

Improving Co-Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom through Professional Development for

Administrators

BY

DEBORAH LYNN FAERMARK

B.S., Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 1995

MAT., National Louis University, Wheaton, 1998

CAS., National Louis University, Evanston, 2006

THESIS

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Defense Committee:

Dr. Daniel Maggin, Chair and Advisor

Dr. Marie Tejero Hughes

Dr. Norma Lopez-Reyna

Dr. Michelle Parker-Katz

Dr. Virginia Zeitlin, Benedictine University

Throughout my life, I have been blessed to be surrounded by a family that had a significant influence on me to become the person that I am today. My Uncle David instilled in me my love of the fine arts and travel. It is because of him that I love musical theatre, museums, and have a curiosity for learning about other cultures. He also gave me my love of baseball, although, much to his chagrin I proudly root for the White Sox and not his beloved Cubs. I do not think it mattered to him, as long as I have a love for the game, he was happy. I developed so many of my passions because of him, and I will be forever grateful for the years we were able to spend together. I know that he is reading every word of this thesis, finding the one (or two) grammatical errors I failed to correct and shouting at me that I missed something. I hear you UD, I hear you!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAHCA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
IDEIA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
UDL	Universal Design for Learning

Summary

Administrators who espouse a commitment to inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms can significantly improve inclusion and co-teaching within their schools. Administrators are instrumental in leading schools to effective inclusion and co-teaching practices (Smith & Leonard, 2005). Those who support inclusion and have a “can-do” attitude have shown a higher ability to successfully implement inclusive practices (Huberman et al., 2012; Marks et al., 2014). Teachers feel that for inclusion and co-teaching to be successful, their school leaders must take an active role in the implementation of inclusion (Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Waldron et al., 2011).

It may not be enough for administrators to provide professional development to teachers to improve their co-teaching practices. Administrators need professional development themselves on the co-teaching process, collaboration skills, and to learn effective inclusive practices to expand their knowledge base on the co-teaching service delivery option (Mackey, 2014). By learning effective inclusive practices, administrators may be in a better position to support the co-teachers. Nevertheless, even knowing that administrative supports can improve inclusion and co-teaching, supports from administrators remains challenging to implement.

The purpose of this case study aimed to explore the impact that professional development for administrators had on their ability to support co-teachers in the inclusive co-taught classroom. Two administrators and two co-teaching dyads participated in this study across two secondary schools outside a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. Administrators engaged in semi-structured, professional development sessions, walk-through observations, and collected evidence from the walk-through observations to complete a data collection form. After each walk-through observation, the administrators provided feedback to the co-teacher dyads which

helped to understand the impact the professional development had on their ability to provide feedback to the co-teachers. The co-teachers partook in semi-structured interviews, walk-through observations, and feedback sessions from their administrators to help gauge the effect the feedback from the administrator had on their co-teaching practice.

Results showed that professional development trainings on co-teaching and inclusive practices had a positive impact on administrators' ability to provide support co-teachers. Administrators conducted walk-through observations to provide co-teachers with non-evaluative feedback on their co-teaching practices. Evidence showed that by providing co-teachers feedback in tandem was essential to improving co-teaching practices. In addition, the administrators provided positive feedback to the co-teachers that built on the strengths of their current co-teaching practices. This positive feedback revealed that co-teachers felt their confidence improved in their co-teaching practices and validated that they were co-teaching effectively with their co-teaching partner. Findings from this study extend research on co-teaching practices and may have an impact on co-teaching reform.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1986, Madeline Will, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for the U.S. Department of Education, wrote that special education “programs must be allowed to establish a partnership with regular education to cooperatively assess the educational needs of students with learning problems and to cooperatively develop effective educational strategies for meeting those needs” (p. 415). Will felt a partnership between special education programs and general education programs would address the educational change schools needed to support students in special education from failing in traditional pullout programs that, at the time, were thought to be the only effective way to teach students in special education.

Today, the number of students with disabilities in general education classrooms continues to increase. According to the most recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2020) for the 2015 school year, 95% of students with disabilities from the ages of 6-21 are educated in public schools. The remaining 5% of students with disabilities attended schools outside the public school in settings such as residential schools, homebound settings, correctional facilities, or family placed private schools (NCES, 2020). Of the children receiving special education in the public schools, 13.6 % of students with disabilities were educated inside the general education classroom less than 40% of the day. The number of students with disabilities taught in the general education classroom 80% or more of the time rose by 7% since 2013, with 62.5% of students with disabilities reported being taught in the general education classrooms in 2015. Of the remaining 95% of students with disabilities educated in public schools, 18.7% spent between 40% and 79% of the school day in general education classrooms (NCES, 2020). This number is slightly down from 19.4% in 2013. These statistics demonstrate the prevalence of

students with disabilities being educated with their same-aged peers in the general education classrooms continuing to grow every year.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA) stated that students with disabilities must be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). However, LRE is not a specific placement but based on the unique academic and behavior needs of each student (Rozalski et al., 2011). Decisions regarding the LRE for individual students require the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team to determine the best setting and education program for students with disabilities. However, the subject of inclusion comes into question when determining a student's LRE. Specifically, IEP teams need to determine if the student in question would benefit socially and academically from inclusion with their same-aged peers without disabilities, or if they would benefit from a more specialized program in a segregated classroom (Friend, 2018). Put simply, LRE and inclusion are not synonymous, although they are often used interchangeably (Rozalski et al., 2011). Inclusion is a philosophical belief that every student has the right to be included in meaningful participation in the school community and to participate in the LRE with full access to the general education curriculum with high expectations for achievement (Harpell & Andrews, 2010; Rice, 2006; IDEA 2004). Inclusion and inclusive practices are based on the philosophy that students with disabilities are included in their school community with their same-aged peers and included based on their abilities rather than their disabilities (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). The assumption of those advocating for inclusion is that placement of students with disabilities into general education classrooms will lead to meaningful participation in the school community, full access to the general education curriculum, and high expectations for their achievement.

School personnel has been pressed to meaningfully address issues related to high academic expectations and performances for students with disabilities. Over the past decade, changes in special education laws require students with disabilities to be included in statewide assessments and to be provided services based on peer-reviewed research (Yell et al., 2006). According to advocates of inclusion, one way to support better academic outcomes for students with disabilities is to increase their participation in general education classrooms. Inclusion and inclusive practices are based on the philosophy that including students with disabilities with their same-aged peers, will lead to better academic outcomes (Friend & Bursuck, 2012).

Inclusive Practices

Friend and Bursuck (2012) state that inclusive practices should build on three principles: physical integration, social integration, and instructional integration. Physical integration ensures that students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom with their peers and only removed when necessary to support their needs. Social integration supports and encourages appropriate social relationships between students with disabilities and their same-aged peers and adults. Third, instructional integration allows students with disabilities access to the same curriculum as their peers while providing accommodations and modifications as needed to ensure their success (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). Friend and Bursuck suggest that the term inclusive practices used over inclusion. They maintain that the term inclusion alone refers to a "single model or program" (p. 6), while inclusive practices define a broader term that is "made up many strategies and options" (p. 6).

