will confirm if co-teaching is effective. If it is not effective, Barry stated
that they “need to look at it and refine it to address certain needs for certain kids because one thing doesn’t work for everybody.”

**Collaborative climate.** Barry stated that his school “definitely” has a collaborative climate. The teachers “have to collaborate because of the PLCs [professional learning communities] and common planning,” which is one of the best practices emphasized in the school. Barry explained that administrators attend the PLC meetings to “hold them [department chairs] accountable to lead.” Teachers can no longer work in isolation; they must collaborate to meet the demands of today’s education, especially if they are co-teaching or team teaching. The collaborative climate does not stop with the departments in the building but is extended across the curriculum and in vertical articulation meetings held during professional development days. Both the teachers and the A-team are highly collaborative: “We work as a team, a very, very close team. We meet every week. We have each other’s back, both professionally and personally.”

**Support of personnel.** Barry reiterated that the staff supports each other at this school. One of the ways that the administration shows its support for teachers is by sharing their duties, “such as lunch duty and lunch detention and extra-curricular activities.” To break the “divide between teachers and administrators,” Barry said that he tries “to galvanize relationships” with the teachers “by co-teaching with them.” When Barry co-teaches with his teachers, he leads the instruction for the teacher while they assist him. Barry’s goal is to “let teachers know that you are in the trenches with them,” since he is “still a teacher first.” Barry shows support for the teachers by “making them feel comfortable and [helping them] get the equipment that they need.” Barry also shows support for co-teachers by “treating everyone equitably in the equation.
There is no number one and number two teacher; everyone is held to the same level of accountability,” because they have the same observation tool for every teacher.

*Role conflict and strain in school culture.* Barry revealed two aspects of role strain and one area of role conflict he deals with in reference to the school culture. Working with co-teachers has caused Barry role conflict and role strain throughout his administrative career. Recently, the safety of the school has become his biggest cause of his role strain.

Barry has been the administrator between a special education and general education teacher who were co-teachers many times in his career. The role conflict between the co-teachers made him the ‘man in the middle’ and caused role strain for him. He had to help the teachers have a professional relationship and learn how to collaborate with each other so that the teachers could share equal responsibilities of the class. Most of the time the conflict occurred, Barry said, because the special education teacher did not know the class content or had difficulty managing student behavior. The requirement of these conversations, Barry admits, is a part of his job, but there some strain does exist.

Barry observed that the “school culture is changing from an external influence” and this is what causes stress for Barry while carrying out his role. He added, “The safety aspect of the schooling process is changing because our society is changing in a bad way.” As the administrator of operations, Barry works with outside agencies, such as the police, to make sure the school has safety plans in place for any type of situation, including an intruder or a shooter. He said, “The school is a soft target, so we have to constantly revisit that to address the issues.”

*Instructional leader.* Barry stated that his “number one role” is to be an instructional leader. He explained that an instructional leader “supports personnel and curriculum and instruction.” He explained that an instructional leader “supports personnel and curriculum and
instruction,” be it in professional development, access to information and technology, or the provision of resources. Barry mentioned that his role in the past was more managerial, but now, “in the age of accountability, it has to be a team effort of instructional leaders.” While they still handle the paperwork and disciplinary aspects of the job, as instructional leaders, they must also be updated with current research. Barry demonstrates that he is an instructional leader through teaching with the teacher: “I actually go in and teach with them, and kind of model what I expect of them.” He also works with the two departments he evaluates on “creating assessments, helping to lead the meetings, giving them vision, and also helping them understand why that’s important when it comes to teacher evaluation instruments.”

**Preparation.** Barry attends different professional development sessions and reads educational resources and news to keep himself updated with current educational issues and then disseminate this to his departments in order to provide a vision for his department. The Smith District is “ahead of the curve” in professional development and “proactive” in training, which is one of the reasons the staff is so “good.” Among the proactive training sessions mentioned by Barry were the training/review modules through the online compliance director that every staff member of the district must take every year. These modules review different educational laws, such as the code of ethics, sexual misconduct reporting, mandated reporting, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and copyright for schools. However, for the past couple of years, none of the modules of the Compliance Director have included the topics of inclusion or co-teaching (Appendix M). Smith District also provides staff with multiple days of professional learning in pre-planning, professional learning days, and post-planning on topics such as “MYP: The Next Chapter,” evaluations, and literacy training as listed in the sample from 2014.
(Appendix N), but none of them for the past few years have been specifically about co-teaching for administrators or teachers.

Barry said he has had training on inclusion laws almost every year from the Smith District’s Department of Special Services but has not had training specifically on co-teaching. When questioned about training for teachers on co-teaching, he stated, “there are professional learning days throughout the year” but could not find any documents to support that claim or recall when or who taught those courses.

**Role conflict and strain as an instructional leader.** Role conflict and strain occur for Barry as an instructional leader because federal and state funding has decreased every year, so the ability for Barry to attend or send teachers to professional development sessions is limited. Without the finances to send teachers to professional development sessions, ineffective co-teaching will more likely be difficult to correct. Thus, Barry said that they often “just remove the special education teachers and reassign them.” Based on the evaluations, the reason the co-teaching partnership does not work is that it is not really a collaborative partnership; instead, one leads and one assists. Administrators try to “use the evaluation tool to help write specific things that are targeted for improvement, then [provide] remediation and training.” Many times, the issue with ineffective co-teaching is “the lack of content knowledge of the special education teacher or the management abilities of the special education teacher.” If there were funds for professional development, then Barry could get the special education teachers the training in content they need in order for equal responsibilities in the co-taught classroom.

**Management.** Management in administration includes overseeing personnel (teachers, paraprofessionals, and students) and the building. This study focused on administrators’ perspectives on overseeing the teachers. There are multiple aspects of overseeing personnel:
hiring, placement, provisions, roles and responsibilities, and evaluations. Barry stated that “in the
days past, administrators pushed paper; they did the logistical thing.” Administrators still manage
the building, but “it is no longer [a setup] where an administrator would go into an office and
they are isolated from the school.”

*Hiring and placement.* As an administrator, two aspects of managing the staff are hiring
and placing the staff. Barry explained that candidates apply for a position online. The
administrators then assess the applicants based on the needs and master schedule of the school
and the applicants’ qualifications, degrees, and certifications. According to Barry, “If they [the
applicants] are multifaceted and can teach multiple subjects, then we are getting more for our
money, or bang for our buck if you will.” The interview process is also crucial: “A person can
look very, very good on paper, but when you interview them, that can change.” Barry admitted
that the final decision is out of his hands. As with most school systems, the teachers in Smith
District are hired by the school system and then placed in the school, usually the school of their
choice and the one they went to for the interview.

General and special education teachers are mostly placed based on the “needs of the
master schedule.” With the current legislation, the areas in which a teacher is certified or highly
qualified indicate to the administration which classes a teacher is allowed to instruct.
Administrators must examine each teacher’s certifications before placing teachers. When placing
co-teachers together, Barry said that special education teachers “must break the material down or
differentiate it, so the students can understand that information; if they can’t, then co-teaching is
not productive.” This is a main consideration when placing special education teachers in co-
taught classrooms.
Barry said that a special education teacher would know they must differentiate, as it is a required role of co-teaching because the administration informs teachers of their roles and responsibilities. As administrators, Barry said, “we keep them [teachers] focused, if you will; we had to look through the same lens. We re-emphasize those things every year because we are a data-driven school. We target the weak areas.” The roles and responsibilities of both teachers in a co-taught class are to “deliver information; develop a good, positive, professional relationship; develop their lesson plans; and [make] common assessments.”

**Evaluations.** The principal evaluates Barry, and Barry evaluates both the general and special education teachers in two different departments. The evaluation for Barry requires three conferences (pre-conference, mid-conference, and post-conference) and goal setting. During the conferences, Barry and the principal discuss goals and how Barry will attain them. The teachers in Barry’s department also complete a survey on him each year. The positive aspect of the evaluation tool is that “it keeps him on his toes because he knows he is accountable for his goals and professional development.”

As for the teachers, Barry has three conferences with them, along with four 10-minute walk-through observations and two formal 30-minute observations a year. He considers the new evaluation tool more comprehensive but continually explained that it requires too many observations for all teachers. He wished that teachers who had shown they are effective could have fewer observations, so he could spend time with new teachers or teachers who were struggling. He explained that the same evaluation tool is used for special and general education teachers: “Special education teachers should be evaluated the same way as regular teachers, because co-teaching is just a model, a matter of semantics.” When observing a co-taught class, Barry evaluates both teachers at the same time. In addition, Barry looks at “the dynamics of how
they get along, their teaching techniques, and if the co-teacher model is working.” The way he believes he knows the co-teaching model was working is if he sees the teachers taking on similar roles and demonstrating they are sharing the responsibilities of teaching. The benefit of the new evaluation is that it provides them with data that helps them “be reflective of what the teachers are doing in their classroom.” The new teacher evaluation tool also incorporates a survey instrument for the teachers based on at least 15 of their students. Barry explained, “Students are pretty accurate and honest with what they say on those things. I think that’s pretty telling on a teacher, whether they are doing a good job or not.”

Building and provisions. Barry manages the building in his specific role in operations. Aside from evaluations from teachers, paraprofessionals, and a certain group of students and their parents, he also receives evaluations from the “custodial staff to make sure everything from a day-to-day perspective is running smoothly.” Ensuring the “safety and security of the campus” is another duty in the realm of building operations. Barry works with outside agencies, such as the police and fire department, to make sure the school is prepared for any event. While he makes sure that the building is fully functioning and clean, he also ensures that teachers have the provisions they need to instruct their classes. Barry believes that “teaching is a challenging enough job,” so he tries to “help teachers get the equipment they need” to support them.

Role conflict and strain in management. When dealing with the management, Barry faced multiple aspects of role conflict and strain throughout the year. As those barriers emerge, Barry and the other administrators “create a plan to solve the issue.” Barry experienced role conflict and strain related to “budget restrictions;” they “cannot buy certain things” because no money is allocated for it. Barry also experiences the strain of school safety because of the reality of
today’s society with mass shootings. The most common sources of role conflict and strain in management were the new teacher evaluation tool and ineffective co-teachers.

One of the main sources of role conflict and strain for Barry was the amount of observations required by the new evaluation tool. He stated, “The state tends to think the more steps you have in the process, the better it is, but I disagree with that. I think you need to have very good, efficient steps.” He added, “You know your good teachers; you know your bad teachers. We need a process to help those teachers that are marginal to get them where we need them to be with professional development.” The conflict and then strain occurs when he knows that the marginal teachers could use more of his time to “raise their level of performance,” but he is required to spend time with the good teachers who are already high performers. Barry believes that the new evaluation tool “is better than what we used to use, but it is too time consuming.”

Barry explained that sometimes when teachers are placed in a co-teaching partnership together, the partnership does not work out and this causes role conflict and strain for teachers as well as administrators. This can be seen during classroom observations and discussed as part of the teachers’ evaluation. Barry described this situation as follows:

Different personalities, different ways of teaching, they just don’t mesh. They may very well be good teachers, both of them, but the partnership is just not working for the kids. It’s not about them; it’s how they work together for the kids. We may have to move that person to another classroom, or pair that person that’s co-teaching with one teacher or another, to another department or what have you.

Barry stated that when teachers are not collaborating, the department chair’s observations or conversations with the teachers, along with the evaluation process, are helpful. Barry said he has experienced role conflict and observed role strain in co-teaching when the special education
teacher does not demonstrate a strong knowledge of content information during conversations with the students. Another aspect of role conflict and strain in a co-teaching relationship that he has observed is the lack of “good classroom management skills” from one of the teachers, be it the regular teacher or the special education teacher. If either of these aspects is observed during an evaluation, Barry said, “We have to immediately look at some remediation and some training there or maybe even replacing one of the teachers.”

Thus, the conflict arises of possibly not having the funds to send a teacher to trainings or classes they need in order to be an effective co-teacher or any teacher who could use training. As Barry evaluates and works with teachers, he learns who and how teachers need support from him. Unfortunately, sometimes role conflict and strain surfaces because “my hands are tied and I cannot make the decision[s] I think are necessary to support my teachers, because we do not have the funds for them.” One reason for the lack of funds could be the fact that the “legislature cut back funding.” The lack of Barry’s ability to give teaching tools, electronics, or professional development for the success of the students causes role conflict and strain for him and the teachers.

**Conclusion for Barry.** In order to comprehend Barry’s perception of the inclusion setting known as co-teaching, his ideas about inclusion required analyzing. Barry’s perception of inclusion was one of mixed emotions. Statements about how inclusion changed education had positive aspects of inclusion that were often juxtaposed with negative ones. Barry explained how inclusion has brought all students into the same school, but at the same time it has created monetary strain on schools. He expressed his negative feelings about the inequity of funding that occurs between special and general education students. Barry thinks that all students should have equal access to the funds so that any student could ask to have a computer at home and not just
special education students who have that privilege because of certain laws. Those laws not only give funds to certain students, but they require them to be placed in regular classes. Barry believes that it is good for students with disabilities to feel like they are regular and be exposed to regular classes, but he does not believe inclusion is for everyone. When he discussed those who should not be included, one can conclude that he was referring to the idea that severely disabled students should not be included in the general education classroom on a daily basis for all subjects. He thinks inclusion should be realistic and schools should place students who can handle the general content into the inclusion classes. When Barry referred to inclusion, he was inferring that co-teaching was the only inclusion instructional setting he knows of in his school, so he uses inclusion and co-teaching as synonyms.

Barry believes co-teaching is a positive instructional setting if executed correctly. Amicable relationships between the general and special education teachers were stated as a must for the setting to work where they should see each other as colleagues who are on the same level. Neither teacher is the head teacher in the classroom, so the teachers should assiduously plan together. It should be noted that when Barry spoke about co-teachers, he was referring to the special education teacher and not the general or regular education teacher. The only difference in the general and special education teachers’ roles in the classroom was that the special education teacher was in charge of making sure the students with disabilities were receiving the individualized instruction or modifications they required without watering down the content. He does not think that co-teaching costs the school any extra money because the teachers are treated as equals and, therefore, receive the same resources.

Barry’s roles in the instructional setting of co-teaching blend within all of his roles as an administrator since he sees all teachers as equal. As an administrator he believed that supporting
teachers was the most important aspect of his job. He showed his support by letting them know he is available for them. He believes he is an instructional leader who supports the staff. Barry wants them to feel comfortable with him as an instructional leader, so he actually tells the teachers he is available to co-teach with them. When he was explaining this, he was referring to co-teaching with regular or general education teachers. He did not mention co-teaching with special education teachers. Another role he believes exists for an administrator is to make sure his teachers have all the resources they need for their classroom. One aspect of the resources he provides to show his support for teachers is allowing them to attend professional development trainings or sessions, as they need, but there have been more financial limitations placed on this aspect of resources in the past decade. Barry clarified that the resources are equally shared among all teachers, so there is no discrepancy amongst funds for teachers. Adversity occurs if the two teachers in a co-teaching class are not benevolent. This was the only aspect of his role that is different for teachers who co-teach. If this occurs, he will step in as the mediator and help them by providing a plan and training if needed. Sometimes he will remove the special education teacher from the class if the plan and training in helping the two teachers become more amicable was unsuccessful. In the end, Barry believes he must do what is best for teachers and students.

Case Two: Smith Middle School

Case Two occurred in a middle school for Smith District. This is the only middle school for Smith District, but the 7th and 8th graders are housed in a different building than the 6th graders. For autonomy of the administrator, all administrators are assumed to only be in charge of one grade. Jesse has an undergraduate degree in psychology and a master’s degree in educational leadership. He began his educational career as a science and math teacher in the
middle grades for a total of eight years. Jesse experienced co-teaching for at least one year while he was the general education science teacher. For the last two of his teaching years, his role was a part-time teacher and part-time grade-level assistant principal in the middle school in which he is currently the principal. He was then promoted to elementary principal and stayed in that position for nine years. He is currently a middle school principal for one grade level.

Table 5. Number of teachers supervised who co-teach in Case Two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Core Content Teachers</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers</th>
<th>General Education Teachers Co-teaching</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Teachers Instructing Co-Taught Classes</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers Co-teaching</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Teachers Instructing Co-Taught Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith Middle School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Number of students enrolled in Case Two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Students</th>
<th>Special Education Students</th>
<th>General Education Students in a Co-taught classroom</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Students in a Co-Taught Classes</th>
<th>Special Education Students in a Co-taught classroom</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Students in a Co-Taught Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith Middle School</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jesse. The first two things Jesse said about being an educator were the following: “This is my passion. I also see this as my calling.” He continued, “My number one goal is achievement for everybody involved: students, myself, teachers, parents. If I do nothing before I take my last breath, just be sure that I made a difference somehow, some way.” He explained his main role as
an administrator is “being the lead learner, balanced with managerial tasks.” “One common thread” for all his roles is “to make sure that we have a safe and orderly school environment.”

Table 7. Themes for Jesse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Administrators</th>
<th>Themes for Jesse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School change</td>
<td>1. Top-down changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Inclusion is unavoidable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Increased accountability for schools and educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Role strain from loss of educators voice in educational policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Role conflict and role strain from increased accountability through an increase in high-stakes standardized testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Role strain from incomplete evaluations and lagging data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Role conflict and role strain from changing curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>1. High expectations for staff and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Inclusion is the norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Co-teaching provides higher expectations for students with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Collaborative climate through professional learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Role conflict and strain surrounding co-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional leader</td>
<td>1. Administrators are the lead learners through inquiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Provide training to co-teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Management | 3. Role strain in reference to supporting co-teaching  
| 4. Role strain from lack of preparation for administrators and teachers about co-teaching |

1. Hiring and placing highly qualified co-teachers  
2. Specialized instruction in co-taught classes  
3. New evaluation tool  
4. Teacher support specialist for special educators  
5. Role conflict and strain placing and overseeing co-teaching  
6. Role strain with new evaluation tool  
7. Role strain through aspects of support from Smith District |

**School change.** Jesse has experienced school change throughout his career as an educator. Most of the changes have been top-down changes from the federal, state, or local governing bodies. Since Jesse has been an administrator, some of the local change has stemmed from him, but when those occur he believes it is a “two-way street as opposed to top-down.” Jesse believes that changes in the school should be focused around the “vision of the school.” Changes he makes to a school are focused around the school vision and based on “the needs of the students, academic or other, and the needs of the staff.” Jesse’s role may also experience change or implement change based on “the school and community, along with partners in education who bring ideas and initiatives and resources that they have readily available to them.”
Jesse believes that the school changes have created positive results and changes in education while, at the same time, some have placed strain on educators.

*Federal policies.* Jesse explained that the federal government has “multiple roles in schools with specific guidelines to follow.” The federal government “plays an important role, because it impacts everything from student attendance to funding guidelines to food services.” The school receives funds from the federal government in support of certain groups of students such as “second language learners and students with disabilities.” “All the laws,” Jesse believes, “seek to get everyone on the same page so that you don’t have, even within the state, schools and districts and administrators making things up as they go.” The policies are a way to bring about “compliance and standardize services and expectations.”

When Jesse became an administrator in the middle school more than nine years ago, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was a federal policy that influenced his role. He said, “I saw myself going from being a lot more focused on the needs of all students [to] now being forced, almost, to look at the needs of individual students, but yet grouped.” Jesse continued, “NCLB required us to subgroup kids and look at their assessment data and attendance data,” which was attached to an “absolute bar.” Under NCLB, all students were expected to reach 100% proficiency no matter their background or ability, so “mandates that intended to leave no child behind still had a lot of work needed in the area of improving growth and actual achievements, so they fell flat since an absolute bar is an unrealistic expectation.”