Friend (2018) offers four strategies to address inclusive practices that may support educators in the inclusive classroom to provide better academic outcomes for students with disabilities: collaboration, accessible and effective instruction, assistive and instructional

technology, and positive behavior supports. While each one of these practices provides essential supports to effective inclusion, a necessary aspect of the co-teaching service delivery option is the inclusive practice of collaboration. Friend (2018) states that a special kind of collaboration takes place in the form of co-teaching. Simply defined, collaboration is an interactive process where people with diverse knowledge bring their efforts together in parity to produce solutions for collaboratively developed goals using shared decision making, resources, and accountability while valuing personal opinions and expertise (Idol et al., 2000; Friend, & Cook, 2017). Friend (2018) explains, "collaboration has become a crucial dimension to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of inclusive special education and related services" (p. 24). Indeed, the development of effective inclusive programs requires collaboration across a range of stakeholders, including general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators. Collaboration is the crux of developing and implementing effective and inclusive practices; this issue is discussed in further detail below.

Providing effective inclusive practices does not mean that all students with disabilities should be included in the general education classroom at all times. The IEP team needs to consider the needs of the students with disabilities, and a continuum of supports must be offered to meet students' needs in compliance with LRE. Friend (2018) explains that inclusive practices vary from school to school. Some schools practice exemplary methods of including students, with teachers and staff meeting the formal definitions of inclusion described above. In contrast, other schools may not demonstrate best practices to include students with disabilities. She further explains that there is a debate on what constitutes inclusive practices with some schools focusing on placements rather than a belief system. Some proponents of inclusion feel that authentic inclusive practices are those that include all students in the general education classroom with

their same-aged peers. While others think that full inclusion does not meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. What is clear, is that students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom more than ever before. As such, models for implementing effective and inclusive strategies have emerged with co-teaching, representing, perhaps, the most prevalent model.

Co-Teaching as an Inclusive Practice

McLeskey et al. (2014) argue that including students in the general education classroom has become as much of an issue of inclusiveness and belonging as meeting student needs. They further challenge that schools need to focus on not just the social aspect of inclusion but also to provide high-quality, effective instruction. Co-Teaching is a method that has gained considerable attention as a model for including students with disabilities in the LRE (Friend et al., 2010). The co-teaching service delivery option is defined as

Two teachers, most often, general and special education teachers who collaborate on the teaching responsibilities of all students assigned to a single classroom. Both teachers work together to develop a differentiated curriculum that meets the needs of a diverse population of students. Both teachers work together in parity to share the planning, presentation, evaluation, and classroom management to enhance the learning environment for all students (Gately & Gately, 2001; Friend et al., 2010).

Co-Teaching has become a popular service delivery option to meet the needs of students in the general education classroom. With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEIA), schools have responded with inclusive service models to educate students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The passing of NCLB required students with disabilities to have access to the

general education curriculum, to be taught by highly qualified teachers, and increased accountability for achievement outcomes for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

In 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, which reauthorized NCLB. The reauthorization added new provisions to support underprivileged students, along with a more substantial focus on family and community engagement, while still holding schools and educators accountable to provide a high-quality education to all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Also, IDEIA ensured that students are taught in their LRE. Friend et al. (2010) state that "co-teaching seems to be a vehicle through which legislative expectations can be met while students with disabilities at the same time can receive the specially designed instruction and other supports to which they are entitled." (p. 9). Thus, to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in their LRE and have access to the general education classroom to the largest extent possible with their same-aged peers, schools have responded with the co-teaching delivery service option. Friend (2014) notes that access is not the same as exposure, and the purpose of including students with disabilities in the general education classroom is to improve their academic achievement. Thus, the co-teaching service delivery model is meant to ensure that special education teachers work closely with the general education teachers to help close the achievement gap for students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

The popularity of co-teaching belies the amount of rigorous research used to investigate its various components and overall effectiveness. For instance, Murawski and Swanson (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of co-teaching research and determined that the research methods in the studies reviewed were not consistent or well-defined. They noted that studies did not describe clear measures for the treatment interventions, leaving the integrity of the outcomes unclear (p.

265). Another issue surrounding the delivery option is that no clear definition of co-teaching is provided, and the terms for co-teaching that are given are interchangeable. They also noted that few studies described the actions of co-teachers (p. 265). Cook et al. (2011) felt that despite its popularity of the co-teaching service delivery option, drawing on the findings that Murawski and Swanson (2001) found in the literature, co-teaching should not be considered an effective or evidence-based practice.

Among the most widely used co-teaching methods is the cooperative teaching approach introduced by Bauwens et al. (1989). This framework built on the collaborative consultation model developed by Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, and Nevin in 1986. Idol et al. (1995) revisited the collaborative consultation model, which outlined how interdisciplinary teams should work together to support teachers to improve their instruction in classrooms that included students with disabilities. In this model, teachers worked together with the special education teacher providing consultation to the general education teacher to implement supports for students with disabilities. In the collaborative consultation model, teachers were not yet teaching in tandem in the general education classroom to support all students. The cooperative teaching model or co-teaching model, as Bauwens et al. (1989) coined the term, built off of the collaborative consultation model. The difference is that in the collaborative consultation model, the special education teacher and general education teacher work together simultaneously in joint responsibility to present content instruction, with students with disabilities included in the general education classroom for this instruction (Bauwens et al., 1989). The cooperative teaching model laid the foundation for the co-teaching service delivery method as we know it today with the authors discussing teachers working in parity and the importance of honoring teachers' expertise. While collaborating during these models, Cook and Friend (2010) noted,

“Collaboration became recognized as the *style* of interacting with others and it was identified as being separate from the *process* of consultation.” (p. 3). This laid the foundation for co-teaching collaboration as it should be done today, which will be discussed in a later section. Bauwens et al. (1989) noted barriers to the cooperative teaching model, such as the additional time needed to plan, lack of teacher cooperation, and the perception of the extra workload. However, they also identified benefits such as helping to transition or mainstream students from self-contained classrooms to a general education classroom. Also, this model provides support to students with disabilities in the general education classroom rather than pulling them out for services.

The co-teaching service delivery option was meant to ensure that two highly qualified educators, most often special education teachers and general education teachers worked closely together to help close the achievement gap for students with disabilities. The co-teaching service delivery option not only offers students with disabilities access to the core curriculum but also to receive sound instruction in inclusive classrooms (Friend, 2014). Co-Teaching is considered a service delivery option since some students with disabilities need other options to meet their needs, such as pull out or instructional services. Ideally, the co-taught service delivery option brings together two educators to collaborate to plan to teach in parity, assess, and support all students. When implemented successfully, co-teaching can support all learners, and educational enrichment for every student occurs.

Murawski and Swanson (2001) stated there is confusion over the co-teaching service delivery option due to vague definitions leading to misunderstanding expectations for teachers. Teachers have unclear co-teaching expectations because administrators have a lack of clarity on the implementation of the service delivery option. Throughout the literature, terms are often used interchangeably, for example, co-teaching is sometimes referred to as collaborative teaching or

team-teaching (Dieker & Murawksi, 2003) or even merely, inclusion (Friend et al., 2010). The definition of collaborative teaching is the special education teacher assisting the general education teacher in providing indirect services to students with disabilities outside of the classroom (Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). A confusion of team-teaching also exists, because team-teaching also refers to one of the approaches within the co-teaching service delivery option defined by Cook and Friend (1995), where teachers teach in tandem. A later section discusses the co-teaching approaches in depth.

An essential aspect to the co-teaching service delivery option is the inclusive practice of collaboration, as mentioned earlier by Friend (2018), collaboration is a unique kind of collaboration that takes place while of co-teaching. Friend and Cook (2017) state that collaboration is when people are engaged in an active process. They further state that collaboration as "a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 5). Furthermore, the definition of collaboration is "an interactive process where people with diverse knowledge bring their efforts together in parity to produce solutions for shared goals using shared decision making, resources, and accountability while valuing personal opinions and expertise (Idol et al., 2000; Friend & Cook, 2017). When collaborating, teachers need to share resources and hold each other accountable for the common goal or outcomes. Also, teachers who collaborate value each other's interpersonal style, develop a trusting relationship and cultivate a sense of community. When implemented successfully, co-teaching can support and enrich learning for all learners.

Collaboration and Co-Teaching

In today's schools, teachers collaborate with many different people for various reasons, in the case of co-teaching, collaboration is the process of teachers working together for a common

goal to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Conoley and Conoley (2010) share that the dynamics of collaboration are intricate, and true collaboration can only exist when there is shared decision making and clear goals. Also, participants must feel their contributions are valued and that they are respected. Cook and Friend (2010) identified several essential attributes of collaboration that deepen the definition and understanding of the term. Collaboration should be voluntary, requires parity between the participants, needs mutual goals, shared responsibility and decision making, participants need to share resources, and share accountability for outcomes.

When one teacher collects data, such as student time on task, while the other leads the lesson is an example of when the one teach, one observe approach is appropriate to use. It is a very powerful approach used to help understand student behavior and needs, and thus, should be used for short periods and for specific reasons. For this approach, both teachers should alternate, taking turns with the role of the observer is to collect data. The one teach, one assist approach is also useful as an occasional co-teaching approach. Here, one teacher leads the whole group instruction while the other teacher assists students with work to help them to remain on task. This approach is helpful when students need to catch up with missed work or need remediation in a concept. As with the one teach, one observe approach, in the one teach, one assist approach both teachers should alternate taking on the role of the lead and the assistant. Both approaches, as mentioned above, should be purposeful and meet the specific needs of the students and the objective of the lesson, and neither approach should not be overused. Friend (2014) noted that it is crucial to use a variety of approaches during a single lesson. However, that is not often the case. The one teach, one assist approach is the most commonly used approach cited throughout the research; when the general education teacher takes the lead while the special education

teacher takes on the role of an assistant the majority of the time in the co-taught classroom (Bouck, 2007; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort et al., 2007; Magiera et al., 2006; Naraian, 2010; Pratt, 2014; Shamberger et al., 2014). The one teach, one assist approach may be the most commonly used approach by co-teachers due to lack of planning, poor collaboration, and undefined roles and responsibilities between the co-teaching dyad (Austin, 2001; Burstein et al., 2004; Daane et al., 2000; Fuchs, 2009-2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort et al., 2007; Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Marks et al., 2014; Morgan, 2016; Naraian, 2010; Olson et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014; Salisbury, 2006; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003).

The team-teaching approach and the alternative teaching approach are appropriate to use occasionally. These approaches take a fair amount of planning and collaboration between the co-teaching dyad. The alternative teaching approach divides the class into groups based on the needs of the students, and teachers can enrich or remediate their lessons to support the unique needs of each group. This approach also allows fewer students and teachers to work with smaller groups. Although pacing between the two groups can become an issue, the alternative teaching approach can support all learners due to the smaller group size. In this approach, it is essential that the groups be heterogeneous and not arranged so that the special education teacher works only with students with disabilities; that would defeat the purpose of inclusion. Similarly, the team-teaching approach allows both teachers to lead the same whole group lesson and bounce off each other to present material in various ways, at the same time, allowing different modalities for learning.

Approaches that should be practiced more frequently during co-taught lessons are the station teaching and parallel teaching approaches. Both of these approaches take a significant

amount of planning and collaboration on the part of the co-teaching dyad. The station teaching approach has the class rotating to three different stations working on various activities utilizing the inclusive practice of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. The UDL framework for learning allows the co-teachers to support students with multiple means of engagement to promote motivation and interest for learning, for the material to be taught in multiple ways to meet learning needs and for multiple means of expression to express learning in a variety of ways (CAST: Until Learning Has No Limits, 2018). Teachers lead two stations while at one station, students work independently, perhaps on computers or other engaging activities. In the station teaching approach, due to the rotating through three different stations, this approach takes a high level of collaborating to plan to ensure that the stations are not hierarchical and activities are not dependent on one station before another.

The final co-teaching approach is the parallel teaching approach. The parallel teaching approach allows for the class to be divided in half, and each teacher teaches a group. Similar to the alternative teaching approach, this approach differs by the same lesson is not taught to both groups. Here the lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of each group. However, again, it is essential that the special education teacher must not always take the students who need remediation or extra support. The teachers must work in parity and share the responsibility for supporting all students.

Co-Teaching in Practice

As stated earlier, the co-teaching service delivery option was designed to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom by providing two highly qualified teachers in the classroom to meet the needs of all students and also to help meet the requirements of LRE. It appears we have made good on the promise of including students with disabilities in the general

education classroom and providing access to the general education core curriculum. Despite the criticism in the rigor of co-teaching research, there are benefits to the delivery option. Friend (2014) offers the following: increased access to a rigorous educational curriculum; decreased fragmentation of services (i.e., students with disabilities are not spending time transferring between specialized classes); the reduced stigma of pulling students with disabilities out of classes and away from their same-aged peers; and a collaborative support system between special education teacher and general education teachers. However, still, it cannot be ignored that empirical research is scattered with pros and cons of the delivery option. As stated earlier, empirical research has not been consistent.