The next federal policy that was implemented and still affects Jesse’s role as administrator is the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004. Jesse said, “It has consistently given me direction in terms of keeping inclusion at the forefront of how we plan and schedule each special education student’s instructional day.” He remarked, “It’s unavoidable.”
Jesse explained that this law is unavoidable because it requires schools to place students in the least restrictive environment, and so every year much of the master schedule is based around the needs of students with disabilities. He went on to say, “since 2004 the expectation is to increase the number of students with special needs participating in the general education environment.”

Most recently, Jesse noted, Race to the Top (RT) is the federal policy that “increased our accountability.” Race to the Top was a federal policy implemented by President Obama to give states a way around NCLB. “It ushered in a new evaluation system; it ushered in a new way to measure school success with the college and career-readiness performance index.” The new way to measure school success includes scores for school climate, fiscal responsibility, and student achievement through a growth model. Jesse expressed concern when he explained that the rollout of this new measurement for success of his school is still not complete after three years. The state still does not have scores for fiscal responsibility, and the students’ test scores are considered “lagging data” because they did not receive them until September of the following school year.

**State policies.** The state has even more control over schools, but Jesse states, “as a charter district, we have some flexibility in how certain rules can be waived, and we are now in a phase where we do not have to seek individual permission or approval to waive.” The example he gave to paint a picture of this is that changing the school’s master schedule is now a building-level decision instead of requiring board approval. “So the role of state policy still influences some of the core areas, but it is not as controlling as it used to be with us being a charter district.”

**Local policies.** Now, the control is given more to the local governing bodies, such as the district and/or the school board. One aspect of local policies that Jesse believes the school is doing well in is “meeting 21st-century expectations.” He elaborated on 21st-century expectations:
It’s actually using some very prominent skills to facilitate instruction and learning. One example would be collaboration. That’s a 21st-century skill. That’s a departure from where we were only three years ago when we had some students doing some group work, but not that’s the norm.

Jesse said that school administrators expect teachers to collaborate with each other to write curriculum maps, lessons, and assessments, and they expect the teachers to be grouping their students together and teaching them how to collaborate with each other also. Jesse believes collaboration is a vital 21st-century skill that teachers should be “facilitating through learning.”

Another 21st-century skill, which can be seen in the state and local assessments, is technical learning. Jesse explained what he meant by technical learning as “when our students are asked to provide some reasoning behind why something is.” In his school every subject is expected to have at least one question on the assessment that requires the students to write technically and explain why or how or to interpret it. Jesse explained that when his drama teacher uses a play script, she does not just have the students learn the lines, but they have to analyze the feeling and meaning behind the lines or interpret the lines so they can then perform the lines.

*Role conflict and strain in school change.* Jesse explained that administrators and teachers feel like they have no voice in what actually occurs in their schools because school initiatives come from the federal government, state, or district and this causes conflict and strain in education. Jesse believes this is one thing that “disengages people from their job.” Jesse said the teachers may see it as “Okay, we’ve got to do this because we were told” not because they believe in it or think it is what is best for students. For example, when NCLB was enforced, “it added multiple layers of documentation and data disaggregation that focused primarily just on
testing,” so teachers who were conflicted and stressed, began focusing their curriculum on the “test instead of the whole child, and it sort of skewed the focus.” Schools had no desire to narrow their focus, but when a school is told it must “prove [its] worth with one of two assessments,” what other change could the government expect to occur?

Since Race to the Top, the incomplete evaluations the school receives have been a source of frustration to Jesse because “there are components of the index and evaluation system that have yet to be used, measured, or even identified.” He continued:

One example is financial efficiency of schools. That is a measurement on the index that has never been identified. Another is the use of student growth percentiles. That still has yet to be utilized or measured, and of course the fact that it’s now considered lagging data is problematic, especially when it comes to things like school improvement.

When asked for some clarification about the above statement, Jesse expressed his concern and strain over the lagging data. A new state student assessment had been created and taken by students in April, and the data from it were not received until late September, making it difficult to use the data for teacher summative evaluations, student promotion/retention meetings, or creating school improvement plans for the following school year. Because of the lagging data, Jesse said, “you don’t get the school’s index results that can inform your future plans until the next school year when decisions have already been made and implemented.” It all just seems to have “led to another level of bureaucracy in which the rules continually change with each and every last one of these, and even though the laws are written, you know, some time ago, some states are just finding ways to comply.”

One aspect of change comes in the form of “vouching for different state curriculums.” As the state changes the curriculum, then the schools must follow suit. Many times teachers feel
they have no voice when it comes to the multiple changes in curriculum that come from state or
district curriculum initiatives. Then teachers express the stress they feel with all the curriculum
changes to Jesse and he is placed in a situation where he may feel role conflict, but he must help
his teachers accept the changes and own the changes in curriculum. Jesse explained that the state
will implement a new set of curriculum standards and the teachers will “think you’ve got it” and
then “there’s another change that happens.” He said, “You get it and then you can tell there is
another change coming but until you see the finished product, you don’t know.” If the
curriculum changes, Jesse continued, then you know the state will also change the evaluations
and assessments. Then, there will be another round of training and curriculum writing Jesse will
have to create for his staff.

**School culture.** Jesse believes the overall culture of his school is positive. “School
culture has a very strong impact on student achievement, and if it is positive, it undoubtedly can
lead to positive student outcomes as well as overall growth for everyone.” The biggest influence
on a positive school culture is “a sense of safety and security.” If teachers and students feel like
they are in a haven, then they can be themselves and thrive in that environment. The next aspect
of school that influences the school culture, Jesse says, is “high expectations for everybody.”
Jesse was very adamant about the fact that the high expectations are for the entire staff and
student population, a kind of no person left behind. He has contributed to that culture by
“modeling and promoting in a very tangible way. Not just saying I’m on the team, but at times,
leading the team.” He believes that “when collaboration, respect, and trust are all a part of the
makeup of the relationships,” it creates a positive school culture. Part of the positive school
culture, Jesse said, can be credited to the inclusive and collaborative climate that is pervasive
throughout the school.
**Inclusion.** In Jesse’s eyes, inclusion is “all kids accounted for in the educational environment in the general educational setting.” Jesse continued, “It’s my conjecture that there are unidentified students in schools, so inclusion has always been a part of education whether people recognize it or not.” When Jesse was a kid, if he had finished his work, then he would ask his teacher if he could go into the class with students with disabilities, as one of them lived in his neighborhood and he thought he was a cool kid. When he was in there, he would help them with their work. Jesse stated that inclusion is now not “a novelty or an exception, but it is the norm.”

In the past, Jesse explained that back in the past 15 years and even now there are people he knows on the side for inclusion of all students with disabilities and some of his friends who are against it. He believes that those who are against it maintain that position due to a lack of “exposure to it and maybe they lacked sufficient training and insight, and there are still some knowledgeable people that believe students are supposed to be served in different settings based on their specific needs.” When he was a teacher in Smith District, he inquired about inclusion and informed his administration that he wanted to be a part of any inclusion they were implementing. Now as an administrator, he is very familiar with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) because “it does not just have protections, but also guidelines on kids, students having access to the general education curriculum.” Jesse continued, “Each state even has a targeted percentage of students with disabilities [SWD] having to take part in the general education curriculum.” Jesse went on to explain that the recommendation from the federal government is that “at least 80% of SWD” should participate in the general educational setting.

**Co-teaching: Perception and purpose.** In order for many students with disabilities to be successful in the general education class, Jesse says that they have three inclusive instructional settings: “co-teaching, supportive instruction, and supportive instruction with a
paraprofessional.” To clarify for Jesse, the first supportive instruction he described is technically called collaborative instruction. The placement of students in these three inclusive settings is “student-driven based on their needs written in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).” Out of the three settings, “co-teaching is the most or widest used and it is where you have two certified teachers in the environment. One is providing the general education curriculum, and the other person essentially is there for specialized instruction.” Jesse believes co-teaching is utilized more than the other two settings because “it has a place in research, but I think it’s more because of the needs of the students.” His perception of co-teaching is “when it works, based on purposeful planning and using student data to make decisions on what’s appropriate, it’s undeniably effective.” The other reality that occurs is “you essentially end up with a general education teacher and a person who is more like a room aid or a paraprofessional.”

Jesse knows from his personal experiences with co-teaching that “the key component is the opportunities [sic] to provide specialized instruction” without the student with disabilities being “overtly or purposely segregated.” In order for teachers to accomplish this, Jesse mentioned that there are “models of co-teaching such as parallel teaching.” This individualized instruction is what he expects to see occurring when he enters a co-teaching classroom, and he believes co-teaching is “beneficial for all the students in the classroom … so the deliberate outcome is increasing student achievement.” The other benefit for students is that they are “getting exposed and experiencing different teaching styles that find ways to complement each other.” Plus, Jesse said, “The benefit will be that student [is] never having to leave that room or be segregated from their peers and still get what they need.” Jesse said that teachers also benefit from co-teaching: “Teachers benefit from the ability to break the class down into smaller learning units based on the specific needs of students.” He believes the “ultimate benefits are
fluent collaboration, problem solving, and having a way to distribute responsibilities for the instruction.” Jesse continued, “One person should not feel overburdened or overloaded based on the needs of students, but feel a shared responsibility.”

*Collaborative climate.* Jesse stated that it is “very evident” there is a collaborative climate in the school. He believes that a hallmark of collaboration “open sharing, and the sense of caring, not just professionally, but personally for each other.” He stated that it is “very evident here when you look at resources, ideas, and strategies all focused on ensuring that.” He used the example of the science department at his school. He explained that:

The scope and sequence of the curriculum matches not just the needs of the kids, but also is aligned to what each and every teacher is doing so you have a very strong sense of group planning occurring as well as consistent dialogue, because even though the lessons are not exactly alike, each teacher still has their own style and how they deliver it, but the content is the same almost by the day … one child could move in a day to another classroom to a different period or different teacher, and not miss any instructional content. That’s powerful.

As a former teacher, Jesse knows that would be really hard to accomplish if the teachers weren’t collaborating, dialoguing, and planning together. All this collaboration occurs outside of the teachers’ paid day with the exception of the four Professional Learning Community (PLC) half days that are embedded into the school calendar. Every quarter the departments present a “curriculum quarterly to the administrative team which explains how they are on track, being successful, and struggling.” This allows each department time to share its successes and needs with the administrators. Jesse pointed out that the collaborative community is supported by the fact that the school not only groups teachers by their content department, but also has students
placed on teams. The teams comprise 120 or so students who have the same core content teachers (math, English language arts, science and social studies), which allows those teachers to collaborate more in order to help those students be more successful. The school also has monthly data team meetings in which the teams specifically look at and discuss students who are struggling learners with other support teachers, the counselor, and the school improvement specialist. At the end of the year, the administrators pay teachers to come back for a two-day session they call “connect the dots.” “These sessions give teachers a voice in what worked, what didn’t work, and make decisions that will impact the upcoming year and future years,” Jesse said. It is a “time for reflections, as well as action and pre-planning.”

Support of personnel. Giving teachers protected time for planning is one way that Jesse and his district show support of his personnel. When Jesse discussed support, he expressed his appreciation of the availability of his superintendent and associate superintendent, his immediate boss. Jesse said, “they show him they support him in real ways.” He gave two examples of how they show their support: in their attendance of school events and in the open dialogue that exists between them. “I don’t know too many others of my colleagues in other districts that can pick up their cell phone and call the superintendent, reach them, and ask a question.”

In the same way he shows support to his staff with his accessibility: “Being available, I think, has to do with visibility and accessibility, so we’re more apt to discuss recent, current events and needs if you see me more often.” He continued by saying “sometimes it’s just being a good listener and observer.” In addition, Jesse believes you must also be “responsive, when there is a need or want, and it’s not always that they get what they want, but that there’s feedback.”

This year, Jesse knew that the special education department could use some more support, so he brought in a teacher support specialist for them. The teacher support specialist works with the
special education teachers and all the co-teachers. Toward the beginning of the year, she presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining co-teaching with each of the co-teaching pairs by department. Jesse said he has “continued to give them feedback on ways they could hopefully become better co-teachers.” He gives them feedback through their evaluation “both informally and formally” on how they could grow into stronger co-teachers. The special education teacher might have had continued feedback from the teacher support specialist, but the general education co-teachers have not met with her since the initial session.

Jesse involved himself in special education because he believes “it is critical that you have administrative input and support because it is a matter of making certain that the students’ needs are being met.” He participates in as many IEP meetings as possible in order to help “build the foundation for those students.” In order to support the students, he will “look at the actual style and personality of the teachers … while sometimes convincing teachers to become co-teachers if a student requires a certain type of teaching environment.” He continued, “I’ve always felt the need to be a part of the conversation to help either train someone or encourage them to participate in it, if it’s best for the students.”

*Role conflict and strain in school culture.* Jesse explained that there could be some role conflict and role strain felt within a positive school culture. There can be role strain experienced in these aspects of the role of the administrator. When looking at inclusion, specifically co-teaching, Jesse explained that the most distress occurs “when opportunities for specialized instruction are missed. You can’t call that co-teaching just because you have two bodies in the room; it doesn’t make it co-teaching.” When there are two teachers in the room who are not collaborating as co-teachers, then the classroom will have “very little impact” on student achievement. This could create conflict between the teachers that causes strain for administrators
and the teachers. Jesse believes it is of utmost importance that both teachers are collaborating so that the students have the support they require. If the special education teacher is not providing specialized instruction, then “you can’t say that’s going to be effective for that child because they never gave them any treatment in the environment based on their needs.” Jesse states that when teachers are not co-teaching, many people think it is because their personalities do not mesh, but he believes “it comes down to skill. It’s highly dependent on the skill set of the teachers.” He continued, “If a person has a weakness or some inconsistencies in the delivery of content, that’s going to impact the effectiveness of the kids’ responses.” He then explained that there are instances in which a special education teacher is highly qualified in a content area, but is not comfortable with that content. As an administrator, Jesse does not learn the weaknesses or inconsistencies in teachers until he spends time in the classroom observing them. During the observations, Jesse can feel and see the conflict and/or strain between the teachers and that is when he must intervene for the sake of the students. In another instance, a special education teacher stayed in a content class for many years as a co-teacher, but was not actually current with the curriculum. If the special education teacher cannot teach the curriculum accurately, there will be some role conflict and strain between the teachers. According to Jesse, “all of these examples can be a problem” and can lead to role conflict and role strain for himself and the teachers. As a principal, Jesses believes the bottom line is that the cost of ineffective co-teaching is that “you’re paying certified salaries and benefits to somebody that is performing the same thing you could’ve paid a paraprofessional to do.”

*Instructional leader.* Jesse began his interview explaining that his main role as an administrator is the “lead learner.” A lead learner, Jesse explained, is focused on “student achievement first and foremost, along with faculty and staff support and development, and
community outreach.” In order to do this Jesse stresses that you must “lead by example, but also be a part of a team.” Jesse thinks you must “model in real time all the qualities that would increase, not impede, but increase student achievement.” Jesse did not always consider himself an instructional leader, but “through study, experience, and support I evolved to believe that I am.” He used to believe that he was just in charge of everything, but then he “shifted from wanting to manage, to wanting to lead.” He now involves himself in curriculum decisions, instructional strategies, assessments designs, and such that teachers are normally in charge of so he can be on the team with the teachers. Jesse created a visual for this by talking about a dance floor:

You want to be on the dance floor, but a lot of times on the balcony, checking out the moves of the dancers and providing them with help: You’re off beat; I need you to get back on beat. We’re not doing that dance with this song. You know, those types of things.

He now shows his staff that he is the “lead learner, head inquirer, while promoting and modeling collaboration as much as possible.” All of this is the “pinnacle of all that is establishing positive, productive relationships with people.”

Preparation. In order to be prepared to be an instructional leader, Jesse participates in professional development and keeps up to date on the latest trends in education by reading journals and subscribing to many newsletters from places, such as the United States Department of Education and state-level board reports. Smith District helps keep its administration up to date on “education law and special education law in legal training.” Jesse explained that their superintendent “does a fantastic job redelivering significant changes in the Principal’s Round Tables, which occur on a monthly basis.” The school also requires administrators and teachers to engage in the compliance directors, which are online review sessions about ethics and such.
When reviewing how Smith District and Jesse have prepared themselves, their buildings, and their teachers to be more effective co-teachers, there was a realization that no policies are in place, but that “there are practices and procedures in place that come from the office of students with disabilities, our special services office.” The most recent practice implemented by the special services office is “progress monitoring of all students with disabilities in the co-taught environment.” Jesse explained, “The special education teachers have a professional goal, which is aligned to the district’s goal, in which they analyze their caseload students’ attendance, behavior, and content [ABC] data every quarter.” Jesse continued that he has not yet seen the district goal but has been told about it. There is training for teachers about co-teaching that is led by a teacher on special assignment who is helping the special education teachers. This support person meets on a consistent basis with the special education teachers, but has only met once with the general education teachers who are the other half of the co-teaching partnership. Jesse has set up an office for the teacher on special assignment while providing technology, such as a SMART Board, and any necessary office equipment. Jesse clarified that the money for the office came from the district’s Department of Special Services (DSS) and not from their school funds. “DSS does a good job of supporting the teachers,” he said. As for DSS supporting administrators, “in administrative meetings we discuss the inclusion participation rate by looking at data and giving us guidance on how to interpret the data.” They have not had specific professional development on co-teaching.

**Role strain as an instructional leader.** Jesse believes the only role strain that occurs for him as an instructional leader is if co-teachers are not collaborating well because they were not prepared for their position as a co-teacher. That is why he brought in the teacher support specialist, as the special education department was a department that needed more support in the
school. Jesses explained that sometimes as an instructional leader you must know your limits and should ask an expert in an area for help and support so your teachers can be more effective at their jobs. The strain that followed for the teacher support specialist is that she was spread between multiple schools and could not spend as much time as needed with each teacher who needed more support. Jesse wishes he could have the teacher support specialist full-time at his school and include her as a member of the administrative team. As a lead learner, Jesse would like for himself, “more professional development in current best practices and any significant changes to any of the models of co-teaching.” If he had this training, then he would be up-to-date with the expectations of co-teachers and could evaluate them more accurately.

**Management.** The second role Jesse mentioned in this interview was “managerial tasks.” He elaborated about what these managerial tasks are, saying that they “include running of the building, organizational type thing[s].” The other roles of management of a school for an administrator are hiring and placing staff, evaluating staff, and making sure the building is running and teachers have the provisions they require.

**Hiring and placement.** Jesse takes hiring staff very seriously. “The Haberman Foundation, who trains administrators to interview teachers and learn who will be successful with students who are challenging,” has trained him. He makes “a recommendation for a candidate for a position, but the school system does the direct hiring.” Jesse makes that recommendation after he has “checked credentials, spoken with previous supervisors, and of course interviewed the candidate.” In his last school he also:

…developed a teacher interview panel, because if you’re going to work with someone and consider them a part of your team, wouldn’t it be good to get to know them
beforehand, ahead of time, to get some impressions to see what you can do to help them coming in and what they may be able to contribute to the team?

His hopes are that he can set up a similar team at his current school, but it has not come to fruition yet. When looking at hiring a co-teacher, he looks for different things. “Initially I look at experience, degree in a certain subject area, and their ability to communicate is huge.”

When looking at placing co-teachers, Jesse first “asks for volunteers.” He would next have “one-on-one conversations with team leaders to see if anyone is interested and then go directly to the teacher.” Then he works with the district’s “DSS to help identify areas of strength for the special education teacher to support students in those specific courses” so they can be paired with the most appropriate general education teacher. Once he has established who his co-teachers will be, Jesse had the teacher on special assignment meet with the co-teachers so they would learn their roles as co-teachers. Unfortunately, this did not occur at the school until September this year. Jesse believes that:

…the general education teacher is primarily responsible for the core curriculum and development of the overall lessons, and pacing of the lessons, and also classroom management. I believe that everything except for the development of the lessons and the core content, all but those things do not fall under the category of the special education teacher. The special education teacher, even though they are responsible for class management, they’re responsible for student achievement. Their student achievement is going to be primarily predicated on how they’re delivering specialized instruction to students that they’re serving from time to time.