Some barriers to the delivery option presented in research lie in the delivery of co-teaching itself. When special education teachers are in the co-taught classroom, they act as assistants to the general education teacher who take on the role of the lead instructor, which may not be an effective use of a highly qualified teacher (Bouck, 2007; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort et al., 2007; Magiera et al., 2006; Naraian, 2010; Pratt, 2014; Shamberger et al., 2014). Schools have incorporated the co-teaching service delivery option to meet the needs of students with disabilities but failed to make due on the promise to support students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom effectively. Educators, teachers, and administrators may not be implementing the co-teaching service delivery option effectively. Collaboration was identified as an essential component of effective co-teaching in numerous studies, yet is not often the focus of inclusive practices such as co-teaching (Fuchs, 2009-2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort et al., 2007; Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Marks et al., 2014; Morgan, 2016; Olson et al., 2016). Thus, the co-teaching service delivery option appears to be more about working

together and collaborating than about the co-teaching approaches outlined by Cook and Friend (1995) presented to teachers.

Administrative Support

School administrators play a critical role in the successful implementation of co-teaching in their schools by providing supports to co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. To begin, administrators must actively support inclusive practices such as the co-teaching service delivery option, and they must also believe and support inclusive practices in their schools (Rice, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011). The inclusive practice of collaboration is noted in research as an area of need by teachers to be successful for co-teachers. Researchers reported that co-teachers felt that common planning time was essential to the success of co-teaching and necessary for effective collaboration and supported communication (Hang & Rabren, 2009; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Shamberger et al., 2014; Pratt, 2014). In their study, Huberman et al. (2012) ascertained collaboration as a guiding force in improved student outcomes. While Mackey (2014) reported findings that “administrative support in the form of professional development around collaboration and co-teaching could have improved the experience of teachers, support personnel, and students in each of the inclusive classrooms” (p. 15). Furthermore, Smith and Leonard (2005) stated, “Principals need to be facilitators of a collaborative vision” (p. 277). They also indicated, “Principals who empower their teachers to collaborate and make decisions that are pertinent to successful inclusion will have greater success” (p. 277). It is the administrators that need to ensure teachers have the appropriate schedules for common plan time to support the need to facilitate active collaboration between co-teaching dyads.

In addition to supporting the inclusive practice of collaboration to support the co-teaching service delivery option, findings indicated that administrators who were collaborative and inclusive were also committed to providing professional development to support teachers' growth in learning about inclusion (Smith & Leonard, 2005). Throughout the literature, teachers reported a need for their administrators to provide professional development for improved co-teaching outcomes (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Huberman et al., 2012; Mackey, 2014; Pratt, 2014; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Ornelles et al., 2007). Pancsofar and Petroff (2013) reported that teachers who had experiences with professional development in co-teaching had improved confidence and higher interest in the delivery option than teachers who did not attend professional development. Brinkman and Twiford (2012) offered that administrators should provide professional development on co-teaching and collaboration to novice teachers and experienced teachers assigned to co-teaching teams to "assess their current skills and identify areas for further development" (p. 10).

Co-Teachers also felt they should have a role in the decision-making process for the implementation of inclusive practices and for co-teaching to be successful (Fuchs, 2009-2010; Rice, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011). Having a role in co-teaching decisions would better support teachers' understanding of inclusive practices and teacher buy in to support new co-teaching initiatives. Furthermore, administrators should be aware of barriers such as incompatible personalities and similar teaching philosophies when pairing co-teachers and teachers should be allowed to volunteer to co-teach (Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Naraian, 2010; Ornelles et al., 2007; Pratt, 2014; Rivera et al., 2014). Administrators that are cognizant of co-teacher pairings could improve working conditions for collaboration. Conoley and Conoley (2010)

expressed the importance of happiness when working together and building strong collaborative relationships, which can lead to greater success in the workplace.

Providing supports such as planning time to support collaboration, professional development opportunities to support collaboration skills and the co-teaching process, and involving teachers in the decision-making process for inclusive practices could improve the co-teaching service delivery option. Research findings indicate the one teach, one assist approach is implemented in classrooms (Bouck, 2007; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Naraian, 2010; Magiera et al., 2006) and effective outcomes for students with disabilities are not shown.

Professional Development

The goal of professional development is "thought to be an effective and necessary mechanism by which teachers can be prepared for supporting students in inclusive schools" (Leko & Roberts, 2014, p. 43). Furthermore, Deshler and Cornett (2012) state that professional development and coaching from administrators help to support teachers to use effective teaching strategies at higher competencies. Leko and Roberts explain that professional development can come in the form of staff development or in-service teacher education. Jacob (2016) offers that administrators can provide professional supports in various forms, such as providing professional coaches, time to plan, classroom observations, and providing targeted feedback on an area of focus. Regarding administrators providing focused feedback, Jacob states that "instead of evaluating teachers for accountability's sake, effective principals grow teaching practice (p. 20).

Furthermore, administrators who support teachers with observations and feedback may help to support teachers to improve their instructional practice, and further may show respect for teachers as professionals (Cooper et al., 2005). Effective administrators spent time in teachers' classrooms with observations to encourage quality instruction and model sound teaching

practices (Portin et al., 2003). These authors also state that administrators should continue with classroom visits to follow up with teachers to ensure they implement necessary changes or feedback into their practice. Moreover, classroom observations can come in the form of scheduled walk-throughs that are focused-based observations that allow teachers to gain growth in a specific area of best practices (Protheroe, 2009). When administrators monitor classroom practices with classroom walk-throughs and provide robust dialogue in the form of timely and specific feedback (Protheroe, 2009), administrators may support teacher effectiveness in their instructional practices.

Co-Teaching Research

Research on co-teaching has been called into question due to a lack of rigorous research methods. Murawski and Swanson (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of co-teaching research and determined that the research methods in the studies reviewed were not consistent or well-defined. For example, they noted that studies did not describe clear measures for the treatment interventions, leaving the integrity of the outcomes unclear (p. 265). They also noted that few studies described the actions of co-teachers (p. 265). Cook et al., (2011) felt that despite its popularity of the co-teaching service delivery option, based on the findings that Murawski and Swanson (2001) found in the literature, co-teaching should not be considered an effective or evidence-based practice.

Furthermore, Cook et al. (2011) reviewed empirical research on co-teaching and determined that there is a lack of evidence-based practices. They stated that co-teaching is not consistently implemented by teachers or across classes, and researchers "do not define or operationally describe how teachers implement co-teaching in their studies" (p. 244).

Furthermore, Friend (2014) notes that research on co-teaching has consisted of studies on three

main areas: student outcomes and perceptions; teachers' relationships and practices; and co-teaching programs and administration. She also noted the dearth in research surrounding the co-teaching approaches.

Despite this, to date, the co-teaching service delivery option is a widely-used service delivery model used in schools to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Friend et al., 2010). Building on this, McLeskey and Waldron (2011) point out that most schools are not as effective as they should be regarding student outcomes, and the supports and services offered to students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom may not be meeting their needs.

The following literature review explores qualitative research focusing on administrator supports for inclusive practices, specifically collaboration and the co-teaching service delivery option. The literature review supports the need for professional development opportunities on the aforementioned inclusive practices for administrators. Furthermore, the literature review suggests that administrators who support inclusive practices in schools may be able to improve the co-teaching service delivery option in their schools, and in turn, improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities. Also, administrators who themselves receive professional development on inclusive practices, specifically in providing feedback on collaboration and co-teaching, may be able to provide the support co-teachers need to be successful.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Study Identification Procedures

A three-step process to identify peer-reviewed studies for inclusion in this literature review. First, an electronic search of Ebsco Host, PsycINFO, Google Scholar took place. These electronic searches used the following descriptors, which were included in combination to capture the eligible studies: inclusive practices, co-teach or collaboration, and special education, students with disabilities or special education or special needs, inclusion, administrative or principal support or professional development. Wildcard versions, in addition to multiple versions of these terms, were also used, for example, co-teach, co-teaching, co-teachers.

The returned citations from each database were exported to the online citation manager Refworks. Following the implementation of the electronic search, the abstracts from each obtained article were reviewed to determine if they met the eligibility criteria. The second step of the identification process included an ancestry approach search of the reference lists of eligible studies identified through the database search. Specifically, the reference list for each study included in the review was examined to identify additional reports not found during the initial database search. For those titles and abstracts that looked encouraging, the author list and title were compared to the directory of studies already found, and if the study had not been included, it was reviewed for potential inclusion. The third step was to review the citation of previous and relevant literature reviews on co-teaching. As with citation drawn from the ancestral review, titles and author lists of potentially relevant studies were compared to the directory of studies already included, subsequently retrieved if not listed, and reviewed to determine their eligibility for inclusion.

Eligibility Criteria

The following four eligibility criteria were used to determine whether particular studies were eligible for inclusion or not. These criteria relate to the purpose of the literature review, which is to understand how administrators define and support co-teachers and their perceptions of co-teaching in the inclusive middle school classroom. Following the review by Scruggs et al., (2007), the following inclusion criteria were used to distinguish between eligible and ineligible studies. First, the studies had to utilize a qualitative research design. As such, studies that investigated their research questions with quantitative research methods such as surveys or correlational research were excluded. It is important to note that studies using a mixed-methods approach were included in the current review if it had a qualitative research component. Studies that did not disclose their qualitative methodology were eliminated.

Second, research was eligible if participants were currently teaching in a co-taught classroom; this included co-teaching dyads that participated in the research study together or general education teachers and special education teachers who participated in the research study individually. The research was also deemed eligible if participants were administrators who were supervising inclusive co-taught classrooms. Research was excluded if it included pre-teachers, administrators, and retired administrators who were not co-teaching or working in inclusive classrooms. The amount of experience of the participants was irrelevant to the purpose of this review. Since the area of study is understanding inclusive practices, co-teaching, collaboration, or professional development from the view of administrators and teachers, studies solely on students or student views and outcomes in inclusive co-taught classrooms were eliminated.

Third, eligible studies needed to either investigate co-teaching, inclusion, inclusive practices, collaboration, or professional development related to co-teaching inclusion, and

collaboration. Due to numerous interchangeable terms used for co-teaching, co-teaching was defined as a service delivery model where a general and special education teacher collaborate to share the responsibilities of all students in a general education classroom. Under this format, both teachers work together to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Under this service delivery model, there is ideally parity between the teachers in planning, presentation, evaluation, and classroom management to provide a positive learning experience for all students (Gately & Gately, 2001). Articles were included if they met this definition for co-teaching regardless of the term they used to define the delivery model used.

The last criterion for inclusion was that the research was conducted in the United States due to the unique nature of the education system. While some articles were a mix of international and domestic studies, only those studies that were solely international were excluded. It should be noted that there were no limitations placed on the grade level of the classrooms in the studies. A total of 33 studies were identified for inclusion in this literature review.

The final step involved charting all the research questions, participants, research design, settings, data analysis, and findings in the included articles. A comparison of the obtained information was performed. Explicitly, findings from the articles were sorted with key phrases charted to determine similarities and patterns. Phrases were looked for that were repeated throughout the findings that could develop into themes. For example, phrases such as collaboration, communication, administrator support, willingness, inclusion, student learning/success, student social skills, inclusive belief/philosophy, relationships, responsibilities, roles, plan time, content knowledge, teaching philosophy, professional development, and assistant/aide emerged. From here, a further detailed analysis compared the similarities and patterns that emerged from all the studies to code them into core categories. The core categories

that emerged from the analysis of the findings from the research studies were; student outcomes, teacher considerations, and administrator influences. The emergent themes found throughout the literature are essential to understanding the foundation of how inclusive practices impact co-teaching. The fundamental goal of education begins with the success of the students and accordingly, student outcomes, academic outcomes, social outcomes, and social-emotional outcomes. Students must be at the forefront of any discussion on inclusion, and how administrators support co-teachers in the inclusive classroom ultimately can significantly impact student success. Therefore, this literature review will discuss the core categories that were identified from the analysis of the research findings in the eligible literature beginning with student outcomes.

Literature Review Core Categories

Student Outcomes

Inclusion in the general education classroom with the co-taught service delivery model was shown to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities (Burstein et al., 2004; Daane et al., 2000; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Ornelles et al., 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997). However, Hang and Rabren (2009) found that although inclusion in the general education classroom with the co-taught service delivery option showed improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities, the gains shown were typical of all students in the co-taught classroom. These findings showed that the co-teaching service delivery option was providing students with disabilities adequate support. Downing et al. (1997) found that students with disabilities were more interested in learning in the general education classroom, which supported their academic growth. Daane et al. (2000) also noted that the academic gap increased for students with disabilities as they grew older, and the curriculum became more rigorous in the upper grades.

Ornelles et al. (2007) stated that for students with disabilities to be successful in the co-taught classroom, the appropriate modifications and accommodations, along with a varied use of research-based teaching strategies to support their learning, must be employed to support students with disabilities academic success.

Studies also found that there were benefits to students with disabilities' social-emotional development when included in the co-taught classroom. Teachers felt that when students with disabilities did well academically, thus improving their social status with peers and provided them leadership opportunities (Ornelles et al., 2007). Teachers also saw improved attitudes, self-esteem, and improved self-confidence in students with disabilities when included in the general education classroom (Downing et al., 1997; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Ornelles et al., 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997). General education students were reported to foster acceptance and understanding of the students with disabilities and were able to develop friendships with their peers and become more supportive of their classmates' different needs (Ornelles et al., 2007). Hang and Rabren (2009) noted there was an increase in student referrals in the co-taught classroom and attributed this to two teachers being in the room to see behaviors occurring. Despite increased referrals, teachers in this study reported they felt that students with disabilities' behaviors improved as a result of the inclusive co-taught classroom. The authors' findings showed that increased referrals could be because of more than one teacher in the room and co-teachers' confusion of their roles, as both teachers felt they were both more responsible for managing student behavior. Hang and Rabren stated that common plan time could eliminate this confusion if the co-teachers could work to understand their roles to support students in the classroom. Building on this, a study by Daane et al. (2000) found that both sets of teachers had

concerns that students with disabilities were distracted in the general education setting, and this could impact their success.