Along with teachers understanding their roles, they also need to be “well versed in the co-teaching models of instruction.” Jesse believes that “the two more powerful models, in my
experience, are parallel teaching and team teaching, where they [teachers] are feeding off each other almost like a one-mind type thing.” At some point in the lesson you would have the “special education teacher providing specialized, one-to-one or small-group instruction for the students that are on their caseload for that content class.”

Evaluations. Jesse explained, “almost four years ago now, the new evaluation tool was first piloted after it was implemented in the state and other Race to the Top districts.” Smith District was a pilot system for the evaluation tool and “now it’s law.” Jesse said, “For administrators, our process is goal-oriented.” Administrators begin with goals and then provide evidence that they have either met or exceeded those goals. There are three conferences—pre-, mid-, and post-, that Jesse has with the associate superintendent, who is his immediate boss. There are eight standards Jesse is responsible for achieving; these are “instructional leadership, school climate, planning and assessment, organizational management, human resources management, teacher/staff evaluation, professionalism, and communication and community relations.” He believes that the strength of the evaluation tool is that “it does involve multiple measures over the course of a school year.”

As far as the teacher evaluation tool goes, “teachers have a total of four (10-minute) walkthroughs, two formative (30-minute) observations, teacher documentation, and administration providing evidence,” said Jesse. Teachers also have three conferences—pre-, mid-, and summative—with the administrators evaluating them. While the strength of the new evaluation tool is the multiple measures, the weakness is that it requires the same amount of observations for all teachers. If there was an opportunity to tier the amount of observations for teachers, Jesse believes it would create less strain for the teachers and him.
Jesse mentioned that the teachers have a set of expectations provided by the state about each of their 10 areas of evaluation, and “I provide the special education co-teachers with an additional set of expectations that are specific to the specialized instruction that they should be providing for the kids” (Appendix O). Jesse continued, “They also have different, yet agreed upon, documentation of evidence that’s specific to the work they do with the progress monitoring mentioned earlier, along with managing a student’s IEP.” With all these guides for teachers, Jesse believes “my evaluation is as effective as the tool.”

**Building and provisions.** In order for Jesse to make sure the building is running smoothly and teachers have the provisions they need, he said he has “managed it collaboratively … by making small tweaks.” He believes that “training and professional learning” are key to the success of the teachers. He provides as much training and professional development as possible. He appreciates the way Smith District has divided the professional learning days into district days and school days. This flexibility allows him to plan workshop opportunities as needed by his staff. He continued, “I set [up] a workshop opportunity specifically for co-teachers in our social studies department to help improve instruction in the domain area of economics,” as it was an area in which the teachers stated they could use support.

One of the provisions Jesse has provided to the special education teachers is the teacher support specialist (TSS). When Jesse became administrator, he saw the need for some extra support in the special education department and, therefore, asked if the TSS could be housed in the building to specifically support the special education department. This TSS “is there as the compliance arm of what I need to see happen,” Jesse said, adding that the TSS is there for “on some levels coaching, on other levels of compliance, as they can guide and give specific
feedback based on what they’ve observed without it being an evaluation” on things, such as co-teaching and writing the individualized education plans for their students with disabilities.

*Role strain in management.* Jesse believes it is up to the principal first and foremost to make sure co-teaching is an effective instructional strategy, and the assistant principal would be next in line. As they manage co-teachers, one situation Jesse noted that has come about is:

…nobody’s monitoring students who require it because the [special education] co-teacher is not consistent with getting to the co-teaching classes in a timely manner. This causes the general education teacher a lot of angst because they are relying on the teacher to be there, not just for crowd control, but because those kids have learning needs when the general education teacher is launching a new topic or some content. If that [special education] teacher is not there to help produce it, it causes issues with the students, because they are not getting what they need.

This is where Jesse wishes there was more training on the models of co-teaching, so that the instruction could be more effective in the classrooms.

Jesse also believes that “the professional evaluation tool needs to be fixed fast, or we’ll never be able to determine whether or not we’re making a difference.” The evaluation tool the state requires is “not fully developed or implemented yet.” Jesse explains in detail the stress that it causes for him and teachers:

There are components of the teacher and the evaluator’s side where student achievement data is required by law, and we’re in our fourth year of implementing it, but the student achievement data hasn’t been ready in time to make it a part of the evaluation.
He explained that student scores on the state’s high-stakes standardized test is “lagging data” and, therefore, is not ready for teachers’ summative conferences. Jesse “does not know if the evaluation tool will ever be finished.”

As far as building and provisions, Jesse believes the role strain would be felt in the fact that “I’m not satisfied with the amount of support the school system provides for co-teachers.” He believes there could be improvement. If he were allowed to create more support for co-teachers, then he would “increase the amount of coaching support that co-teachers receive.” The TSS he brought to the building to support his special education department is “not building-specific, so she does have obligations that she is split between and is technically not a part of the leadership team at the school.” He dreams of having someone who is a school-based person who could assist “general education teachers with co-teaching strategies, differentiation, and other best practices along with assisting the special education teachers with specializing instruction for their students with disabilities. Jesse said, “I would also ask what teachers want, because I believe the other part of what I think could improve is teacher voice.”

**Conclusion for Jesse.** Jesse is passionate about being an educator who is the lead learner and inquirer. This passion is for all the stakeholders involved in education, which includes, but is not limited to, the local community, teachers, students, and parents. He sees inclusion as something that always has been and always will be. He believes it will always be the most appropriate option for students with disabilities. Jesse believes that most of the students with disabilities should be placed in co-taught classes in order to meet the needs of the students. When it comes to co-teaching, Jesse sees the roles of the general and special education teacher as collaborative, but distinctive at the same time. There are certain roles and responsibilities the general education teacher oversees such as lesson plans, pacing of curriculum, and classroom
management, while the special education teacher oversees specialized instruction and data for
the students on their caseload. In order for teachers to accomplish this in a co-teaching
classroom, Jesse suggested they use different models of co-teaching, such as parallel and team
teaching that he used back when he was a science co-teacher.

When it comes to Jesse’s role as an administrator in co-teaching, he must be involved,
have discussions, and provide support needed for the co-teachers. Observing the teachers and
having honest conversations about what they are experiencing as co-teachers involves him in the
co-teachers’ classrooms. Once he has observed them and had conversations, then he knows what
support they need from him. The first support he provided was personnel, which is support he
believes schools in general could use more of, in the form of a teacher support specialist. This
person presents all the co-teachers with a foundation for co-teaching and helps the special
education staffs stay in compliance with all the federal laws surrounding special education. He
also helped provide physical resources for the special education department’s meeting room. In
order for Jesse to support his staff, he must look, listen, and then act.

Case Three: Smith Elementary School

The final case for this study occurs in an elementary school in Smith District. It was the
largest of the elementary schools in the district at the time of this study. As seen in table 6, there
are almost 800 students in the building, whereas most of the other elementary schools in Smith
District have around 500 or less students in the building. Iona is the principal of Smith
Elementary and there are two assistant principals Iona oversees. As explained in table 5, she
supervises 52 teachers, which can be double what other elementary principals supervise. Iona has
an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree in education, along with a leadership add-on and
a doctorate in education focused on curriculum and instruction. She was an elementary teacher
for seven years before becoming a model teacher for another southeastern district, working in a program with beginning teachers that were cut due to budget constraints. She was never a co-teacher when she was a teacher so her only personal experience with co-teaching was through working with co-teachers when she was a coach. She worked for a program in the State Department of Education for two years as an instructional specialist and a literacy coach until the program was cut due to budget constraints. Iona then became a literacy coach in the Smith District for two years before becoming an assistant principal at an elementary school for three years. She has been in her current position as an elementary principal for five years.

**Table 8. Number of teachers supervised who co-teach in Case Three.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Core Content Teachers</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers</th>
<th>General Education Teachers Co-teaching</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Teachers Instructing Co-Taught Classes</th>
<th>Special Education Teachers Co-teaching</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Teachers Instructing Co-Taught Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith Elementary School</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9. Number of students enrolled in Case Three.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>General Education Students</th>
<th>Special Education Students</th>
<th>General Education Students in a Co-taught class</th>
<th>Percentage of General Education Students in Co-Taught Classes</th>
<th>Special Education Students in a Co-taught class</th>
<th>Percentage of Special Education Students in Co-Taught Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith Elementary School</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Iona.** Iona believes “everything” is her role as a principal at an elementary school. Previously, Iona was an assistant principal, so she immediately began discussing the difference between the two roles: “it’s very different being a principal from an assistant principal because as a principal, you feel you have to set the tone for your building.” She explained that her biggest challenge was “really trying to reset a culture of collaboration and higher expectation. That’s basically the umbrella under which everything else falls in terms of working with teachers, working with students, and working with parents.” She also explained that she takes “temperature checks” of teachers throughout the year in order to gauge whether collaboration is occurring and high expectations are in place. She takes temperature checks through conversations with teachers, participating in meetings throughout the school and professional learning communities. Because her major role is to improve student achievement, she checks how the students are doing in their class, so she knows how she can support them. Iona said that she wanted to make sure that “mindsets are collaborative, positive, and full of high expectations for all.” Because her role is to have “my eyes on everything,” she takes her place on the “balcony” or looking at the big picture of how the school worked together to make sure everything and everyone is “working effectively.”

**Table 10. Themes for Iona**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Administrators</th>
<th>Themes for Iona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School change</td>
<td>1. Administrators set tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dependency on federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Increased accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Role conflict and role strain from the politics in education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School culture | 5. Role conflict and role strain from increased accountability through an increase in high-stakes standardized testing  
6. Role strain from lagging data |
| 1. Administration sets the expectations  
2. Full Inclusion through co-teaching  
3. Collaborative climate through professional learning communities  
4. Role conflict and strain surrounding co-teaching |
| Instructional leader | 1. Required role for administrators  
2. Role strain in reference to leading co-teaching  
3. Role strain from lack of preparation for administrators and teachers about co-teaching  
4. Role strain from the lack in participation of new teachers |
| Management | 1. Hiring caring, quality teachers  
2. New evaluation tool  
3. Provides planning time for co-teachers  
4. Role conflict and strain placing and overseeing co-teaching  
5. Role strain with amount of support from Smith District  
6. Role strain with evaluation tool |
**School change.** Iona said, “Education is constantly changing and evolving.” Iona has dealt with school change ever since she became a principal five years ago. She has led her staff through major changes in the state curriculum, a new evaluation system for administrators and teachers, and new school rating regulations for the school through Race to the Top. According to Iona, “The level of accountability is much higher; the expectations for the teachers are much higher.” As federal, state, and local polices change, Iona must determine ways to support her staff through these changes. The key advice she was given about the kind of change that her staff might accept was to “not ever throw the district under the bus. You own it, or help people work through it . . . by helping them understand it and why we have to do it.”

**Federal policies.** Iona said, “As a Title I School, we do receive federal funding, which brings enhancements to the school programs and certain staff positions.” Several positions change from year to year based on how much funding they receive, so this year federal funds have paid for positions, “such as the school improvement specialist, a lab science teacher, and our parent liaison.” The federal funds also pay for “100% of the student population [to] receive free breakfast and lunch, so really, we depend on them very much here.” Iona continued, “Then, of course, because we do receive those federal funds, we have to adhere to all of the rules that govern them, too.” Moreover, federal laws determine how the school assists students with disabilities through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Individual Education Plan (IEP), students with accommodations through 504, students who are homeless, and students who are second language learners. Stipulations and limitations are attached to all funds they receive.

Iona first moved into a leadership position as a literacy coach when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was implemented, which “definitely affected her position” because she was paid by
federal funds. NCLB changed how and why schools looked at data and how the public, based on those scores, perceived the schools. According to Iona, “NCLB made you look at the achievement of all your subgroups of students and required school[s] to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).” It forced the educators to pay attention to subgroups, such as “special education, ESOL, economically disadvantage, and different racial groups.” Iona believed the rationale for NCLB was correct because it required them to “really analyze the instruction in the classroom and the progress students were making in the different instructional settings.” However, the idea of an absolute bar and the assumption that every child could be on the same level at the same time was not realistic. It did however “force us to find strategies to work towards helping all these subgroups, not just throwing them all under the table.”

Another federal law that Iona “can’t even begin to explain” how it has affected her as an administrator is the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). She must spend a great deal of time making sure we are in compliance . . . and our students who have IEPs are getting what they need in terms of their services, working with teachers, and working with parents. I must also work a lot with our district level when it comes to IDEA, probably more so than any other law. She has many meetings with special education teachers or with someone from the central office who wants to confirm that they are meeting the needs of students with disabilities and talking to parents. Iona believes, “it’s a stricter law so we want to make sure that we are definitely in compliance, and that does take some time.”

The current federal law that most affects Iona’s role as an administrator is the waiver through Race to the Top. This waiver now gives more control to the state. The new state plan is “very intense, much more intense than AYP, but we made gains this year, so we’re very excited
about that!” Iona likes the higher expectations of the new assessments and the growth measure, which replaced the absolute bar, because it eliminated the “scripted programs in elementary school.” She “thinks that [is] how it should always be, but it does require a teacher to have a different skillset than before.” The rigor of the assessments has helped teachers accept that these are the new expectations, and now “it’s not such a foreign concept from an instructional point.” Iona believes “she can see that the children are benefitting.” When the school received the student’s scores on the new state end-of-grade tests, “to see that level of rigor and to see the number of students who did not meet the proficiency level is very eye-opening for me as an administrator.” Iona explained that the low scores on the new state assessment are a “state-wide issue,” which shows the “rigor of the test,” but that was no consolation.

Role conflict and strain in school change. The role conflict and strain caused by school change revolves around “the political agenda.” She continued, “You hear from politicians; they want to take care of teachers and limit testing, but they are the ones creating the laws which require them!” The requirement for so much high stakes testing creates conflict between educators and policy makers who say they want to take care of teachers. She believes that education is a “very politically heated environment now and we [educators] are bearing the brunt of everybody’s agenda.” Because it is an election year, there is extra stress felt because the upcoming changes in education will depend on who takes over the Oval Office and whether the new state superintendent will listen to the educators whom he surveys. Conflict and strain surface for educators as the politicians tell schools what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach, but “there’s just a few of us that are actually doing the work.” Iona explained that the expectations for students with disabilities to perform on the high stakes tests as well as their
peers places an extra amount of stress on the teachers who take on the responsibility of being the co-teacher for the grade.

Iona thought that the accountability that began with No Child Left behind was “challenging, but it’s nothing compared to what’s going on now.” She explained that previously teachers could open scripted reading programs, assign workbook pages, and would “get a glowing evaluation and your [sic] kids performed okay, but now you [sic] have to have differentiation and a challenging environment and all those things teachers now have to do, and I believe that came about because of NCLB.” All aspects of education are heavily evaluated, which causes immense strain on educators. Because of the accountability that has intensified since the implementation of NCLB, Iona has never felt more “heavily scrutinized” than she does now, even though the new state regulations are not yet fully implemented. Some aspects of the school score are not utilized yet because they have not been completed by the state. She thinks the state is trying to push things too fast, and they should work on the details beforehand. Iona feels it is “a much higher, very intense level of scrutiny and accountability,” and “a big issue is keeping your teachers motivated and uplifted through it all,” because what she sees is teachers who are feeling conflicted between how they want to teach and what they teach so their students can perform well on the high-stakes standardized tests. Iona believes her teachers are very stressed from the pressure to perform.

In addition, Iona thinks it is difficult to know how their instruction affects student performance when the end-of-grade assessment keeps being changed by the state and their data are lagging. They did not receive the scores from the 2014–2015 school year until September 2015, which made it difficult to make any changes based on student performance because the school year had already begun. Iona expressed, “It’s really frustrating to me as an administrator,
and, I know, to the teachers. I think the state has a lot of demands on them from the federal government, and they don’t have the capacity to handle it all.” The high level of scrutiny in education, Iona believes, “makes it much harder to find good quality people and keep them, because you can’t find more time or pay them more.” Furthermore, Iona participated in this study because

if there is an opportunity in any small way that I can get the message out about what teachers are really dealing with and what we’re dealing with as educators, I want to do that because I think that the people who make those decisions oftentimes don’t know.

Iona believes that education is a “political hot button.”

The reason for the change in education is not that it is good for students, but that it appeals to constituents. There is a massive conflict between those in education and those in charge of educational laws. Iona said, “politicians are not here on a daily basis, but they are the ones that make decisions.” However, “someone has to be the voice of reason to say, ‘stop, this is what we’re dealing with here.’” Iona believes that people who are not “in the trenches” with the educators do not understand “the reality of what we are dealing with.” The truth is that “there are circumstances where a child may not make growth through no fault of the teachers; it’s just the circumstances around the child.” Moreover, she said, “I feel like as a leader in education, it’s my job to educate the public about what’s really going on in schools.”

Iona feels that the strain placed on her in the role of principal is caused by local politics because “the smallness of our system is one thing, but also the worst thing about our system.” She continued, “it’s navigating the different politics while trying to advocate for your school, and making sure that our needs are met, and our kids’ needs are met.” She tries to invite her bosses and the school board to the school for different events, but “they’re not here very much.” She
explained that there are many elementary schools in her district, and she sometimes feels like certain schools are favored, and she must fight to draw attention to her school because “we are doing great things, seeing progress and impressive results.” The teachers know that they often do not receive the attention they deserve, so it is “hard to keep teachers uplifted and motivated when they are working so hard, but not at the top of the list even though . . .our scores on the state scale are the only ones in the district which actually made gains.” Iona wishes, “the politics of being in a small school system was one of the things that I wish I didn’t have to deal with.” In spite of this neglect, Iona tries to keep a positive outlook for the benefit of her staff and students because she believes in what they are accomplishing.

**School culture.** Iona expressed, “the culture of our school is ever-evolving and getting much better.” When she began as the principal of the school, she thought that because of the demographics of the school, “the expectation level wasn’t what you’d want to have.” Her school is the largest elementary school in the district, and 80% of their students qualify for free or subsidized lunches. As much as 45% of the student population is mobile, which means that transient kids enter and leave, homelessness is high, and many students are in crisis. Because these factors weigh on the staff, Iona said, “I just don’t think anybody knew that we could expect more from our students. Even though they may come from poverty, because no matter what label you want to attach, you can still have a high expectation.” After her first year as principal and “look, listening and learning,” she decided to change a few things. The first was that their mission was not to have “high expectations and high levels of learning for everyone every day.” She said the teachers had expectations of the students before, but she wanted them to have “higher expectations of themselves and students to see what’s truly possible with our students.”
Inclusion. Iona proudly stated that the elementary school she leads is “full inclusion and we do not have small group classes here.” Every grade level has at least one class, which is the inclusive class for that grade. Iona recalls that as a child, she saw only pullout, and she is very proud that the school is inclusive because she believes it is best for the majority of children. Iona said that several students with disabilities were very successful in their inclusion program. Their disabilities ranged from deafness, physical disabilities, to learning disabilities. Iona explained that one aspect of the school ranking is based on the percentage of students in general education classrooms, which is the least restrictive environment proposed in the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Because the school practices full inclusion, it does very well in this ranking. Iona said, “So, there is a big push for students to stay in inclusive classroom from the district’s Department of Special Services (DSS).” Iona believes that inclusive classrooms allow “students to be able to stay in their classroom setting with their peers and have those models around them to learn from, and I guess expose students in the classroom to different learning and learning styles.”