Moreover, studies observed benefits for general education students, making co-teaching in the inclusive classroom beneficial for all students. General education students learned to be more accepting and understanding of their peers with diverse needs, and friendships formed between students with disabilities and their same-aged peers (Downing et al., 1997). General education students also benefited from two highly qualified teachers in the room and being able to have assistance from both teachers.

Teacher Considerations

When seeking to understand the core category of teacher considerations, a disposition for inclusion practices and the importance of collaboration and willingness to co-teach emerged as subthemes. Teachers who demonstrated a positive disposition for inclusive practices are more likely to see greater success in the inclusive co-taught classroom. For example, teachers who were committed to making inclusion and co-teaching work had great success that supported moving their schools towards inclusion. Burstein et al. (2004) found that a critical success to inclusion was the willingness of the teachers to implement inclusive practices. General education teachers were also committed to inclusion and took an active role in ensuring students with disabilities had access to the curriculum by providing modifications and accommodations to meet the needs of the students (Olson et al., 2016). Furthermore, as stated earlier, when working with students with disabilities and referring to them, teachers who were committed to inclusion used shared language such as “our” and “we” versus “me” and “my” when referring to students with disabilities and both sets of teachers wanted to work with all students (Morgan, 2016; Salend et al., 1987).

In order to make inclusion and co-teaching successful, co-teachers felt that common planning time was essential to the success of the co-teaching service delivery option and necessary for effective collaboration and to support communication (Austin, 2001; Burstein et al., 2004; Daane et al., 2000; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Pratt, 2014; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Furthermore, the lack of planning time to collaborate is a barrier to successful co-teaching (Fuchs, 2009-2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Harbort et al., 2007; Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Marks et al., 2014; Morgan, 2016; Olson, 2016). Lack of planning time in many situations was due to scheduling issues (Olson et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014). Bouck (2007) shared that a special education teacher reported she participated less in the classroom after losing a common plan time and found herself unfamiliar with lessons due to the loss of collaboration time with her co-teaching partner.

The importance of collaboration and the willingness to collaborate for co-teaching was central to teachers being committed to making inclusive practices successful (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Huberman et al., 2012; Leatherman, 2009; Mackey, 2014; Morgan, 2016; Olson et al., 2016; Smith & Leonard, 2005). Smith and Leonard (2005) found that collaboration was a key to successful inclusion and a necessary component to supporting students, allowing teachers to plan for students with disabilities and time to explore their roles and responsibilities. Olson et al. (2016) discovered that teachers felt they had a shared responsibility for students with disabilities and they had to work together for the success of the students through collaboration, they also indicated that time was needed to time to collaborate. Huberman et al. (2012) explored high-achieving high school districts and found that administrators in these schools valued teacher collaboration, which they felt was the cornerstone of successful inclusion. Each school provided

time for co-teachers to plan instruction and discuss the needs of the students. Although the authors did look at student outcomes, schools that are committed to collaboration and providing professional development showed high academic outcomes for students (Friend & Cook, 2017).

Research also indicated that there were barriers when collaboration did occur. Mackey (2014) reported that while the teachers had time to collaborate, that they had no guidelines or support from their administrators or knowledge of how to collaborate. The author stated, "for teachers in this study, administrative support in the form of professional development around collaboration and co-teaching could have improved the experience of teachers, support personnel, and students in each of the inclusive classrooms" (p. 15). Morgan (2016) reported that teachers stated that meetings with set upon agendas were the most successful, while principals felt that collaboration needs to be a shared responsibility to meet a learning goal. Clear agendas and expectations support the research by Mackey reported that while teachers were meeting to collaborate, they had no clear focus on their collaboration and would benefit from guidance from their administration. Building on this, there is a need for professional development in collaboration and co-teaching to ensure teachers have the skill sets necessary before initiating the co-teaching service delivery option. Brinkman and Twiford (2012) reported that teachers stated that planning meetings with set agendas were the most successful, while principals stated that collaboration needs to be a shared responsibility to meet a learning goal. This builds on the findings by Mackey, which showed that while teachers were meeting to collaborate, they had no clear focus for their collaboration and would benefit from guidance from their administration. Mackey and Morgan both stated in their studies that when collaboration has set agendas with a clear focus, teachers felt they were more interconnected to the delivery of services for the students.

Communication is vital to improving the relationship between co-teachers (Smith & Leonard, 2005; Naraian, 2010). Teachers gained trust and communication skills as they worked together, and thus co-teaching practices improved (Magiera et al., 2006). Time together as a co-teaching pair to learn to work together also improved trust and built a positive relationship leaving special education teachers feeling less like a visitor in the general education classroom (Austin, 2001; Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Pratt, 2014).

Along with the lack of planning time and challenges with collaboration, barriers with special education teachers' knowledge and understanding of content knowledge when co-teaching in the inclusive classroom was an added pressure to co-teaching (Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003).

Isherwood and Barger-Anderson reported that the special education teacher was a burden on the general education teacher who felt obligated to support them in the content material during class instruction causing frustration that made the special education teacher feel unprofessional. One general education teacher reported, not knowing the content lowers the special education teacher to a supervisory role in the classroom (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Another general education teacher stated the special education co-teacher, "...was more of a hindrance than a help in the room because it was another person who did not know her material" (Keefe & Moore, 2004, p. 83). Furthermore, Dieker (2001) also noted that special education teachers were learning the content knowledge alongside students with disabilities, thus limiting the special education teachers' ability to support the students due to their lack of content knowledge.

Rice (2006) found that general education teachers were resistant to change and did not want to implement inclusive practice or the co-teaching service delivery option. They also found that general education teachers seemed to misunderstand what inclusion was or why it should be

implemented. Marks et al. (2014) reported that some special education teachers did not like the idea of having to co-teach or losing the autonomy of their classroom, causing them to leave to teach at less inclusive schools. Marks et al. reported that principals shared, “The most significant challenge continues to be changing the mindset of teachers along with the need for training and resources to support the changes the district is undergoing” (p. 78).

Conversely, there were findings of teachers being committed to inclusive practices. Olson et al. (2016) found that general education teachers were committed to inclusion and took an active role in ensuring students with disabilities had access to the curriculum to meet their needs by providing modifications and accommodations. Building on this, they also reported that it was important to all teachers to provide the same rights and opportunities to students with disabilities as their same-aged peers. Drawing on this same concept, when working with students with disabilities, Morgan (2016) found that teachers who were committed to inclusion used shared language such as "our" and "we" versus "me" and "my" when referring to students with disabilities. Studies also found that teachers generally believed that students with disabilities belonged in the general education classroom (Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Magiera et al., 2006).