In the Smith District, the elementary schools have different instructional settings for students with disabilities, so if a child needs specific services, then he or she might be transferred to another elementary school. At the time of this interview, Iona and the lead special education teachers were “concerned about two students and not sure if they were getting enough services.” When they analyze the data on the children, if they find that they need more services, the student(s) will be transferred to another elementary school in the Smith District, which will provide them with the resources they require to be successful in school. Iona explained that the students who might be transferred would need intense specialized instruction in a small group setting for reading, math, or behavior. However, an enormous amount of data is required to
change a student’s instructional setting from an inclusive setting to a small group setting, so they are still gathering data.

*Co-teaching: Perception and purpose.* In Iona’s school, all of the inclusive classes utilize the instructional setting of co-teaching. She has seen co-teaching evolve from the amount of time a student spends in the co-taught classroom to “discussions about the kinds of models used within that classroom.” She continued to explain what she meant by stating that in the past, the special education teacher and the students used to join the class at certain times of the day or maybe most of the day, and they would just accommodate them. However, in the current situation, the teachers collaborate, so they can use different models of co-teaching, such as parallel, station, or alternative teaching. Iona said that if the special education teacher pulled or removed students from class for instruction in a smaller group setting, then she would pull any student who needed the specific re-teaching, not only students with disabilities. In this “true partnership” between the co-teachers, there are “blurring lines when it comes to exactly whom they’re working directly with, as long as their students are getting their services.” In order for co-teaching to be an effective instructional strategy, Iona said, “both teachers come in prepared because they planned together as they are both viewed in their evaluation and the student survey as the classroom teacher . . . . so the kids really don’t see a difference.” She believes that this way of co-teaching is “extremely valuable and necessary.”

*Collaborative climate.* Iona believes that because of the instructional differences in primary and secondary education, elementary schools are just now beginning to experience a collaborative climate that involves instructional strategies, differentiation, curriculum, and assessments. Some areas of the school have caught on faster than others have because the culture is “more collegial than collaborative” in most of the building. There is a much greater need for
collaboration because of the rigorous expectations and curricular standards at the federal and state levels. She explained,

I love working with [professional learning communities] PLCs, because in elementary PLCs weren’t really a thing. I know at the secondary level it’s been around for a while, but elementary not so much. It’s been great to work with teachers in this way and really have that collaborative type of a culture.

Iona thinks the new rigor of the end of grade assessments helped catapult elementary schools into a collaborative climate in terms of instruction and assessments. Because her background is curriculum and instruction, she has “really enjoyed digging into the data with the teachers.” Iona thinks that the teachers were not used to an administrator who would analyze assessment data with them, but she is happiest being an instructional leader.

Since she became the principal, Iona has focused on creating a collaborative climate with the community and parents, which has been an area of change in the school culture. She said, “as I’ve grown as a leaders and as a principal, I’ve learned how to really engage people,” which has helped the school increase the parental and community involvement in her school. When she first became the principal, there were no strong teacher/school/parent relationships because “the mindset was that we didn’t have involved parents.” She had to change the minds of the teachers and parents to show that there could be a stronger connection between them. She, therefore, hired a person to liaise with the parents. This person is bilingual and helps connect teachers and parents on a daily basis. The collaboration between the parents and teachers has also improved the school governance team. Iona also has improved the collaboration between the school and the community by increasing the number of community partnerships and engaging them in her school.
Support of personnel. In order to retain teachers, Iona believes that you must be creative in your support of them because, Iona said, “you can’t give them more time or money.” She listens to her teachers, so she knows their needs and then acts to fulfill them as quickly as possible. Every week, Iona sends out a newsletter to her staff in order to keep them informed about upcoming events and due dates. The newsletter also highlights the teachers’ successes because “teachers don’t tend to brag about themselves.” A bulletin board is placed near the teachers’ mailboxes, where the staff can praise each other for doing a great job. Once a month, they pull them down and put them in a raffle, and one lucky teacher wins a prize. On the days that the teachers are required to stay later than normal, or “just because,” she will try to provide food for the staff, so they do not have to worry about what to eat. Iona shows her support for her co-teachers by making sure they have smaller class sizes and fewer duties, so they have more time to plan together. She also tries to attend as many of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings as possible. Just as she shows support for her staff, Iona believes the district supports her and her staff. The district has an annual employee award banquet at which they recognize exceptional staff throughout the district. Iona said there is a good combination of district and school tools to show teachers that they are supported.

Role conflict and strain in school culture. Iona expressed that a great deal of her role conflict but mostly role strain stems from the instructional setting of co-teaching. As valuable as co-teaching is, “it’s hard to find that right marriage.” According to Iona, when two people work closely together, it resembles a marriage or a partnership because they have to be connected in order to make co-teaching work. Iona is currently dealing with “a situation that is very hard.” A general education teacher, who was formally a special education teacher and who volunteered to teach the inclusion class, is now having difficulty collaborating with the special education
teacher and the other support teachers who come into her room. Iona explained, “She [general education teacher] wants to control her territory, and then you’ve got other certified, degreed experts coming in, so I have had to run some mediation between them.” This type of conflict between teachers makes her struggle between being an instructional leader and an evaluator. Iona knows it is her job to support the teachers and help prepare them for their job, but at the same time, she must be honest in her evaluations of the teachers. Two other aspects of co-teaching cause strain and require Iona to intervene in the classroom occur because the politicians believe that teachers should be held accountable for their student’s performance on end-of-grade tests. Part of their evaluation is based on the growth of their students, and Iona sometimes finds it difficult to pick the inclusion teacher. Teachers in the inclusion or co-taught classrooms have the additional stress of handling “these challenging, I call them fragile learners, who are struggling academically because of their disabilities and oftentimes have behavior issues;” whereas the other grade-level teachers who “didn’t step up to be the inclusion teacher have students [who] are less challenging.” Some teachers who do offer to take these classes then treat the special education teacher as “a glorified para-professional [teacher aid], and there is no equal sharing of duties and responsibilities or lesson planning.” Iona said that in one case, the general education teacher told the students, “I’m the teacher, not her.” When such situations of conflict occur, Iona must step in and help the teachers to become real co-teachers who collaborate and have equal responsibilities in the classroom.

These stressful factors in co-teaching have caused many of Iona’s staff to “burn out.” She has lost some teachers in both general and special education because they are not happy working as co-teachers or with the possibility of being a co-teacher. There are a couple of reasons Iona explained teachers who are the co-teachers have more stress than the others. One of those
reasons was the high amount of planning and collaboration a co-teaching classroom requires. The other one was that teachers are held responsible in their evaluation for the performance of their students and the co-taught classes often have students were entering the class at a lower level than their peers who also have challenges with learning (as expected since they have a disability). Iona has told her staff that they must all be prepared to be a co-teacher at some point in their career. She explained that co-teaching is not executed in the same manner everywhere. Iona said that she is currently dealing with a new teacher who is not used to their expectations of co-teachers, so she is re-training her. In addition, Iona said that the workload of the teachers is overwhelming. Many teachers are deciding that teaching is not worth the possible conflict with another teacher or the strain that is associated with the role as a co-teacher, and they are leaving the field for what they believe are less stressful jobs. Iona would like to have the ability to compensate co-teachers for the “extra work they take on by having more difficult students.”

**Instructional leader.** Iona said, “Curriculum and instruction is my first passion in education,” which is supported by the fact that she received her doctoral degree in education with a focus on curriculum and instruction. When she was a literacy coach, she realized, “To impact change on a larger level, you really do need to be in the administrative part of things.” Iona thinks that the federal laws have “required [that] all principals pretty much have to be instructional leaders.” Iona believes that being an instructional leader means that she is “the one that has your eye on, from the balcony, all the instructional components of the building.” From the balcony, the principal can see how all the people are working both independently and collaboratively. There are many instructional programs in Iona’s elementary school, and she has to make sure that they are “working effectively” to promote the success of the students. These programs include the early intervention program (EIP); English as Second Language program
(ESL); and special education programs, such as the gifted program, which supports students who have high academic abilities; students with 504s; and students on the Individual Education Plan (IEP). In her school, teachers are in charge of each of these different groups of students, so she focuses on the “big picture and makes sure they have what they need and that [they] are assessing their programs to make sure they are working and then readjusting as needed.” When she first became the principal, it was a “real eye-opener to see how all these programs fit together while realizing I’m in charge of them all.” She allows each lead teacher to focus on his or her program while “I focus and worry about everything working together.”

Preparation. Iona first prepares her teachers by “discussing instruction with them.” She has recently implemented professional learning communities in her school in order for the teachers to discuss data thoroughly. In the past, the teachers did not sit with each other and assess how well the students were performing in different subjects or help each other with different instructional strategies. However, Iona likes to talk about instruction, student assessments, and other relevant data to figure out a way to help these kids and not just think these kids can only do so much. I think I’ve been able to show them over time that our kids have potential and just need certain supports to reach that potential.

Iona prepares her staff to be successful by holding meetings and discussions with them. In order for Iona to know which instructional practices will work best for the students, she not only has prepared by working hard for her academic degrees, but she also keeps up-to-date by subscribing to several organizations, such as the local school board and the United States Department of Education. She uses her Twitter account only to stay linked to professional organizations. Regarding the teachers, Iona also “encourages them to be aware of what is going
on in education.” Smith District’s central office frequently updates the administration about any possible changes in federal, state, or local laws. She said, “We frequently have updates on IDEA and testing.” Iona has never prepared for leading co-teachers in her building, but if she had training, then she would like to be able to help in the “meshing of the personalities of co-teachers.” Moreover, she would like to learn “how I can help those teachers to understand the needs of their students and pushing the expectation level so there is rigor and the child is truly challenged.”

She said that at the beginning of the school year, the school system requires the staff to complete some on-line training in the legal compliance with copyright laws and sexual abuse. Throughout the year, on-going training is offered on the school district’s professional learning days. However, Iona could not recall any training for co-teaching. She “believes the biggest challenge is time” for having the opportunity to meet with co-teachers and support them. Iona said, “We [have] got to prioritize.” Most of the training focuses on “general education kind of issues,” but she does believe the special education teachers have more exposure to training in the Department of Special Services (DSS). Although the special education teachers attend many sessions offered by DSS, Iona is not sure what they cover besides IEP compliance.

Role strain as an instructional leader. Iona wishes there was “training for herself” and “both the general and special education teachers in the co-teaching partnership” so that this instructional setting could be more effective in her school. She requested training in co-teaching for her new staff, but they received only information about “what is co-teaching and what does it look like, but that is not sufficient.” Iona believes that “the biggest challenge is time, and then if it is during the school day, coverage. I feel like our district is not really heavy with staff development which is relevant to each school’s needs or they go overboard.” For example, Iona
said that her special education teachers have been required to attend phonics training for several
days, “but it takes them away from the kids who need them, as a sub is not the same as a
teacher.”

Iona’s last thought on preparing teachers coincides with new teachers. She wondered
“how well the teacher programs are preparing them for the real classroom.” Iona thought that
perhaps the teacher prep programs needed to focus on “putting teachers in the school setting
because that is when you learn if you really have what it takes to be a teacher.” She believes that
teacher prep programs should require pre-teachers to spend more time in the classroom assisting
teachers so they know if they will really “care about what they are doing and will do whatever it
takes to help their students succeed.”

Management. The management of a school entails overseeing the hiring, placement, and
evaluations of teachers in addition to running the building and providing all the resources. Iona
explained, “This is where some administrators are most comfortable because they are roles that
have always existed for principals.” As Iona began changing the culture through her
expectations, teachers began leaving, which has allowed her the opportunity to hire and place
people in her building who “share my vision and care to make it happen.” The task of evaluating
teachers has become a strain, but it also requires her to visit teachers often, so she has no doubt
about what is occurring in her building. Maintaining the building and providing space and
resources for her staff is an on-going challenge, but it is exacerbated by the physical size of the
school and the federal funds she receives.

Hiring and placement. Iona said, “I’ve been able to bring on some really good team
players to build up our school and that’s why our culture has really shifted for the better.” In the
five years that Iona has been the principal, some teachers have left, but those who have stayed
“are some of my best teachers and have been here longer than me.” She stressed the importance of “quality personnel versus personnel.” Although the teachers who left did not agree with the changes, Iona perceives that she, therefore, has had the opportunity to hire caring, quality personnel who have high expectations of themselves and the students. The school is currently at a “tipping-point in that we are almost 50/50 split of people who have been here from before me and ones that I’ve hired.” Iona said that she truly believes “getting the right person on the bus really is key to a schools culture.” Iona also said one key role of an administrator is hiring staff. When she is interviewing, she looks for “someone who has a heart for children, because I firmly believe the other pieces can be taught.” In the past year, “we had a large turnover and I had to hire 20 teachers” because “some teachers left; some were not asked back, and we had 100 new students enroll.” Iona does not hire the special education teachers for her school because they are hired and placed by Smith District’s Department of Special Services (DSS), but her whole team is new this year. “It’s hard hiring special education staff, so I’m glad they hire for us,” said Iona.

Another task is to place staff in the correct positions because “having the right people in place has a big impact on culture,” said Iona. When she places teachers in a co-teaching partnership, she has to “know their personalities and which ones are highly collaborative.” Iona also looks for teachers who have “that temperament to work with kids, that patient and temperament to work with students who have special needs.” She first asks for volunteers and then meets with the administrative team and the teachers before placing them in a co-teaching partnership.

*Evaluations.* When Iona first became the principal, a different evaluation tool was utilized. However, she believes that the new tool “is much more in-depth, so it gives you a better picture of what’s going on in the building.” The new evaluation tool requires her to adhere to a
“rigorous schedule of trying to get into everybody’s room six times, while still fulfilling all your other roles.” She does wish that fewer observations were required for effective teachers so she could spend more time with teachers who are new to the school or teaching and those who are struggling in an area and could use more specific support. In some of the first training in using the evaluation tool, the administrators were “shown a video of teachers, and they had to rate the teachers; then we analyzed them together and discussed our ratings.” Iona would like similar sessions, so she ensures that she evaluates co-teachers appropriately. The new evaluation tool includes student surveys, which is “a whole other angle we have never done before.” Iona believes that in this evaluation tool, the observations, the teacher and administrative documentation, and the student survey are effective because they make you “focus a bit more on yourself as an educator and a professional.” The new process is much more “interactive, and it shines the light on those teachers who are doing a great job.” It also allows Iona to see who is not performing as she expects, and it allows her to “have those hard conversations with teachers and that really helps teachers make some decisions about is this really what I want to do.”

The associate superintendent uses the leadership version of the new evaluation tool to evaluate Iona’s performance. However, she thinks that most administrators do not focus on their evaluation because they are “so focused on evaluating the teachers.” Iona meets with the associate superintendent at pre-mid-post conferences where she formulates her professional and personal goals. However, she believes her evaluation should be based on “evaluating all the staff, maintaining the building and all the instructional settings without a catastrophe should be a successful year.” One aspect of the new leadership tool Iona does appreciate is the feedback she receives about herself when the teachers fill out the surveys about her performance and that of other administrators.
Building and provisions. Iona’s leadership skills tend towards the instructional aspect of her role as an educator. However, she must also ensure that the building is running well and that the teachers have the resources they need. Iona tries to make sure the building is running effectively so that the teachers do not have to worry about anything other than helping students to be successful. If she could, she would decrease the number of students or create more space for the teachers and students because the building seems at capacity. Her teachers seem to know they can come to her and other leaders in the building if they need anything. She and the other leaders will do their best to help them acquire the necessary resources. For example, to give the co-teachers more time to plan, “we try to make it so they only have duty either morning or afternoon or in some instances, not at all, so they can plan together.” The special education department helps Iona with her budget by providing special education teachers with resources. If she could provide her staff with anything, it would be “more personnel to support our students with disabilities, but that has to do with federal mandates that when you get to the reality of where we are now, the rubber meets the road and there’s a disconnect.”

Role conflict and strain in management. A major role conflict and strain for Iona is picking the inclusion class for each grade or sometimes two classes, which is a requirement for their full-inclusion. Many times, “it’s down to, okay, who is it going to be this year? As the teachers are not really stepping up to do it.” If no one volunteers, then Iona will meet with her assistant principals and discuss the situation. She then approaches the lead special education teacher to see who he or she believes is “highly collaborative, the right temperament, and all those things.” Then Iona will approach the teacher and hope that he or she accepts the role. Iona knows that being a co-teacher is more work and she wishes she could compensate the teachers for the extra responsibility, but her budget does not allow that flexibility. Another aspect of
conflict that arises in reference to special education happens when the school schedule must be created. The students with disabilities “dictate the schools’ schedule;” sometimes the people might enter the room at the same time, so “I know it makes it hard to coordinate it all,” but that is how it must be. Consequently, it creates conflict between other needs of the other students in the school.

As the principal of one of the largest schools in the district, Iona feels role strain when she often has to remind her superiors about the “challenges the school faces” in order to make sure that her staff receive the praise they deserve and that the needs of both the teachers and the students are met. One of those challenges arises throughout the year, as she and the administrative team must observe all the teachers in the building. They are required by the new state evaluation tool to observe each teacher six times throughout the year. Iona believes that one of the flaws of the new evaluation system is that “it is not tiered. There are some teachers that really don’t need that intensity, because they have proven they are really excellent.” When Iona has to spend time evaluating teachers more often than is necessary, it takes away from the time she should spend with teachers who really need her support as well as her ability just to “drop into a room.” Because of the new evaluation tool, when an administrator walks into a room, “the teachers are on edge about the amount of times we must be in their room.” Two assistant principals are responsible to evaluate the 63 teachers in the building. The principals divide the responsibility equally. However, in some schools, the two administrators have less than 20 teachers to evaluate. In addition, “it is not like the only thing we are doing is evaluating teachers during the day. We have students enrolling, withdrawing, discipline issues and so on.” On one occasion, when Iona was discussing with another principal the students who have behavioral issues and receive the highest level of behavior support, the other administrator replied, “We
really don’t have tier three behavior.” Iona said, “Well, that is not our reality.” Iona knows that her superiors support her, but sometimes she has to remind them about how much is on her plate and the challenges that her school faces.

**Conclusion for Iona.** Iona has experienced several changes in education because of federal laws. She believes that it is necessary to have the mindset that change determines the path forward. When she became the principal at Smith Elementary, Iona created a vision of high expectations in an academically challenging environment. She accepts and embraces the challenges of running her school. She is very proud of her caring staff and all that their students have accomplished in the past five years. Iona has hired several teachers every year that she has been the principal. One reason that teachers have left is her vision for the staff and the students. The school has had a high turnover rate because she wants her staff to have high expectations of their students despite their challenging lives.

In the past few years, another change that has caused staff to leave is the transition from working in isolation to collaborating with other teachers. This collaboration has many forms, some of which are established, such as inclusion, while others are new, such as professional learning communities. Iona considers co-teaching a necessary and required instructional setting, but it has challenges. One challenge is the placement of teachers in the co-teaching classroom. Iona believes that the teachers placed in that setting must be “highly collaborative.” According to Iona, in order for a co-teaching classroom to be effective, the teachers must act as equals by collaborating and sharing responsibilities. Because Iona’s school is a full-inclusion school, each grade must include at least one co-teaching class. A specific cause of Iona’s role strain is the need to designate the inclusion classrooms in each grade because the staff does not always volunteer to co-teach. Iona thinks that many teachers have left because of the stress of co-
teaching as well as the other changes currently occurring in education because of federal, state, and local policies.

**Cross-case Findings**

The following section will compare and contrast the findings revealed in the three cases through the four participants in this study. These cross-case findings will explain this study’s themes that fall under the four main roles of an administrator utilized in this study: school change, school culture, instructional leader, and management. The findings that were consistent and inconsistent among the administrators will be revealed in a chart and then expanded upon. The consistent themes are presented in Table 11 while the inconsistent themes are in Table 12.

**Table 11: Summary of Consistent Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Administrators</th>
<th>Consistent Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School change</td>
<td>1. Decreased provisions from the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Increased accountability for schools and educators that creates role conflict and role strain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>1. Collaboration required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Professional learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Co-teaching that has role conflict and role strain surrounding it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Higher expectations for staff and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Quality staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Divided worlds: special vs. general education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructional leader

1. Administrators should model expectations of instruction
2. More training about co-teaching is required for all in education to alleviate role conflict and role strain surrounding co-teaching

Management

1. Hiring and placing caring quality educators
2. Multiple measure evaluations need tweaking to relive role conflict and strain for administrators
3. Local control of school finances

Table 12: Summary of Inconsistent Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Administrators</th>
<th>Inconsistent Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School change</td>
<td>1. Knowledge and use of inclusive instructional settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>1. Roles and responsibilities of co-teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>1. Evaluations of co-teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Designated planning time for co-teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Provisions for co-teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some similarities and differences among the participants were based on whether they were a principal or an associate/assistant principal. Other similarities and differences in these topics were consistent with those of the secondary administrators, but were not consistent with the
findings from the elementary administrator. The themes revealing similarities and differences in the findings will be introduced in this section and elaborated upon further in Chapter Five.

School change

Each of the cases acknowledged that the changes occurring in education are moving towards more accountability in education through federal laws. This requires states to adjust their policies, which then trickles down to changes in local policies. The policies created by federal and state politicians have a “high impact” on each their schools since many of the changes required by schools in the past decade began with a federal law. While Barry, Jesse, and Iona mentioned some positive aspects about the direction in which accountability for schools is moving, they pointed out more negatives than positives. John said that he does “not like them at all” and believes that “it’s too much top down, strings-attached, dependency… yes, it [No Child Left Behind] made you look at subgroups, but I think they [teachers] always did that.” A great deal of role strain is inflicted upon the administrators and they feel conflicted because of the federal and state laws that govern so many aspects of their schools. As administrators, the two major consistent themes of school changes the participants have experienced due to federal, state and local policies are: 1) decreased provisions; and 2) increased accountability for schools, educators, and students through high-stakes testing and the inconsistent theme 1) knowledge and use of inclusive instructional settings.

Decreased provisions. Each case explained how the school’s funding is tied to one program or another through federal laws. Many of these schools are affected by federal title policies, such as the Title I program that supports economically disadvantaged students or Title III, which provides funding for English second language learners. Each of the administrators was concerned with the amount of dependency schools had on these programs and the “strings
attached” to receiving the funds. Each case explained the conflict and strain felt when dealing with providing teachers with resources and staffing their individual school. The administrators acknowledged there must be accountability on the distribution of funds, but they wish the school administrations had more flexibility in terms of how the funds were used in each of their schools.

**Increased accountability.** The administrators discussed three federal laws that have created large-scale school change. The laws were enacted in order to increase accountability for schools. The first was the NCLB, which introduced the use of high-stakes, standardized tests as a measuring tool of student achievement and school proficiency. This law was the catalyst for holding schools accountable for every student’s performance on these tests. Each administrator in the study said that holding schools accountable for student performance is reasonable, but the federal and state governments have not executed it appropriately. The growth model for student performance on high-stakes tests that is now used through the Race to the Top waiver from the NCLB is heading more in the right direction for school accountability, according to each of the participants in this study.

The IDEA increased the accountability of educational instructional settings for students with disabilities. It calls for the LRE for instruction for each child with a disability. Each of the administrators in the three cases believes that inclusion of students with disabilities better represents real life and is how schools should function. Three of the administrators incorrectly used “inclusion” and “co-teaching” interchangeably and stated that it was the only form of inclusion in their schools. The elementary school is a full-inclusion school that has at least one co-taught class per grade level in which all students with disabilities are instructed. When discussing how students with disabilities affect a school, the administrators’ main discussion revolved around how the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) almost completely dictate the
school’s schedule and require close collaboration with Smith District’s DSS so that they know they are complying with federal law. Each of the participants in the three cases experience role conflict when they are forced to hold all students to the same standards, despite the grade level at which they entered, and when they must hold the teachers accountable for the students’ test scores during their summative evaluations. The administrators from each case discussed the role strain that comes with constantly giving high-stakes, standardized tests to students throughout the year and trying to keep up teachers’ spirits in the process.

**Inclusive instructional settings.** In Smith District where this study took place, there are multiple instructional settings students with disabilities have the option of being placed in order to meet the requirement of the least restrictive environment of IDEA. The inclusive instructional settings available in Smith District are consultative services, supportive services, collaborative and co-taught. Jesse, case two, explained that his school also utilizes the inclusive instructional setting known as supportive services as a placement for students with disabilities. None of the other three administrators knew of and therefore do not use other placement options for students with disabilities.

**School culture**

Each administrator in these three cases believed they influence the school’s culture. Barry, Iona, and Jesse stated that administrators are the ones who have the most influence over school culture while John thought about it a little differently. John stated that it is the perception of the extent to which students believe the school’s staff cares about them that sets the schools culture. They all explained the factors that create positive cultures in their school system and buildings, as culture first begins with the leaders in the system. Each case expressed that there is overwhelming support from the Smith District leaders, and they also explained why they felt that
this support from the district leaders correlates with the factors that influence the individual school’s culture. Barry, John, Jesse, and Iona all believe that if administrators prioritize collaboration, high expectations and quality staff as leaders in their schools, then a positive school culture will be inevitable. The role strain that occurred for these administrators in reference to the school’s culture revolved around co-teaching. The three consistent themes that emerged from the data as the most influential on their school culture were: 1) the collaboration required; 2) higher expectations; and 3) quality staff; along with one inconsistent theme 1) roles and responsibilities of co-teachers.

**Collaboration required.** There were two areas in which the participants in each of these cases discussed the importance of collaboration in today’s schools. The first was the use of professional learning communities (PLCs), and the other was co-teaching. All the participants explained how important collaboration is in today’s schools, given all the accountability and requirements for teachers. In the PLCs, teachers meet with similar content teachers to develop curriculum, share instructional strategies, analyze data, and discuss classroom management strategies. The special education teachers in each case are assigned to two PLCs, so they meet with teachers from the main subjects they teach as well as the special education department at their school.

Co-teaching is an instructional setting that is utilized by all the cases in this study, in which 23%–77% of the general student population, 91%-100% of the special student population, 88-100% of the special education teachers, and 27%–50% of the general core content teachers participate for at least one class during their school day (shown in Tables 1–6). The participants all claimed that they believe co-teaching is an effective and necessary instructional setting if the right people are working together. All the administrators explained that co-teaching is the
number one inclusive instructional setting utilized in their schools. Only one of the participants knew of other placement options for inclusive instructional settings. The administrators believe that when the right people are in the co-teaching partnership, everyone benefits from the inclusive instructional setting. Conversely, if the teachers are not collaborating well with each other, then all the participants believe and have experienced that everyone can experience role conflict and role strain, and as a result, no one benefits.

**Higher expectations.** The administrators in each of the three cases explained that with the first federal law (NCLB) that required all students to take and perform at a certain level on high-stakes, standardized tests, higher expectations of all students have been a part of everyday school life. They told stories of how they used to not worry about certain students’ performance, but now almost every single student is held to the same educational standards. All the administrators said that this was a step in the right direction, but that some students are on a different academic level because of uncontrollable circumstances, such as a learning disability. They pointed out that the pressure of higher expectations causes role strain for educators, and sometimes even role conflict because they know some students will not perform at the same level as other students; while they feel this is acceptable, educators know that they are still accountable for the students’ performance on high-stakes, standardized tests.

**Quality staff.** As the expectations for students have been increased, so has the need for quality staff. Each of the administrators in the three cases stated that their staff influences the school’s culture. The secondary administrators, case one and two, said that “caring and highly qualified personnel” are the second most important influence on the school’s culture. The primary administrator, case three, stated that she looks for the caring aspect first is that she believes that “everything else can be taught,” but the teacher’s ability to care about every student
is a characteristic of a person. Barry, Jesse, and Iona all mentioned that quality staff includes everyone in the building not just the administration and teachers.

One aspect of being a quality staff in reference to the teachers mentioned by all the cases is their ability to collaborate as co-teachers. John believes that part of being a qualified teacher in today’s age of accountability is the ability to be in a collaborative classroom. If the teachers are placed in a co-teaching partnership, their willingness to collaborate is a key factor because all of the administrators believe the teachers should plan for their classroom together and handle classroom management consistently.

**Roles and responsibilities of co-teachers.** As stated earlier, two of the three cases believe that the general and special education teachers have completely equal roles and responsibilities in a co-taught classroom that revealed an inconsistent theme for this study. Case two, Jesse, stated that the teachers do not have equal roles in all aspects of the classroom. Jesse believes that the general education teacher is responsible for knowing and teaching the content while the special education teacher should focus on specialized instruction for the students with disabilities. All administrators believe that the teachers in a co-taught class must plan together and have consistent classroom management in order to carry out their roles. One other inconsistency in the roles of co-teachers is what makes them highly qualified in the eyes of the administrator. Both of the high school administrators in case one expressed the need for both co-teachers in a classroom to be highly qualified in the content area so that “true collaboration” is possible in that classroom even though it is not required by law.

**Instructional leader**
The three cases all believe they are instructional leaders for their schools and that it is one of the most important roles they have in this “age of accountability.” The “age of accountability” is a phrase both Barry and John consistently used throughout the interview sessions. It refers to the large amount of high-stakes testing that has become the focus of education. The three administrators who have been in their positions for over five years stated that the role of the principal previously was more of a managerial position, but now requires instructional leadership; Iona became a principal when instructional leadership was already part of the job. The only instance of role strain that occurred for the four administrators as instructional leader was their desire to provide more training for themselves and teachers about co-teaching. There was also role conflict and role strain experienced because of the evaluation tool. The consistent themes that emerged from this role were (1) model expectations for instruction; and (2) more co-teaching training required. There were no inconsistent themes found in this study in relation to the role of an instructional leader.

**Model expectations for instruction.** Each participant in the three cases explained how they believe their role as an instructional leader is one of the most important aspects of their job in today’s educational system. All the administrators seemed to light up when discussing their role as instructional leaders and how they enjoy spending time “in the trenches” with their teachers. As instructional leaders, the administrators said that they assist teachers with a variety of things, such as instructional strategies, analyzing data, and participating in and providing professional development, along with providing resources and other types of infrastructure for teachers. When the administrators in each of these cases described how they are instructional leaders for their staff, they all said that in order for them to demonstrate instructional leadership, the staff must feel that administration is approachable. The approachability of an administrator is
key to being an instructional leader. The administrators all show their staff they are instructional leaders in different ways and all of them expressed the pleasure in fulfilling that role as an administrator.

**More co-teaching training required.** As instructional leaders, the administrators stated that not only could they use more training in co-teaching, but so could their teachers. All the administrators in this study discussed the limited time and money they have for providing professional development, but that they all believe it would be very beneficial to all involved in co-teaching to have consistent training in the instructional setting. None of the administrators have participated in any professional development that focused on the inclusive instructional setting of co-teaching, and only one case, Jesse in case two, provided training for their co-teachers during the most recent school year. Iona, case three, requested training for her co-teachers as they were all new that year, but her teachers never received it. Each of the participants expressed concern for the lack of training for themselves and their co-teachers.

**Management**

John, Jesse, and Barry explained that when they first became administrators, they believed their role was more managerial. As long as the school was running smoothly and everyone was doing his or her job, then they were fulfilling their role as administrators. Their role at that time was more about overseeing everything in the building than it is today. John and Barry implied that the role of the administrator changed when NCLB began the “age of accountability.” The role of management in this study included hiring and placing staff and performing evaluations, along with managing the physical building and providing resources to staff. Each of the administrators reflected on how their roles are interconnected with each other, so sometimes it is difficult to categorize them into separate roles. For example, Iona, John, and
Jesse recognized that hiring affects the culture of a school while the placement of staff can affect the climate of the school. As with all the other roles of administrators explored in this study, role conflict and strain was discovered in each aspect of the management roles. While discussing the roles of the administrator that fall under management, three consistent themes were revealed, namely: 1) hiring caring, quality educators; 2) multiple measure evaluations; and 3) local control. There were also three inconsistent themes found during this study: 1) evaluations of co-teachers; 2) designated planning time for co-teachers; and 3) divided worlds of special and general education.

**Hiring and placing caring, quality educators.** According to three of the administrators, the school’s staff is the second most important factor in a school’s climate, while the most important factor is the administration. When asked what they believe quality staff is for their schools, the administrators at the secondary level began by explaining what a highly-qualified teacher is, with content knowledge as the first priority; the primary educator believes the most important characteristic of a quality teacher is caring for the students, as the “rest can be taught.” While Jesse does not believe, as the other administrators do, that co-teachers should have equal roles, they all agreed that co-teachers should be planning together and have consistent classroom management in order for it to be an effective instructional setting. The administrators all expressed the desire to have educators and school staff who are caring and highly qualified. While the administrators do not actually hire their staff, they do interview them and make recommendations for Smith District to hire general education teachers for the positions in their schools. The Department of Special Services (DSS) hires and places the special education teachers in each of the schools. The administrators all expressed how they have experienced role
conflict and role strain when placing teachers as the general education co-teacher if no teachers volunteer as a co-teacher.

**Multiple-measure evaluations.** As a requirement of Smith District’s waiver to Race to the Top, the district implemented a new evaluation tool for the staff four years ago. All of the administrators in the three cases explained that this tool is better than their former evaluation tool. All of the participants stated that they appreciate having a multiple-measure evaluation tool such as the new evaluation tool. The administrators said that they like the survey and the documentation aspects of the new evaluation tool, they expressed concern that it also requires too much of administrators and teachers with respect to number of observations. All of the administrators explained that they should not be required to observe teachers who have proven over time they are exceptional as many times as they observe teachers who are new or who are on professional development plans and need more administrative support. Since the administrators are required to spend so much time in teachers’ classrooms, there is little time to devote to the teachers who could really use the support or to just drop in on teachers’ classrooms when they invite the administrator in for a lesson. Each case repeatedly explained how the observation requirements cause role conflict and role strain for them and their teachers.

Another frustrating aspect of the new evaluation tool is that it is incomplete for both the teachers and the administrators. One incomplete part for the teachers and administrators is the student assessment data. The state has changed the end-of-year or course assessment for students for the past two years, and when schools do receive the data on the students’ performance, there is a time lag because it comes after the next school year has already begun. Additionally, there are aspects of the evaluation tool for administrators that have not been completed like the school climate score and school finances that are also not complete and, therefore, not a part of the
evaluation tool. This causes role conflict and role strain for administrators because they are being evaluated and are evaluating teachers using a tool that cannot be fully implemented even after four years of using it.

**Local control.** Even through Smith District is a charter district and the administrators in these three cases have more control over their schools than administrators in non-charter districts, they would still prefer more control of the schools finances. If they had more control, they would all raise teacher salaries because of the difficulty and pressure that teachers now face. Each of the participants mentioned the stress associated with teaching and the difficulty in finding and retaining quality teachers. Along with raising teacher salaries, the administrators expressed the role strain they experience when they cannot provide teachers with the resources they need, such as supplies, training, or the protected planning time they want for their classrooms and themselves due to the limitations on how funds they receive are dispensed. While Case One and Three currently provide time for co-teachers to plan together at the same time, all of them want to be able to give their teachers the resource of protected planning time.

Evaluations of co-teachers. All of the administrators stated that they observe co-teachers during the same class period while they are teaching together using the same evaluation tool. Jesse, case two, was the only administrator who explained that the state had created a separate guide for special education teachers (Appendix L) that helps him know what he should be looking for when observing special education teachers. All of administrators explained how they have dealt with role conflict and role strain when observing and working with co-teachers. Additionally, each of them have experienced and observed co-taught classrooms where the special education teacher’s role in the classroom was comparable to a paraprofessional’s role instead of a teacher’s role. This lack of collaboration between the teachers is one instance when
the administrators explained that they intervene in order to help the teachers effectively collaborate. This lack of collaboration between co-teachers caused the most role conflict and role strain for the administrators when working with co-teachers.

**Designated planning time for co-teachers.** All of the administrators in these three cases expressed the idea that in order for co-teaching to be an effective instructional setting, the co-teachers should plan together. Case one provides planning time for co-teachers by assigning all teachers planning time with their content. Case three provides not only planning time with the co-teacher during their planning period, but also eliminates duties so co-teachers can have extra planning time together. Case two does not provide planning time or eliminate duties for co-teachers so they may plan together. If co-teachers have planning together it is because they are on the same team and it was accidental not deliberate.

**Divided worlds.** There are two areas of management in which each of the administrators in these three cases explained that there was a division of the school system. The two worlds in education that exist are general and special education. While the administrators in each of these cases run their schools with their administrative teams, the administrators discussed how DSS is often in control when dealing with special education students and teachers. DSS oversees the hiring, placement, and funding for special education teachers and assists administration in scheduling students with disabilities classes so they are in compliance with their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) along with confirming schools are following all special educational laws.

All three cases also explained that the funds are divided into these two worlds. The funds support teachers in different ways. There are a couple ways in which provisions for the teachers are different. The administrators explained that there are different trainings for general and special education teachers and if training for special education teachers is provided by DSS, then
it trumps any other training. The administrators all acknowledged that some of the trainings for teachers must be different because general education teachers do not write Individual Education Plans and other roles that only a special education teacher would do. Three of the administrators explained teachers also receive different amount of stipends at the beginning of the school year for providing supplies to their classrooms, because special education teachers receive their stipend from DSS while general education teachers stipends come from their school administrators budget.

**Summary**

The data presented in Chapter Four were gathered for a collective case study involving three cases through a total of 16 interviews (four interviews with each of the four participants). The procedures for data collection in this study were presented in Chapter Three in hopes that they will validate the consistency of the data collection process. The four overarching roles for administrators utilized in this study were confirmed in the interviews, and the presence of role conflict and strain throughout the administrator’s day in all roles were ubiquitous. The administrators explained how some of their roles are more significant today than before certain federal and state laws affecting education were established. The interconnection between the roles of administrators was apparent as the participants explained their roles. There were multiple themes revealed in reference to each of the main roles of the administrators that explained the relevancy of administrative roles and showed consistencies and inconsistencies between each of the participants.

An analysis and interpretation of the consistent and inconsistent themes in the three cases that emerged under each of the four main roles of administrators will be presented in Chapter Five as the findings for the study. The interconnectivity of the administrator roles led this study
to compile the consistent and inconsistent themes into a cohesive account of the overall findings for this study. Chapter five will explain how the findings emerged that explained the administrators’ perception of a perceived role in co-teaching. The consistent and inconsistent findings are discussed in relation to the theoretical frameworks of organizational and cognitive role theory. Next, the connections from the study’s consistent and inconsistent findings to literature will be explained. Then, the limitations and conclusions of the study will be stated. After that the implications for practice and research, along with an action plan will also be presented. Finally, Chapter Five will conclude with the researcher’s reflection.
Chapter Five

Discussion of Research Findings

Revisiting the Problem

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) expected all students, including students with disabilities, to meet standards on high-stakes, standardized tests and in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was improved to match the expectations of the NCLB. In order for schools to help students with disabilities meet these new academic requirements, many schools began placing students with disabilities into co-taught classes so that a general education teacher with content knowledge could teach them (Bessette, 2007; Cook & Friend, 2004; Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010; Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Harbort, Gunter, Hull, Brown, Venn, Wiley, & Wiley, 2007; Magiera, Lawrence-Brown, Bloomquist, Foster, Figueroa, Glatz, Heppler, & Rodriguez, 2006; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005; Zigmond, Kloo, Volonino, 2009). With the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes, school administrators became responsible for more teachers, students, and parents. Administrators were also required to collaborate with the Department of Special Services (DSS) to confirm they are meeting the federal guidelines for students with disabilities.