Other barriers that impede the implementation of the co-teaching were compatibilities of personalities, teaching styles, teaching philosophies, and content knowledge (Daane et al., 2000; Downing et al., 1997; Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Ornelles et al., 2007). Findings showed that teachers reported that having a shared teaching philosophy was essential to working together and having a compatible relationship (Naraian, 2010; Pratt, 2014; Rivera et al., 2014; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Naraian found that the participant in her study co-taught more effectively with a co-teacher with whom she shared a similar educational philosophy.

Another barrier reported in the literature was the disparity in roles and responsibilities between the co-teachers. Fuchs (2009-2010) reported that general education teachers felt there was always tension and a power struggle between ownership of the students in the classroom. When roles and responsibilities were not defined, special education teachers often took on the role of an assistant in the inclusive co-taught classroom demonstrating what was described as the one teach, one assist approach of co-teaching (Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Harbort et al., 2007; Magiera et al., 2006; Naraian, 2010). Harbort et al. recorded co-teaching teams to observe their teaching and student interactions in the classroom. Findings showed that the general education teacher instructed 30% of the time while the special education teacher instructed less than 1%, and the special education teachers monitored the classroom in more intervals, 20% compared to the general education teachers at 9% (Harbort et al., 2007). The authors noted that this is not the most useful way for a highly qualified special education teacher to service students in the classroom (Harbort et al., 2007). Rivera et al. (2014) found that all schools in their study reported discussing teacher equality/inequality, indicating that "the only issue is that the special-ed teachers always seem like an assistant, like an aide" (p. 79). Teachers felt that it was important to identify the roles and responsibilities that each teacher would have before co-teaching together (Ornelles et al., 2007). Further research showed that co-teachers should discuss the roles and responsibilities at the start of the year, and teachers should build on each other's expertise (Morgan, 2016), allowing for respect and parity between the co-teachers.

Moreover, when defining roles and responsibilities, it is essential to respect and value the expertise that each teacher brought to the inclusive co-taught classroom (Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Morgan, 2016; Pratt, 2014). Leatherman (2009) reported that teachers understood the general education teacher was the curriculum expert, and the special education teacher was the

modification expert, and they could learn from each other to grow as teachers and to help all the children. Rice (2006) pointed out the importance of understanding each teachers' role in the classroom and respecting their expertise rather than blurring the roles. Rice explained that by expecting the general education teacher to take on the role of the special education teacher to support students with disabilities, it overlooks the expertise that special education teachers have concerning being experts in understanding the individual needs of the students with disabilities. It also implies that anyone can do the special education teachers' job and that they do not bring any specialization to the classroom. Friend (2014) builds on the findings discussed earlier by Rice and stated that co-teachers are not interchangeable in the classroom, and their expertise should come through. Friend (2014) shares that both teachers should be "active participants" (p. 15) and take on roles that best fit them.

Further findings showed special education teachers' feelings of being devalued in their roles in the classroom (Bouck, 2007; Pratt, 2014; Smith & Leonard, 2005). Furthermore, when roles and responsibilities were not defined, special education teachers' often took on the role as an assistant in the inclusive co-taught classroom demonstrating the one teach, one assist approach of co-teaching (Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Naraian, 2010; Magiera et al., 2006; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). One general education teacher reported they were not sure why the special education teacher was in the classroom, and one special education teacher noted they were seen more as an assistant than a teacher (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Another special education teacher mentioned they were asked to do nonacademic tasks such as to get coffee (Keefe & Moore, 2004). One general education teacher noted that a favorable opportunity of co-teaching included the freedom to leave the classroom to run errands while the other taught (Bouck, 2007). Likewise, Embury and Dinnesen (2012) shared that a

special education teacher participant used words such as “support, modifier, consult, help” (p. 47) to describe their role in the co-taught classroom.

When asking special education teachers to do nonacademic jobs such as to get coffee or when they are relegated to the role of an assistant, they feel demeaned. Bouck (2007) states in her discussion, “The precedent cannot be that general education teachers primarily assume the large-group instructional space and special education teachers are left to fill the role and space of instruction to individual students” (p. 50).

Findings of special education teachers’ time in the classroom also influenced the implementation and success of co-teaching that impacted teachers in the inclusive classroom. The special education teachers’ time was limited in the general education classroom due to having multiple responsibilities for IEP meetings, paperwork, different daily schedules or having to be in more than one classroom at one time (Daane et al., 2000; Salisbury, 2006; Youngs et al., 2011). Numerous responsibilities made it difficult to support students with disabilities in the inclusive co-taught classroom and to co-teach, causing tension between the co-teachers. It was identified that it would be advantageous for the special education teacher to be more flexible and be more involved with students and in the classroom more often (Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Morgan, 2016; Pratt, 2014). One general education teacher shared that with the special education teacher having to be in multiple classrooms, it made it hard for her to truly have shared co-teaching responsibilities (Ornelles et al., 2007). Special education teachers expressed that they were pressured to be in two classes at once, due to scheduling and servicing more classes than there were class periods (Embury & Dinnesen, 2012; Ornelles et al., 2007; Youngs et al., 2011).

Administrative Influence

Administrators who value including students with disabilities in general education classrooms and the co-teaching service delivery option can significantly improve inclusive practices within their schools (Rice, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011). Administrators who value inclusive practices such as effective inclusion and co-teaching practices may influence teachers to have the same inclusive philosophy. Administrators who successfully implemented inclusive practices and the co-teaching service delivery option had a “can do” attitude doing anything they could to make inclusion work (Marks et al., 2014; Salisbury, 2006; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Waldron et al., 2011). One administrator stated, “Special education is considered not to be a separate entity; [special education students] have the same rights and privileges as general education kids” (Huberman et al., 2012, p. 65). Marks et al. found that administrators who had an inclusive philosophy showed their commitment through their hiring practices, hiring teachers that shared their same commitment to inclusion.

When inclusive practices were not successful, teachers reported they did not receive support from their administration for inclusion, specifically a lack of support for planning time to collaborate (Fuchs, 2009-2010). Smith and Leonard (2005) stated, “principals need to be facilitators of a collaborative vision” (p. 277). They also indicated, “principals who empower their teachers to collaborate and make decisions that are pertinent to successful inclusion will have greater success” (Smith & Leonard, 2005, p. 277). Administrators need to ensure teachers have schedules that support collaboration, and they need to facilitate active collaboration between teachers. Huberman et al. (2012) saw collaboration as a guiding force in improved student outcomes in their study. Salisbury and McGregor (2002) stated, “School principals make

explicit the embedded values of diversity, membership, and collaboration in every aspect of their school's operation" (p. 272).