This influx of students with disabilities created new roles for administrators. Administrators now must assist in school change and act as “compliance officers” for some aspects of the IDEA’s federal laws (Boscardin, 2005), such as the least-restrictive environment (LRE), as well as ensure that teachers are using research-based teaching methods for students with disabilities (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; US Department of
Education, 2007, 2012). Administrators are also responsible for creating an inclusive school culture where all students and staff feel welcomed (Dipola, 2003; Hoppey, 2010; Ryan, 2006). As federal laws increase accountability for student achievement and impose the requirement for teachers to use research-based instructional strategies, the importance of the administrator’s role as the instructional leader for teachers and students has also increased (Dipola, 2003; Hoppey, 2010). In addition to a 30% increase in the total number of special education students over the past 10 years, the IDEA requires students with disabilities to be placed in the LRE, which means “three out of every four students with disabilities spending part or all of their day in a general education classroom” (National Education Association, 2015). Many students with disabilities, as well as special and general education teachers, are being placed into co-taught instructional settings in order to meet the requirements of IDEA. This has greatly altered the management role of the administrator. Administrators are now responsible for hiring, placing, and evaluating all teachers, as well as providing provisions, such as funding, supplies, and resources not only for general education teachers but also for special education teachers and staff.

Review of Methodology

The researcher seeks to understand and explore administrators’ perceptions of and roles in co-teaching by asking the following questions:

1. What are administrators’ perceptions of the inclusive instructional setting known as co-teaching?

2. How do administrators perceive their roles within co-teaching?

Because this study explored the personal perspectives and experiences of four participants, it lent itself to a qualitative research design. Since the participants were all administrators from the same Southeastern school district (Smith District), Creswell (2013) and
Stake (1995) would refer to this as a collective case study. This study occurred at multiple sites in the same district (one elementary, one middle, and one high school), which allowed comparing and contrasting of the administrators’ perspectives of their roles and of co-teaching within multiple sites. The administrators shared their perspectives and experiences regarding administrators’ roles and co-teaching during four different interviews. The elementary and middle school administrators were principals, whereas one of the high school administrators was the associate principal and the other was an assistant principal. The responsive interview technique (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) used during the interviews allowed the participants to answer the questions with their personal knowledge and perceptions of administrative roles and co-teaching. The interviews were analyzed independently of each other, and then a cross-case analysis identified the themes. Based on the major findings from the cross-case analysis, documents, and observations, both the consistent and inconsistent themes are presented in this chapter.

**Reviewing the Findings through the Lens of the Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework utilized as the foundation for this collective case was role theory. Biddle (1986) explains that actors are “thoughtful, socially aware humans” (p. 69). This study provided four actors (administrators) in three different cases. As the administrators were interviewed, they demonstrated the characteristics Biddle claims actors portray. This study explored administrators’ perceptions and roles in co-teaching, so the role set of the administrators must be acknowledged. Merton (1957a) explained that the role set consists of the other people involved in the actor’s play. Merton, along with other theorists, used the theatre analogy when explaining role theory. The administrators in this study all identified the same role set, including (but not limited to) the superintendent, the associate superintendent, the school
board, other administrators, faculty, the central office staff at each school, students, parents, community members, and partners in education. Kahn (1964) explained that whom an actor is interacting with depends on the personality the actor portrays in order to be in the appropriate role for that particular moment. Since this study explores how administrators function in and perceive their roles, organizational role theory (Kahn, 1964) and cognitive role theory (Biddle, 1986) were the specific areas of role theory that informed this study.

Organizational Role Theory

Organizational role theory focuses on “social systems that are preplanned, task-oriented and hierarchical” (Biddle, 1986, p. 73). These social systems have normative expectations that are based on the role of the actor. For an administrator, there are expectations as to how he or she should act based on his or her social position, just as there are expectations as to how teachers should act based on the fact that they are subordinates to the administrator. The administrator was also in a position to pacify everyone in his or her role set. The interviews with the administrators revealed that the administrators find themselves continually between the others in their role set. Wilburn (1989) explains it as the “man in the middle” (p. 2), mirroring John’s statement that he was “constantly” caught in between players in his role set. The other three administrators responded similarly, saying that it often leads to role conflict and role strain, just as Getzels and Guba (1957) suggested in their research. The administrators described being placed in role conflict and feeling role strain at one time or another in almost all of their roles as administrators.

All of the administrators explained how they have dealt with role conflict and role strain with the co-teaching instructional setting, and they all described similar situations in which these occur. They each described situations in which the special education teacher’s role in the co-
taught classroom is seen more as that of an assistant or paraprofessional than that of a teacher. When a special education teacher plays the role of paraprofessional, it contradicts the role the administrator gave her and expected her to play. This leads to role strain for the administrators because it is necessary for them to rectify the situation for all of the others (or role set) involved. The administrator is placed in a position in which she must resolve the ineffective co-teaching classroom and put role resolution in place. The administrators explained how the first step in role resolution is a conversation with the teacher in which they explain how the teacher was not meeting the administrator’s expectations. The administrators said that if needed, they would try to find some way to provide the teacher with professional development or extra training or support.

One aspect of organizational role theory that was not revealed in any of the cases was the expected roles and responsibilities for co-teachers. Biddle (1986) explains that when systems have explanations of roles and responsibilities, then normative expectations are more likely to occur. Each of the administrators explained what they believe are the roles and responsibilities for co-teachers, but no one produced a document given to teachers and neither Smith District nor the individual schools had provided any training to co-teachers at the beginning of the year. Jesse was the only one who said that he utilized a state-provided rubric for special education teachers while performing teacher observations, and that he had a teacher support specialist provide one training session every September for co-teachers. The rubric Jesse provided to the special education teachers was not shared with the general education teachers in the co-taught partnership and no follow-up occurred after the initial training session. None of the administrators have taken it upon themselves to create norms for co-teachers in their schools.

Cognitive Role Theory
Cognitive role theory allows researchers to discover actors’ perceptions of expectations and the effects of those perceptions on the actors’ behavior by recognizing the relationship between role expectations and behavior (Biddle, 1986). The complexity of each person’s life exists because of the position she is born into, her job, her education, and whom she interacts with throughout life (Biddle, 1986). This case study has allowed the researcher to explore how the administrators perceive co-teaching based on their life experiences, the people they oversee, and those who oversee them. The study has also offered a window into how all of these things have affected their experiences as administrators and how their roles in co-teaching have evolved as a result.

All of the administrators have a positive perception of co-teaching and believe it is a vital instructional setting for students with disabilities. They all have also dealt with conflicts between co-teachers, teachers, and parents and the strain that accompanies these conflicts. Two of the administrators were general education co-teachers at one point in their teaching careers, so they have different perceptions of co-teaching that are partially based on their personal experiences as co-teachers. John and Jesse both explained their successes and failures as co-teachers. This experience allows these administrators to have conversations with their co-teachers from a more personal perspective. John explained that when he was a co-teacher, he treated the special education teacher more like a paraprofessional than an equal colleague, so he uses his experience to tell teachers how not to be. Jesse, on the other hand, had a great experience as a co-teacher, but when he was a co-teacher, the roles were more equal similar to how the other administrators in this study explained they expect from co-teachers and so there is a slight difference between how he carried out co-teaching and what his expectations are now for co-teachers.
Each of the administrators has the same superintendent and associate superintendent as bosses, and they all have access to the DSS; however, they do not have the same perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers, and, therefore, they have different expectations for the general and special education teachers in a co-taught classroom. The standard descriptions in the evaluation tool that Jesse utilizes have changed his perception of the roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher in a co-taught classroom. Even though he has not been trained on what the roles of co-teachers would look like in a classroom, having access to this knowledge alters his role in co-teaching. Jesse said, “I think there could be another layer of support for me.” He continued, “When it comes to the observation part, it would be great if… their observations were done by a DSS-assigned person, so that we could get even more in-depth feedback on the specialized instruction part, because the specialized instruction changes with the needs of the students.” He explained that the people in the DSS might have received more training on what specialized instruction looks like in the classroom, and, therefore, they have a “trained eye, which could be better for a person’s overall growth.”

**Reviewing the Findings through Connections to Literature**

The administrators confirmed that the findings in literature suggested one of the results of federal accountability was an increase in co-teaching classrooms (Cramer, et al., 2010; Davis, et al., 2012; Embury, et al., 2012; Friend, et al., 2010; McDuffie, et al., 2008; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). As far as three of the four administrators are concerned, co-teaching is the only instructional general educational setting for students with disabilities that has personnel support. For these three administrators, co-teaching provides the LRE in which students with disabilities are exposed to the general education curriculum while being instructed with research-based methods, as required in the IDEA in 2004 (USDE, 2007). They all believe that co-teaching is a
vital instructional setting for students with disabilities. All of the administrators believe that one of their most important roles as an administrator in today’s educational setting was creating a collaborative climate. Literature on inclusion supports this notion and confirms that effective co-teaching is one aspect of that collaborative climate (Bauwens et al., 1989; DiPaola et al., 2004; Rice, 2006). The administrators described how they show support of co-teaching through all of their overarching roles: school change, school culture, instructional leadership, and management. The consistent and inconsistent themes that are supported in the literature will be explained by exploring what the literature determines is effective co-teaching and then by synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting the themes with the researcher’s Six Ps of leading effective co-teaching (discussed below).

Effective Co-teaching

Two of the three cases in this study defined co-teaching in a similar manner to Cook and Friend (1995) and Sileo (2011), in which co-teaching is a partnership with equal responsibilities between a special education teacher and general education teacher working in the same classroom with a diverse group of students. There are many components of effective co-teaching found in the literature review that facilitate in creating effective co-teaching classrooms. They are administrative support (Bessette, 2008; Cook & Friend, 1995; Mastropieri, et. al., 2005; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001), quality and compatibility of co-teachers (Berber & Popp, 2000; Bessette, 2007; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010), multiple forms of training (Austin, 2001; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Friend & Cook, 2010; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010), designated planning time (Gerber & Popp, 2000; Lehr, 1999; Nierengarten & Hughes, 2010; Tannock, 2008), and use of the six approaches to co-teaching instruction (Cook & Friend, 1995, 2004). All of these except for the six approaches to co-teaching instruction (one teach, one assist,
parallel teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, team teaching, and one teach, one observe) were mentioned by all of the administrators. Each participant said that they provided, as much support for their teachers as they believe is possible within their role as principal or assistant principal.

When it comes to quality teachers, they all agree that it means the teachers are highly qualified by being certified in their subject areas and that they are caring teachers. When the administrators are deciding who will be the co-teachers, they hope for volunteers first and then, failing that, they look for teachers who have similar pedagogical ideas to each other so that they will be more compatible. All of the administrators expressed their concern that the educators in their schools who become co-teachers are not provided with continual support. Barry and John (Case One) could not recall the exact year when their co-teachers received their last training on co-teaching, but they believed it was a few years previous. Iona (Case Three) had requested training from the district for her co-teachers since they were almost all new that year, but had not received it. Jesse (Case Two) provided his co-teachers with one training session two months after the school year had begun.

While all of the administrators explained that co-teachers needed to plan together in order for co-teaching to be effective, not all participants ensured their co-teachers had designated time to plan. Smith High school had the best arrangements for co-teachers since their teachers are provided with planning time during the school day. Iona (Case Three) tries to eliminate certain duties for co-teachers so that they have more time to plan together before or after school. Case Two has based the planning class period on the team of teachers (the four core content teachers), so if co-teachers have planning time together, it is by coincidence; the administrator has not eliminated any duties for co-teachers so they can plan together before or after school. Iona and
Jesse mentioned the importance of co-teachers using different co-teaching instructional strategies than they would if there was just one teacher in the classroom. Both of them explained parallel teaching, and Iona also described station teaching and alternative teaching during their interviews, but John and Barry did not mention or describe any of the co-teaching instructional strategies that research has suggested help create effective co-teaching classrooms.

When asked about which inclusive instructional settings are utilized at their schools, all the administrators mentioned co-teaching as their main inclusion setting. As confirmed in the interviews for this collective case study, the administrators (not the teachers) control through their overarching roles all but one of these components, uses of the six approaches to co-teaching, for effective co-teaching. Administrators lead school change (Meyer, et al., 2004; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002) for co-teachers by supporting them while the teachers adjust to collaborating with someone. Administrators set the school culture (Fullan, 2001; Furney, Aiken, Hasazi, & Clarke-Keefe, 2005; Lasky & Karge, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004) by creating a collaborative climate and hiring quality teachers. In this age of accountability, the administrators stressed that they must be instructional leaders (DiPaola et al., 2004; Fullan, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2000; Lynch, 2012; Praisner, 2003). Administrators are the ones who manage the school and faculty, and provide the resources, such as providing training for their co-teachers and creating designated planning time for them (Lynch, 2012; Meyer, et al., 2014; Valentine, Maher, Quinne, & Irvine, 1999).

**The Six Ps of Leading Effective Co-teaching**

In order for effective co-teaching to occur in schools, the literature reveals many roles in different categories that should be filled by administrators. The list was named and organized by the researcher to synthesize and simplify the magnitude of roles of the administrator to help
facilitate effective co-teaching. The roles are referred to as the “Six Ps of leading effective co-teaching,” and are as follows:

1) Policies and procedures
2) Promoting a collaborative climate
3) Preparation of administration and staff
4) Personnel pedagogy and quality
5) Provision of resources and planning time
6) Professional evaluation as co-teachers

This next section will review what was found about these roles in the literature and what the participants in this study expressed. Throughout this section, the connection of the Six Ps to the consistent and inconsistent themes from the interviews is acknowledged.

**Policies and procedures.** One of the ways the literature reveals administrators can lead co-teaching is through creating roles and responsibilities for co-teachers (Bessette, 2008; Hines, 2008; Nierengarten, 2013; Scruggs et al., 2007; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). All the administrators explained that there are many ways teachers learn their roles and responsibilities, but only Jesse in Case Three actually provided his co-teachers with specific guidelines for this in the training they participated in during the second month of the school year. Jesse also utilized a document created by the state about the roles of special education teachers to guide him and his special education teachers; Iona mentioned the document, but Barry and John did not know about it when asked about it in the follow-up interview. This inconsistency led to a theme for the study, as the research suggested that these roles and responsibilities should be established prior to the school year so the teachers can discuss it and come to a consensus of the roles and responsibilities for their classroom. Keefe and Moore (2004) found in their study of co-teachers
that the teachers struggled with figuring out their roles in a co-taught classroom since they were used to having autonomy in their separate classrooms. All of the administrators said that year after year, they experience role conflict and role strain because of situations with co-teachers. These situations often occur because the co-teachers are not collaborating but instead are taking on the roles of general education teacher as the main teacher with the special education teachers acting as paraprofessionals. Research suggests that this role conflict and role strain can be a result of co-teachers not knowing their roles and responsibilities (Davis, Dieker, Pearl & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002), and that has been confirmed in this study.

Promoting a collaborative climate. Fullan’s research (1998) suggests that a collaborative climate increases student achievement and Mendel’s (2012) article suggests that creating a collaborative climate is the second most important factor of effective principals. Smith District and the administrators in this study strongly promote collaboration through the PLCs they have established in their schools; much of that collaboration was one of the major themes for this study. The PLCs are department or content-based (Math, Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, Humanities, Language B). While all of the administrators explained that their schools have very collaborative climates because of their PLCs, they also explained that not all of the special education teachers and general education teachers are in the same PLC or plan with their co-teacher. All the special education teachers in Smith District belong to a content PLC and a special education PLC. Additionally, the administrators explained that, based on the needs of the students with disabilities, they might have to schedule special education teachers to instruct different content with different teachers, so some teachers might need to belong to more than one content PLC. John at Smith High school was the only one who could confirm that the special education teachers require only one content PLC since they only teach one content class (such as
science), but they could co-teach a Biology and Environmental science class just as the general education science teachers do. All the administrators believe that collaborating through planning together is a key element of effective co-teaching, but they also acknowledge that they continually deal with co-teaching partners who are not collaborative and who do not plan together even if they have common planning time. When co-teachers do not plan together, research has shown there is a lack of specialized instruction for students with disabilities (Davis, Dieker, Pearl, & Kirkpatrick, 2012). The administrators also mentioned the role conflict they are involved in when co-teachers do not plan together and the role strain that follows.

**Preparation of administration and staff.** Each of the administrators in the study said that they all wish they had received more training about effective co-teaching, as none of the administrators had ever received training specifically in co-teaching. Many recent studies show that, due to a lack of training, administrators lack the knowledge required to adequately lead all aspects of special education (Friend et al., 2010; Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007; Lynch, 2012; Praisner, 2003). All of the administrators mentioned their dependence on Smith District’s DSS and in the high school’s case, the special education administrator as well. The desire for and lack of training became one of the consistent themes of this study. The administrators also noted that their degrees included few, if any, classes on special education, which is also found in studies conducted by Lasky and Karge (2006) and Cruzeiro and Morgan (2006) about administrators and special education. This finding was consistent with the majority of the research on inclusion as well.

When discussing the preparation of teachers, all of the administrators pointed out the importance of providing professional development for co-teachers, but only one participant provided any training for co-teachers that year. Iona (Case Three) explained that she had asked
the Smith District’s Department of Special Education (DSS) for co-teacher training since all of her co-teachers were new that year, but during the interview she realized the teachers had never received it. The lack of preparation for teachers in the role of co-teacher is a common theme found in the literature about inclusion (Friend et al., 2010; Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). According to the research, co-teachers should receive ongoing training in order to effectively co-teach, or the special education teacher will act more as a paraprofessional or assistant than a teacher, but co-teachers rarely receive the necessary training (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003).

None of the administrators mentioned the need to prepare other staff (such as paraprofessionals or specials (art, gym, chorus, or band) in the school for their involvement in providing students with disabilities the LRE. Since Jesse is the only administrator who utilizes more than one inclusive instructional setting, he should have at least mentioned the training of paraprofessionals. The inclusive instructional setting called “supportive instruction” requires a paraprofessional to assist the general education teacher in providing the LRE for students with disabilities. Therefore, training for the paraprofessional is necessary in order for that individual to provide the support for the special education student required in the IEP.

**Personnel pedagogy and quality.** Quality staff was a consistent theme found in this study. When the administrators were asked to explain what they meant when they said quality staff, each participant stated that the teacher must be highly qualified in the subject area they are teaching and they must be caring individuals. All the administrators in this study mentioned the need for teachers to have the quality of caring about their students. Iona actually stated that the first quality she looks for in teachers she is interviewing is being a caring adult as the rest she believes can be taught. However, the secondary teachers explained the importance of teachers
having content knowledge as the most important and caring was the second most important. This was one of the inconsistent findings of this study.

The requirement of teachers to be highly qualified in the content they are instructing became a law with the passing of the NCLB for general education teachers and then clarified for special education teachers in the improvement of the IDEA in 2004 (Bessette, 2008; Davis et al., 2012; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010). John explained that they even require special education teachers to be highly qualified in the general education content or subject they co-teach at Smith High School. Harbort et al. (2007) found in their study of secondary co-teachers that if the special education teacher is not certified in the subject and is unwilling to instruct in the classroom, then the special education teacher takes on the role of an assistant teacher. John and Barry both explained that in their case, if the special education teacher is not certified in the content or is not willing to instruct the class, that is when administrators experience role conflict and they sometimes have to remove the special education teacher if the conflict cannot be resolved. They have both felt role strain because of these situations. Mastropieri and Scruggs’ (2001) study revealed that the lack of certified special education teachers in complex academic content, such as calculus, was one deterrent for secondary schools’ use of co-teaching as an instructional setting for students with disabilities. John explained that in the past few years, he has actually paid for general education teachers to become certified in special education so he could pair two highly-qualified content teachers together in the complex academic content classrooms. This same action by secondary administrators was found in Cramer and Nevin’s (2006) study. Iona and Barry expressed similar experiences when leading co-teachers, but they had not gone to the same lengths as John in order to have highly-qualified content teachers who are also certified in special education. Iona spent
more time than anyone explaining the role conflict and role strain she experiences each year when deciding who will be the general education teacher taking on the role of a co-teacher because she has found that teachers become more burned out and have more stress when they are in a co-teaching partnership.

Iona explained that when she can pair together a special education and general education teacher who have similar ideas about pedagogy, then there was less role strain for those teachers and they actually enjoyed the partnership. John explained that he has a few co-teaching pairs of teachers who benefit from the partnership and request year after year to stay together. He makes sure when he makes schedules that those teachers are priority on this list so they can continue collaborating. Both Iona and John explained that the teachers who continue co-teaching together have pedagogical ideas that are similar, and the teachers each realize that the other person in the partnership seems to have complementary strengths, so together they are the best teachers possible. These findings of the need for co-teachers to have similar pedagogical ideas are consistent with previous research on co-teaching, including Cook and Friend’s (1995) and Nierengarten and Hughes’ (2010).

One aspect of pedagogy that was inconsistent in the cases of this study was the use of the instructional approaches to co-teaching that were first introduced for co-teachers in 1989 by Bauwens, et al., and then re-vamped by Cook and Friend (1995). These instructional approaches have been prominent instructional methods in most research on inclusion even though they are rarely consistently used in co-taught classrooms (Bessette, 2008; Embury & Kroeger, 2012; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Magiera et al., 2006; Nichols et al., 2010; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Zigmond et al., 2009). The administrators in these cases confirmed the lack of knowledge about instructional approaches for co-teachers. Jesse mentioned these approaches when discussing
what he hopes to see in co-taught classrooms and Iona mentioned them when discussing different types of inclusive instructional settings. Barry and John never mentioned the approaches in their interviews. The lack of knowledge of these co-teaching instructional approaches became an inconsistent theme for this study.

**Provision of resources and planning time.** The four administrators expressed their concern with the decrease in funding they are receiving from federal, state, and local governments. They explained that the federal mandates continue to increase the schools’ responsibilities, but they also continue to not fund the mandates. The administrators explained that schools are so strapped for funding that there is little external professional development they can provide and that they rely on Smith District to provide professional development for teachers. While the administrators stated that Smith District provides more professional development for the staff in the district compared to other districts, there is definitely still room for improvement, especially in the area of co-teaching. Weiss and Lloyd (2003) recommend that teachers have training in co-teaching before stepping into the co-teaching role in order to prepare them for the school year, and then they should have continual support and training (if needed) throughout their time as co-teachers.

One resource administrators can provide for co-teachers without much cost is common planning times. Harbort et al. (2007) found that administrators should provide “assigned planning time” for co-teachers (p. 22) in order for effective co-teaching to occur. The administrators at Smith High School create planning time for their teachers based on the department or content they teach, and this includes the special education teachers. The administrator at Smith Middle, Jesse, organizes planning by teams not by content, so if co-teachers have common planning time, it is by accident. He does not eliminate duties or roles for
co-teachers so that they can have some protected planning time, as suggested by Gerber and Popp (2000) in their study on inclusion. Iona, the administrator at Smith Elementary, does relieve co-teachers of certain duties so they can have protected planning time. The desire for providing the staff with more resources was on the wish list for all advisors, and the decrease of funding was found as a consistent theme for this study.

Professional evaluation as co-teachers. All the administrators explained in their interviews that they observe co-teachers in the same observation session. Since the administrators at two of the schools have different expectations of the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers, the evaluation of teachers is not consistent across Smith District. The inconsistency across cases could stem from the fact that Jesse utilizes a document created by the state that explains how each standard on which they evaluate teachers would apply to special education teachers. Iona had seen and used the document at one point, but she had not applied it to the current year nor given it to her new assistant principals. This inconsistency also became a theme for this study. Research finds that when administrators are observing a co-taught classroom, they should be looking for different qualities than when they observe a classroom with one teacher (Murawski & Lochner, 2010) because if it does not look different, then it is not clear why two teachers are needed for the instruction of the class.

Iona was the only administrator to admit that she struggles when assigning a general education teacher as the co-teacher. She explained that there is more stress for teachers who are co-teachers because there is so much more planning involved, and there are sometimes behavior problems and academically challenging students they must be responsible for and teach. In this age of accountability, Iona explained that it places an extra strain on teachers as a portion of their evaluation is connected to student performance on high-stakes tests. Friend et al., 2010
experienced similar results in that administrators found that general education teachers were not as willing to be co-teachers if their salary was tied to their students’ test scores because, on average, special education students do not perform as well on these tests (Friend et al., 2010).

Many themes about co-teaching surfaced from this study connecting the findings to the research already available about inclusion. Utilizing the findings in this study based on organizational and cognitive role theory along with the connections with the literature between the consistent and inconsistent themes of this study provide implications for practice and research, but first the limitations of this study must be explained.

**Study Limitations**

This study was successfully completed, but some limitations should be noted. This study presents the perspectives and experiences of three cases composed of four administrators. Therefore, the findings revolve around the perceptions of the participants in each case. The sample size of three cases with only four participants makes it a small sample size compared to other larger quantitative studies. Two of the administrators are principals and two are not, so their immediate bosses are not the same, which means that they are not directly led by the same superior. The two principals also have different roles from the associate and assistant principal, so their perspectives could be different. All cases are in the same small district, so administrators from a larger district may have different roles and perspectives of co-teaching because of their district’s larger size. They are also in a Southeastern school district that is subjected to the same educational requirements of the states’ waiver through Race to the Top, and, therefore, may have knowledge limited to schools in the Southeast. The district is also a charter district, so it does have different rules and regulations than non-charter districts. The participants’ perceptions are their own and are based on their individual knowledge, experiences, and personal biases.
Therefore, their perceptions may be limited to each individual and offer limited views in any generalizations (Orcher, 2005). While there was a plethora of documents for the researcher to review, there was not much data found in the documents that discussed the roles of administrators or co-teaching. Another limitation to this study is that it only revealed the perspectives of administrators and did not take into account the perspectives of teachers, parents, students, or other staff in the school. Finally, the researcher is a teacher in the district of these cases. Since the researcher has been and is currently a co-teacher, the researcher has strong personal connections to the topic of co-teaching. When the researcher began teaching, her goal was to have all co-taught classes, but as the researcher experienced role conflict and role strain in co-teaching partnerships, her ideas began to shift. The researcher felt the need to switch from special education to general education to determine if being in the other world of education would be any different. Then, as the general education teacher in the co-teaching partnership, the researcher felt like some of the role conflict and role strain experienced while co-teaching could have been avoided if administration supported and listened to the needs of the co-teachers more frequently. The idea that administrators had not been trained about co-teaching never occurred to the researcher until she had dug into the literature surrounding inclusion and co-teaching. The personal connections and feelings could weaken the research.

**Implications for Practice**

The consistent and inconsistent themes are beneficial to the field of education since co-teaching is a prominent instructional setting for students with disabilities. An important step for states and school districts is figuring out a way to provide administrators with the ability to implement the Six Ps. By doing this, they will have a guide for auditing their current co-teaching practices and a better understanding of what they need to implement based on the deficient areas.
States, school systems, and administrators should confirm they have created policies and procedures for the teachers involved with co-teaching. Part of those policies and procedures should be roles and responsibilities for co-teachers. This study found that there are separate descriptions of the roles and responsibilities already available from the state, but that these are not consistent with research on the roles and responsibilities of effective co-teachers. The state should re-evaluate what research says about co-teaching and follow the suggestions supported by research to create separate documents for evaluating co-taught classrooms (Murawski & Lochner, 2010). Next, school districts should evaluate the professional development they provide for their administration and teachers and find a way to provide continual support for those evaluating co-teachers and any staff involved in an inclusive instructional setting, such as co-teaching and supportive instruction. Since the administrators explained that funds are limited for professional learning, school systems could find internal staff that is willing to provide trainings to other staff members about co-teaching.

If states or school systems are not able to provide the foundation that the literature suggests is beneficial for leading effective co-teaching, then they should determine which other inclusive instructional settings would be more favorable than non-effective co-teaching classrooms. All the administrators in the study mentioned the role conflict and role strain associated with co-teaching when they place two teachers together who are not compatible and do not have the support need for effective co-teaching, so the schools should evaluate if co-teacher is really the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

**Implications for Research**

This study has brought to light many topics about inclusion, education norms, and special education that are lacking in the literature. One thing that has been mentioned in other studies is
a need for a longitudinal study of students’ academic gains in co-taught classes verses other inclusive instructional settings to determine if co-teaching is truly an effective instructional setting for students with disabilities. The difficulty in conducting this study would be finding primary and secondary co-teachers who meet the criteria established for effective co-teaching, since most co-teaching classrooms utilize the less effective one-teach one-assist co-teaching model (Scruggs, et al., 2007).

Another theme revealed in this study was the existence of what seems to be two worlds of education: general and special. It would be interesting to interview, observe, and dissect the roles and responsibilities of general and special education teachers to really compare and contrast their roles and see if they really are so different from each other. Such a study could compare general education teachers to special education teachers who instruct students who are fully or partially included in general education to special education teachers who instruct severely mentally or emotionally disabled students. The comparison of these three types of education might reveal how similar or different special and general education truly are from each other.

The final suggested areas of future research from this study surround the term “specialized instruction.” There could be a study exploring what specialized instruction looks like and how specialized the instruction is. As found by Harbort, Gunter, Hull, Brown, Venn, and Wiley (2007), even when teachers meet the highly-qualified (HQ) requirements, it does not mean that they will be able to provide specialized instruction for students with disabilities in a co-teaching classroom. The administrators in this study requested training on what specialized instruction is and how it would be observed in a classroom.

**Action Plan**
The action plan for this researcher is to first work with her current school and district to help implement the knowledge she has gained in this study. Another idea is to contact the Department of Education to figure out why the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers do not match the definition of seminal researchers such as Cook and Friend (1995). After the researcher spent time working at the state level of the Department of Education, then maybe a move to the federal Department of Education would be beneficial. Another possibility would be working in a consulting group or organization that educates educators in order to help spread knowledge and implement what has been learned in this study. A final idea would be to collaborate with lobbying groups to help create large-scale school changes in order to create and support effective co-teaching and other inclusive instructional settings.

**Researcher’s Reflection**

As someone who has been a co-teacher for the past fifteen years for at least one class a day, becoming the general education teacher in conjunction with this study has really opened my eyes. When I was the special education co-teacher, I worked hard to feel like I was an equal with the general education teacher. Most of the time, the collaboration between the general education teacher and I allowed us to be equals and be seen as equals by the students. However, one year I was paired with a general education teacher whom I had never worked with before, and when I asked him when we would be planning our class together, he gave me a funny look. We eventually planned our class together and he informed me that he had never worked so hard with a special education teacher as he had that year. He explained that most of the co-teachers just come in and walk around or sit down in the back and do not ask to plan, assist with creating lessons, or instruct the class like I had. In my research, I learned that the type of co-teaching this teacher had described, known as one-teach one-assist (Cook & Friend, 1995), is predominant
across the world. I was shocked when I read study after study revealing how researchers
continued to observe this type of instruction in co-taught classrooms since co-teaching’s
inception in the 1980s. How have we not learned from the research?

This realization of the lack of true co-teaching occurring across the world in so many
studies made me wonder why co-teaching has been suggested as the LRE for students with
disabilities. If school districts are not able to support teachers in following the guidelines
provided in so many studies about effective co-teaching, then why is it promoted as the LRE for
students with disabilities? If co-taught classes are just going to utilize the one-teach one-assist
co-teaching model of instruction, then students with disabilities are not receiving the
accommodations and modifications they need from their special education teacher, which means
that these students could possibly be successful in a supportive instruction or general education
class. Schools could save so much money by hiring paraprofessionals instead of special
education teachers if all students with disabilities need is someone to guide them every once in a
while during the class.

Now that I have moved from special education over to the world of general education, I
am not sure why teacher training is divided into special education and general education in
college or professional development. There are a few things special education teachers are in
charge of (such as IEPs), but I am not sure what else calls for separate departments. In my
opinion, teachers should be training as educators, and if they want to specialize, then it could be
in a specific area of special education, but I do not believe it should not be a separate program. I
believe, as someone who was educated under the special education umbrella, that I actually had a
more well-rounded pre-service training than most general education teachers do. Very few
general education teachers have any exposure to the teaching and behavioral strategies I learned
going through a pre-service special education program. Instead of the worlds of education being divided into general and special education, it should be more comprehensive because most students with disabilities are instructed in the general education classroom.

During the course of this research, I discovered that the specialized instruction that special education teachers are required to provide for the students on their rosters is the same if not less than the differentiation strategies I use with my struggling students. If this is the direction co-teaching is headed, then I have no desire to be a co-teacher because the new roles and responsibilities lend themselves to one-teach one-assist, as special education teachers are not required to lead instruction, help all students, or create lesson plans. A special education teacher should not be earning the same salary, as a general education teacher is if they are not responsible for the same amount of work. Instead, this new direction of co-teaching in Smith District is asking the special education teacher to plan with the general education teacher but only make accommodations or specialized instruction for the students on his or her roster to the lessons and classroom management plan created by the general education teacher. If simple accommodations are what is now called specialized instruction, then a paraprofessional can provide those and schools can save a ton of money. Utilizing paraprofessionals more often would also help with the lack of special education teachers.

The last question that arose for me over the past couple of years while performing this study is the newest inclusive instructional setting being used in the state this study occurred in known as “collaborative instruction.” The idea behind this inclusive instructional setting is that a special education teacher would be in the classroom for half of a class period and provide specialized instruction for the students with disabilities. There are many questions that come to mind: 1) which part of the class does the student with disabilities need more assistance; 2) how
does the placement team determines; 3) how is this beneficial for students with disabilities; 4) how is this realistic for teachers or scheduling; 5) what research was used to support this new type of inclusion? It is difficult for teachers to carry out the instructions of the government when you know it is counter-intuitive and not at all research based. If teachers are having difficulty co-teaching then collaborative instruction will be even more difficult for administrators to schedule and teachers to implement.
References


Quarterly, 23(3), 229-236.


NIH Office of Extramural Research PDF (2008). *Protecting human research participants.*
http://www.northeastern.edu/research/hsrp/


Appendix A: Research Consent

Associate Superintendent:

As you know, I have been in the doctor of education program at Northeastern University for the past several years. I am finally to the point of the process where I may begin my research. In order to begin my research I need permission from the school system in which I prefer to conduct my research. As an employee of this district for the past 14 years, I would prefer to conduct my research in Smith District. I will be protecting the school system and participants by using pseudonyms in all aspects of the study and publications about the study.

The research will gain insight into the perception administrators have of co-teaching, and their perception of their role within co-teaching. In order to learn the perception of administrators, I need to gain access to them, which is why I am writing this letter.

I need at least three administrators, one from elementary, middle, and high school who are willing to be interviewed and observed. I will conduct three interviews that will last for at least 45 minutes, and they will be given the choice as to where they prefer for the interview to occur. Another step in the data collection process will be observing them twice in their natural setting. I will also need permission from you to contact the people in the school system that can help me gather documents and archival data from both the school system as a whole and each school where the participant is an administrator. Collecting data from multiple sources will help me triangulate the findings of this study.

I have attached the IRB approval form, the letter I will send to possible participants, and the interview questions that will be asked to the participants. Please let me know if there are any questions or concerns about this study that I may address for you.

I approve this research to take place in Smith District.

___________________________________________
Signature of person agreeing for the study to occur

___________________________________________
Printed name of person agreeing for the study to occur

___________________________________________
Signature of the researcher

___________________________________________
Printed name of the researcher

Date
Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

I have been in the doctor of education program at Northeastern University for the past several years. I am finally to the point in the process where I am ready to begin my research, and I am looking for study participants. In order for you to feel a little bit more comfortable participating in this study, let me explain a little bit of my background.

After graduating with both an undergraduate and master’s degree in special education, I moved to Georgia specifically to work for this school system and the school where I currently teach. I have been an employee of this district and have taught at the same school in this district for the past 14 years. My work has been in predominantly co-taught classrooms, in which I have been both the special educator and the general educator. For the first eleven years, I was a special education teacher, and for the past three have transitioned to general education science. As a teacher I have come to understand the importance of administrative support. I have noticed the complexity of the role of the administrator and the competing issues, which administrators have to balance. I want to better understand how administrators balance the multitude of roles and competing priorities- as the instructional leaders of the school.

My research seeks to gain insight into the perception administrators have of co-teaching, along with their perception of their role in co-teaching. In order to learn the perception of administrators, I need study participants, which is the purpose of this letter.

In order to protect you and the school system, I will be using pseudonyms during the whole data collection process. I will be protecting the school system by using a pseudonym, the Smith district, in all data collected. I will be protecting your identity by using a pseudonym such as Iona, Jesse, Barry, or John. There are a few important privacy protections in place for this study.

There are two requirements for the participants in my study: participants must be an active evaluator of co-teachers, and they must have been a credited evaluator of co-teachers for at least two years. I need three administrators who are willing to be interviewed and observed: one from elementary, middle, and high school.

I will by utilizing multiple methods to collect data for this study, one of which is three interviews with each participant, which must last at least 45 minutes. Each participant will be given the choice as to where he or she prefers for the interview to occur (the participant’s office, my classroom, a meeting room at the library, or another of the participant’s choice). Participants also have the right to not answer any questions they prefer not to answer and to leave the study at any time. Another step in the data collection process will be visiting each school to observe each administrator in their natural setting. I prefer to observe at least twice. Because collecting data
from multiple sources will help me triangulate the findings of this study, I will also need to access and gather documents and records from the school. Finally, after the interview has been transcribed and the data has been analyzed, I will ask to meet with participants once more to confirm the data collected from the participants. Participants have the choice to review as much of the data collected as they wish.

Please know that should you choose to participate in this study that you might also choose to leave the study at any time. Please let me know if there are any other questions or concerns about this study that I may address for you.

If you have any questions about the study or are interested in participating, please contact me at curnutt.c@husky.neu.edu or 404-452-7609. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson at co.brown@neu.edu. Since this is a research study being conducted through Northeastern University, it is required that I follow all procedures to maintain a valid study and kindly ask that you contact me about this study through the contact information I have provided to you in this letter and not through our district.

Thanks for the consideration,

Carrie Lee Hedrick
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Northeastern University, Ed.D. Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Name of Investigator(s): Carrie Lee Hedrick
Title of Project: Administrators’ perceptions of and role in co-teaching.

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to discover your perception of and role in co-teaching. This form will tell you the basics about the study; in addition, I will meet with you to answer any questions you may have about the study. When you are ready to make a decision, please email or call me to inform me whether or not you would like to participate in the study. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this statement; I will then provide you a copy for your records.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
I am asking you to be in this study because you meet the two participant requirements of this study. You are an active administrator of co-teachers, and you are currently in at least your second year of being a credited evaluator of co-teachers.

Why is this research study being done?
There is a gap in research on co-teaching from the perspective of administrators. The purpose of this research is to discover administrators’ perceptions of and role in co-teaching.

What will I be asked to do?
During three interviews you will be asked to answer a series of questions that unpacks your view of co-teaching and the expectations of your position and roles you fulfill as an administrator.

Where will this take place, and how much of my time will it take?
You will be given the opportunity to choose where the interviews will take place. You may choose your office, a conference room in the school in which I teach, or in a meeting room at the local library. The three main interviews will require at least 45 minutes of your time, but no more than an hour. After the interviews have been transcribed, I will present you with the opportunity to review the transcription of your interviews to confirm your statements and to clarify any remarks you feel are unclear. After the data has been analyzed you will have the option to review the data collected in the study and ask any lingering questions.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
There is no calculable risk or discomfort for this study. You are not obligated to answer any questions and may stop participation in any part of the study at any time.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, all the information gathered in this study will potentially lead to new information for administrators and leaders in school systems about co-teaching and will uncover the nuances of your role as an administrator in the age of educational federal mandates.
Who will see the information about me?
Only the researcher will know the information directly pertaining to you. During this study the school system will have the name the Smith District and you will be given a pseudonym in all areas of the collection of data. All others who read the data in this study will only know the pseudonyms. All information will be kept strictly confidential following IRB guidelines, and all transcripts and computer records will be destroyed within three years of study.

Can I stop my participation in this study?
Yes, you may stop your participation in this study at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you choose not to and may stop your involvement in this study at any time.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Mrs. Carrie Lee Hedrick at curnutt.c@husky.neu.edu or 404-452-7609 at any time.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617-373-4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously.

Will I be paid for my participation?
You will be given a $75 Visa or MasterCard gift certificate upon completion of the study.

Will it cost me anything to participate?
There is no cost to participants.

Is there anything else I need to know?
If you have questions that have not been answered in this consent form, please let the IRB administrator or me know and we will be happy to elaborate or provide further assistance.

I agree to take part in this research.

________________________________________________________
Signature of person agreeing to participate in the study

________________________________________________________
Date

________________________________________________________
Printed name of participant

________________________________________________________
Signature of the researcher

________________________________________________________
Date

________________________________________________________
Printed name of the researcher
Appendix D: IRB Approval

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: September 22, 2015  IRB #: CPS15-09-01
Principal Investigator(s): Corliss Brown Thompson
Carrie Lee Hedrick
Department: Doctor of Education
College of Professional Studies
Address: 20 Belvidere
Northeastern University
Title of Project: Administrators’ Perception of and Role in Co-teaching
Participating Sites: [Redacted] Permission forthcoming
DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Informed Consents: One (1) signed consent form
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Investigator’s Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

[Signature]
C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

[Signature]
Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630
Appendix E: Approval from Smith District

Research Applicant: Carrie Lee Hedrick
Research Title: Administrators' Perception of and Role in Co-teaching
Address: 411 Angier Place NE,
City/State/Zip: Atlanta, GA, 30308
Telephone: Work 404-452-7609 Home: 404-452-7609
Fax __________________________ E-mail curnutt.c@husky.neu.edu

I understand that any unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is illegal as provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 (FERPA) and in the implementing federal regulations found in 34 CFR Part 98. I understand that participation in a research study by students, parents, and school staff is strictly voluntary.

In addition, I understand that any data, datasets or outputs that I, or any authorized representative, may generate from data collection efforts throughout the duration of the research study are confidential and the data are to be protected. I will not distribute to any unauthorized person any data or reports that I have access to or may generate using confidential data. I also understand that students, schools, or the district may not be identified in the research report. Data with names or other identifiers such as student numbers will be disposed of when their use is complete.

I understand that acceptance of this request for approval of a research project in no way obligates the Marietta School District to participate in the research. I also understand that approval does not constitute commitment of resources or endorsement of the study or its findings by the school system or by the Marietta Board of Education.

If the research project is approved, I agree to abide by standards of professional conduct while working in the schools. I understand that failure to do so could result in termination of the research study.

I agree to send a copy of the study results to the superintendent and/or his designee after completion of the study for any future use to the __________________________ ___________. I understand that the study is not complete until this report has been provided to the __________________________ ___________.

[Signature]
Research Applicant, Signature __________________________ Date 10/16/15

[Signature]
Signature of Administrator or Staff Sponsor of Research Project __________________________ Date 10/5/15

[Signature]
Signature of Sponsoring Higher Education Agency __________________________ Date 10/16/15
Appendix F: Interview Questions Session 1

Prior to recording state: I would like to ask your permission to record this interview. Today you will be answering basic information about your education and career. Then I will be asking you questions which pertain to my theoretical frameworks, Role Theory, and ending it with questions about co-teaching. Please let me know if you would like to take a break at any time and we can pause the interview. When you read through it you may clarify any statements you made, then you can do so at the next session, email or call me.

Interview Session 1

Basic info:
1. Where did you go to college and what degrees have you received?
2. How long have you been in education?
3. How long were you a teacher and which subject(s) did you teach?
4. How long have you been in an administrative role? Which role(s) have you had?
5. How long have you been in your current position?
End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself, education or career?

Role Theory

1. What do you believe are your roles as an administrator? (ORT/CRT)
2. How you know your roles and responsibilities as an administrator?
3. Who is your role set as an administrator? Has your role set ever changed as an administrator? If so why and how. (ORT)
4. Who influences your role as an administrator and how do they influence your role as an administrator? (ORT)
5. Do you have any roles you are expected to carry out that you do not agree with? Please elaborate. How do they affect you? (ORT)
6. Who do you oversee as an administrator and how do they influence your role as an administrator? (ORT)
7. Do you have any roles as a leader you must follow through with that you do not agree with? Please elaborate. How do they affect you? (ORT)
8. Have you experience a drastic change during your role as an administrator? If so, what were they? If not, then do you see any future changes in your role occurring? (ORT)

9. Have you experienced situations in which you felt like you were the “man in the middle”? If so, please elaborate. (ORT)

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about your role or role set as an administrator?

Co-teaching

1. How do you define “inclusion”? (CRT)

2. How do you believe inclusion has changed education?

3. Have you seen inclusion evolve since you have been in education? If so, how?

4. Do you have any personal experiences you could share about inclusion?

5. Which federal law(s) are associated with inclusion and how are they associated?

6. What are the different instructional settings of inclusion?

   With regard to the different inclusive instructional settings, I’d like to ask you to explain what you believe you would see in a classroom with each type of instructional setting.

7. Explain which inclusive instructional settings are utilized at your school.

8. Rank the inclusive instructional setting in an order of use from most prominent to least prominent. Explain why you believe they are utilized in this order.

9. Explain any inclusion instructional settings that you know about, but have not seen utilized at your school. Why do you believe it is not used at your school?

10. What is co-teaching? (Only ask if they did not explain it in the inclusive instructional settings)

11. What is your perception of co-teaching? (CRT)
12. Do you have any other personal experiences with co-teaching you would share that have influenced your perception of co-teaching?

13. What is effective co-teaching? What are its potential benefits to students and teachers, and what are the costs? (CRT)

14. Who are the personnel involved in making sure co-teaching is an effective instructional setting? (CRT) What is their role in making sure it is effective?

15. What do you believe is your role in co-teaching? (CRT-only ask this if they do not mention themselves as a person involved in co-teaching in their answer to question 13)

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about inclusion or co-teaching?
Appendix G: Interview Questions Session 2

Prior to recording state: I would like to ask your permission to record this interview. Today you will be answering questions about your role in school culture, school change and being an instructional leader. Please let me know if you would like to take a break at any time and we can pause the interview. When you read through it you may clarify any statements you made, then you can do so at the next session, email or call me.

School Change

Policies-Federal Mandates (ORT/CRT)

1. What role does federal level policy have on your school?

2. Were you in an administrative role or in another job in education when No Child Left Behind (2002) was implemented? If so, how did it influence your position?

3. Does NCLB have any impact on your current position as an administrator? Some see this as the tipping point towards more academic accountability for students. Please comment on how NCLB affects you as a leader.

4. How has the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) influenced you as a leader? Some see this as the tipping point towards more inclusion-based instructional and stricter regulations for educators. Please comment on how IDEA affects you as a leader.

5. How has Race to the Top (2012) influenced you as a leader? Some see this as the tipping point towards more accountability for educators. Please comment on how RT affects you as a leader.

6. In what ways do you believe your school changed in order to meet the requirements of NCLB, IDEA, and RT? Can you comment on the positive change those laws presented, in your role as an administrator? Please comment on the challenges those changes presented, in your role as an administrator.

7. What policies are in place at your school system and school pertaining to co-teaching? Did you implement any of those policies? Elaborate, if possible.
End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about federal mandates and policies?

**School Culture**

1. From your perspective, what do you believe has the biggest influence on school culture?

**Promoting (CRT)**

2. How would you describe the culture of your school?
3. How have you contributed to the culture of your school?
4. Do you believe there is a collaborative climate in your school between your staff? Please elaborate by explaining why you do or do not feel there is a collaborative climate and if you have any part in the collaborative climate.
5. Do you believe your superiors support you? Please elaborate by explaining why you do or do not feel supported.
6. How do you show support to your staff? Please elaborate by explaining how you show you support your staff.
7. Have you shown to your staff that you accept co-teaching as a valuable instructional setting? In what ways?
8. Have you promoted co-teaching in the school system, your school and community? In what ways?

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about school culture?

**Instructional Leader**

**Preparation**

1. Have you had courses or professional development in reference to federal educational law? Please go as far back as possible by including any college courses in your undergrad or other certification programs you have received in your career.
2. Has your school or school district provided professional development for teachers in reference to federal education laws? Please specify which is school-based and which is district-based and also specify when the training occurs (pre-service, pre-planning, ongoing in school year, post-planning). (ORT)

3. How have you prepared yourself to comply with federal education laws?

4. Does the school system have policies that increase the effectiveness of co-teaching? If so, what are they? (ORT)

5. Do you feel you have enough control over policies and procedures to make co-teaching an effective instructional strategy? Why or why not? (CRT)

6. Have you created policies or procedures in order to increase the effectiveness of co-teaching? If so, what are they? If not, do you feel that you need to implement policies or procedures in your school to increase the effectiveness of co-teaching? Why or why not? (CRT)

7. Have you received courses or professional development in reference to co-teaching? Please go as far back as possible by including any college courses in your undergrad or other certification programs you have received in your career. (ORT)

8. Does your school system provide professional development for you in reference to co-teaching? If so, could you list and/or describe specific courses. If not what professional development would you like to have as an administrator, and what challenges do you face in their implementation? (ORT)

9. Does your school provide professional development for teachers in reference to co-teaching? If so, could you list and/or describe specific courses. If not what would
professional development would you like your teachers to have in place, and what challenges do you face in their implementation? (ORT)

10. Does the school system or school provide follow-up and continuous support for co-teachers? Will you explain those support systems? If not, what systems would you like to see in place, and what challenges do you face in their implementation? (ORT)

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about preparation of educators?
Appendix H: Interview Questions Session 3

Prior to recording state: I would like to ask your permission to record this interview. Today you will be answering questions pertaining to the schools personnel, evaluations and provisions. Please let me know if you would like to take a break at any time and we can pause the interview. Please let me know if you would like a copy of your transcription. When you read through it you may clarify any statements you made, then you can do so at the next session, email or call me.

Instructional Leader

1. What do you believe it means to be an instructional leader? (CRT)

2. Have your ideas of what it means to be an instructional leader changed over time? If so how?

3. Do you believe you are an instructional leader? Will you explain how you have you shown your staff that you are an instructional leader? (CRT)

Personnel

1. Explain how you hire personnel. What do you look for in a teacher with regard to experience, personal qualities, and training? (ORT)

2. Have you changed your hiring practices or placement of teachers in classrooms in order to create room for effective co-teachers? If so, explain how. If not, could you explain a situation in which you would? (ORT)

3. Explain how teachers in your school become co-teachers. What are the major considerations for placement, and what considerations are important but not essential? (ORT)

4. How do teachers know their roles and responsibilities?

5. What do you believe are the roles and responsibilities of general and special education teachers in a co-teaching classroom? (ORT)

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about personnel?
Management

Professional Evaluation

1. How have you been prepared to evaluate co-teachers? Do you feel adequately prepared to evaluate co-teachers? Elaborate on why you do or do not feel prepared to evaluate co-teachers. (ORT)

2. How do you evaluate teachers who are co-teaching? Do you use any particular instrument specifically for co-teachers, or is there a standard district/school instrument for teacher evaluation? If so, may I please have a copy? (CRT)

3. Do you believe you evaluate co-teachers effectively? Elaborate on why you do or do not feel you evaluate co-teachers effectively. (CRT)

4. How do you think co-teachers should be evaluated?

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about professional evaluations?

Role Strain (ORT)

5. Would you say you have effective co-teachers in your school? If so, explain what you have specifically observed that makes them effective (strategies, data, etc). If not, explain specific instances you have observed in a co-taught classroom that makes them not effective in your eyes.

6. When and/or if you have observed ineffective co-teaching, what strategies do you use to remEDIATE to assist the teachers? Is there a system-wide plan in place, a school-wide plan, or is it a case-by-case basis?

7. If a co-taught classroom in your building did not look like what you think they should, how have you supported those teachers to make a change? If they look like you believe
they should then how to you show your support to those teachers to continue being effective co-teachers? (CRT)

8. Have you ever had to deal with co-teachers not collaborating and pushing back or conflicting well with each other or not working well together in general? If so, how did you deal with it? If not, how would you deal with it?

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about effective, ineffective or leading co-teaching teams?

Provisions

1. How have you managed the business aspect of school to support co-teaching? Consider things like scheduling, duties for co-teachers outside of the classroom, professional development opportunities, planning time, etc. (CRT)

2. Has the school system allocated resources to support co-teachers? What are the major areas of support? (ORT)

3. Are you satisfied with the amount of support provided by the school system for co-teachers? Why or why not? If you could increase/decrease system support in any particular areas, what would they be? (ORT)

4. Do you feel that in your capacity as leader of co-teaching teams you have been provided with adequate resources (including time, money, and other material finances) to lead your teachers well? What other kinds of support would you like to see?

5. How have you specifically allocated resources to support co-teachers? Explain how you did or did not. Are you satisfied with the amount of support and resources you have provided for co-teachers? Why or why not? (CRT)

End with: Is there anything else you would like to share about provisions?
Appendix I: Interview Questions Session 4

Prior to recording state: I would like to ask your permission to record this interview. Today you will be answering questions pertaining to the schools personnel, evaluations and provisions. Please let me know if you would like to take a break at any time and we can pause the interview. Please let me know if you would like a copy of your transcription. When you read through it you may clarify any statements you made, then you can do so by emailing or calling me.

1. Why do you think co-teaching is a beneficial instructional setting?
   
   * Explain how you believe co-teaching and supportive instruction inclusion instructional settings are similar and different.

2. If you could do anything to motivate teachers what would you do?

3. If you could do anything to motivate teachers to become co-teachers what would you do?

4. What federal/state/local laws would you eliminate, alter, or create if you were in charge?

5. How would you change hiring practices if possible for your building?

6. If your boss was able to “grant you wishes” what would your top three priorities be for your school?

7. What would you change about the evaluation tool for administrators and teachers?

*Only for Jesse
## Appendix J: Observation Checklist for Administrator’s Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities Observed Behavior</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School change (policies/roles and responsibilities)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School culture (promoting/admin support)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Instructional leader (preparation/personnel/placement of teachers)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Management (resources/professional development/planning)</td>
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## Appendix K: Document Summary Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date Received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title/Purpose/importance of document</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief summary of documents contents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Sample of Special Education Teacher Evaluation Rubric Guide

### Evidence of Documentation

Evaluators may request documentation from teachers when a standard is not observed during an announced or unannounced observation. The examples below will provide ideas that may be helpful when needing further documentation. **This is not a comprehensive list of examples and should not be used as a checklist.** Documentation may also need to be supplemented with conversation, discussion, and/or annotations to clarify the teacher’s practice and process.

**Teachers of adapted curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Examples of Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Professional Knowledge** | ➤ Summary of a plan for integrating instruction.  
➤ Class profile  
➤ Annotated list of instructional activities for a unit  
➤ Annotated photographs of teacher-made displays used in instruction  
➤ Annotated samples or photographs of instructional materials created by the teacher  
➤ Lesson/intervention plan (including goals and objectives, activities, resources, and assessment measures) |
| **Ask for** | **Look for** |
| • Student learning profiles  
• Integrated curriculum units for Multi-Grade and/or Multi-Subject classes**  
• IEP goals that are standards based and supports that connect the learner to grade level standards  
• Verbally able to articulate learning of the students and/or provide annotated list of instructional activities that are based on the students’ individual learning profiles  
• Evidence of scaffolding towards achievement of grade level standards  
• Evidence of transactional supports to encourage student independence | • Evidence of specialized instruction to address IEP goals that progress the student towards mastery of grade level standards.  
• Evidence of specialized instruction to address IEP goals and provide access to grade level standards. **  
• Evidence of scaffolding to facilitate participation in and/or provide access to grade level standards.  
• Evidence of IEP implementation.  
• Educational practices that demonstrate mastery of content and its delivery by engaging all students in academic, behavioral and social/emotional learning experiences.  
• Establishes learning targets for content-related skills and self-management/self-advocacy.  
• Presents information in ways that actively engage the students in the material that they are learning and in ways that students can understand, remember and apply.  
• Evidence of transactional supports to facilitate and foster independence.  
• Use of assistive technology to facilitate participation and mastery of learning targets.  
• Flexible groupings used to provide specially designed instruction. |

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Appendix M: Smith District Module Training

ComplianceDirector.org Access Instructions

ComplianceDirector is working with ____ to provide online training for specific content areas which must be reviewed annually with ALL _____ staff. Training may be completed any time, any day, and from any location with Internet access. On or before September 30, 2014, (side note this was the directions for 2015 SY also which means the are the same core content modules for the previous two school years) ALL ____ employees must complete the following training modules:

Core Content Modules:
- Code of Ethics
- Sexual Misconduct Reporting
- Mandated Reporting
- FERPA
- Copyright for Schools

Access Instructions:
Go to https://www.compliancedirector.org
Select “__________”
Click on the module you have been directed to take
Enter the module using the following:
  - Username: pioneer
  - Password: _______

Complete the training module (usually takes 15-20 minutes)
Upon completion, you will be prompted for the following:
  - Select System: __________
  - Username: __________________
  - Password: smartview

Personal Information Screen:
  - Enter your first name
  - Enter your last name (as it appears on your paycheck)
  - Enter the year you were born (4 digits)
  - Enter the last 4 digits of your social security number
  - Select your work location from the drop-down menu provided
  - Enter your email address. **NOTE: You will receive an email confirming module completion almost immediately. Print and keep that confirmation page for your records.**
  - Click “Submit”

To initiate a new module, click on ________________, select module, and begin again....
### Appendix N: Sample of Smith District Professional Learning Opportunity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Who Should Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-9:30</td>
<td>Evaluation Training for Administrators</td>
<td>Principals, Assistant Principals and other TKES Evaluators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30-12:30</td>
<td>Early Literacy Phonics Training - Part I</td>
<td>Registered K/1 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-3:00</td>
<td>PL for SPED Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>SPED Paraprofessionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-4:00</td>
<td>MYP: The Next Chapter</td>
<td>All teachers of grades 6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
<td>4th grade - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All 4th grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
<td>2nd grade - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All 2nd grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-11:30</td>
<td>SLO Implementation Training</td>
<td>Testing Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-12:30</td>
<td>5th grade - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All 5th grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-12:30</td>
<td>3rd grade - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All 3rd grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>MYP: The Next Chapter</td>
<td>MSGA, MMS, MHS Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>GoClaim (Medicaid Training)</td>
<td>OTs, PTs and SLPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-3:45</td>
<td>Kindergarten - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All Kindergarten teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-3:45</td>
<td>1st grade - Math and Reading Launch Units, Curriculum Guides, preview for quarter 1</td>
<td>All 1st grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-4:00</td>
<td>School-Assigned Title I &quot;Expert&quot; Meeting</td>
<td>Selected Individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Who Should Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast - 7:00-8:00; Kick-off - 8:00-10:00</td>
<td>Employee Kick-Off</td>
<td>All Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 - 11:30</td>
<td>Hospital/Homebound Meeting</td>
<td>Any teacher interested in being considered to provide hospital/homebound services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:30</td>
<td>Parent Liaison Meeting</td>
<td>All Parent Liaisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-12:00</td>
<td>PBIS Training</td>
<td>PBIS School Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td>Media Specialists' Meeting</td>
<td>All Media Specialists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>