Principals who are collaborative and inclusive were also committed to providing professional development to support teachers' growth in learning about inclusion (Smith & Leonard, 2005). Throughout the literature, findings indicated that teachers reported a need for their administrators to provide professional development for improved co-teaching outcomes (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Huberman et al., 2012; Mackey, 2014; Pratt, 2014; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Ornelles et al., 2007). Brinkman and Twiford (2012) offered in their findings that administrators should provide professional development on co-teaching and collaboration to novice teachers and experienced teachers assigned to co-teaching teams to "assess their current skills and identify areas for further development" (p. 10).

Billingsley et al. (2004) found a discrepancy in novice special education teachers' work assignments and their preservice preparation. When supporting students with disabilities in the co-taught classroom, novice teachers stated they lacked the preservice training they needed to support students (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Fuchs, 2009-2010; Mackey, 2014). Along with a lack of preparedness from preservice programs to support students with disabilities, Brinkman and Twiford (2012) found that first-year special education teachers need support in collaboration and co-teaching practices. Thus, additional supports are needed in preservice programs for teachers who will teach in co-teaching settings. Along with suggestions for administrators, their study also had implications for higher education institutions. The authors recommended that recent teacher graduates' perceptions should be heard concerning co-teaching and their lack of ability to collaborate so their needs can be met through higher education coursework prior to entering teaching. Higher education institutes should use the information new graduates are

providing to plan curricula that support topics the graduates feel is the most important to co-teaching, such as communication, collaboration, differentiation, and IEP development.

Concerning administrator support, Brinkman and Twiford (2012) offer that administrators need to be aware of novice teachers' needs in co-teaching and collaboration, and should provide new teachers professional development in collaborative practices so that they can be prepared to co-teach with general education teachers. Friend et al. (2010) state, "In many ways, co-teaching demonstrates the potential as well as the complexity of collaboration that joins the fields of general education and special education." (p.18). To support the understanding of what new teachers need in the area of co-teaching and collaboration, administrators not only need to provide professional development to co-teachers, but they need to participate in professional development themselves to gain knowledge in inclusive practices (Mackey, 2014). Increased knowledge will lead administrators to provide strong leadership for an inclusive setting for all students in their school. Mackey reported findings that administrators need professional development to help expand their knowledge on the co-teaching process, collaboration skills, and to learn effective inclusive practices to support the co-teaching service delivery option in their schools. Moreover, Brinkman and Twiford (2012) also found implications in their study that professional development was needed for administrators to help support them in understanding the skills required to develop effective co-teaching teams.

Teachers also felt they should have a role in the decision-making process for the implementation of inclusive practices and the co-teaching service delivery option to be successful (Fuchs, 2009-2010; Rice, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011). Having a say in decision making will better support teachers' understanding of inclusive practices and their buy in to support new initiatives. Furthermore, administrators should be aware of barriers such as

incompatible personalities when pairing co-teachers and allowing teachers to volunteer to co-teach (Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Naraian, 2010; Ornelles et al., 2007; Pratt, 2014; Rivera et al., 2014). Pratt (2014) found that those who took on co-teaching as an expectation of their job felt they had no choice but to co-teach due to scheduling restraints.

Summary of Key Findings of Literature Review

An understanding of inclusion, inclusive practices, collaboration, and the co-teaching service delivery model has been presented. The research proposed in the following paragraphs addresses three issues identified in the literature review through the themes of student outcomes, teacher considerations, and administrator influences. The key findings that emerged addressed the issues of administrator support for co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. First, for schools to be successful in including students with disabilities in the general education classroom with inclusive practices, there needs to be an inclusive philosophy and support from the stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, and the school community. Administrators who share their inclusive vision to the teachers, staff, and all stakeholders can help to foster an inclusive philosophy within the school community. To significantly improve the co-teaching service delivery option in their schools, administrators must support inclusive practices by supporting teachers with professional development to support the understanding of effective collaboration and co-teaching; they must also provide common plan time. In doing so, administrators may be able to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities. Salisbury (2006) stated, "Schools that function inclusively do so for a reason" and "principals in these schools were the reason" (p. 79). Inclusion in the general education classroom with the co-taught service delivery model was shown to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

However, having an inclusive philosophy is not enough. A second key finding showed that teachers need to know how to effectively implement the co-teaching service delivery option using inclusive practices such as collaboration to know how to meet the needs of all the students. Co-Teachers must learn to work in parity and with defined roles and responsibilities. Also, co-teachers must know how to collaborate in order to instruct, assess, and manage all students in the co-taught classroom. Teachers also must be equipped with the inclusive practices necessary to deliver research-based practices for all students in inclusive classrooms.

The final key finding showed the need for support structures such as professional development for administrators that support inclusive practices such as co-teaching, so, in turn, they can help support co-teachers to be successful in collaborating and co-teach. To foster these factors, administrators who support the inclusive philosophy and are provided professional development on inclusive practices, specifically in providing feedback on collaboration and co-teaching, may then be able to provide the support co-teachers need to be successful.

Pilot Study

To examine the connection between administrators and co-teachers and the implementation of co-teaching in the inclusive classroom, I conducted a pilot study to explore how middle school administrators defined and supported co-teachers and their perceptions of co-teaching in the inclusive middle school classroom. Eight ($n=8$) administrators ($n=8$) who supervised co-teachers in a co-taught content-specific inclusive classroom participated in this study. The participants were a mix of principals, assistant principals, and an assistant superintendent of support services. The administrators participated in one semi-structured interview which focused on gleaning information regarding the participants' experiences supervising teachers in the co-taught classroom, the perceptions of what they felt co-teaching

looked like in the classrooms, the co-teaching experiences in the school, and the professional development opportunities offered for co-teaching and inclusion for the teachers.

Two main themes emerged; *Shared Co-Teaching* and *Divided Co-Teaching*.

Administrators described *Shared Co-Teaching* as having two teachers in a shared relationship where both teachers were responsible for planning, instructing, and assessing all students in the general education classroom. *Divided Co-Teaching* showed to follow the one teach, one assist approach described by Friend et al. (2010), where the general education teacher takes on the role as the lead teacher and the special education teacher takes on the role as an assistant. The administrators' teaching background influenced both of these approaches. Schools implementing *Shared Co-Teaching* were led by administrators with special education teaching backgrounds, while schools implementing *Divided Co-Teaching* were led by administrators with general education teaching backgrounds. Findings showed that administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools provided specific supports to achieve co-teachers teaching in a shared approach to co-teaching.

The administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools provided clear expectations for how co-teaching should be delivered in the classroom and articulated their vision to the co-teachers. Administrators shared that co-teaching should be a shared responsibility with the general education teachers and special education teachers instructing in tandem and that instruction should be "50-50" with both teachers sharing the "heavy lifting." The administrators stated they understood the complexity of co-teaching and the unique challenges that co-teaching presented; they respected each teachers' expertise that they brought to the classroom; the general education teacher being the content specialist and the special education teacher being the modification specialist. The administrators also stated they were aware of the challenges the

special education teachers faced with not knowing content knowledge and that the general education teachers had with not being able to support students with disabilities by providing them with modifications and accommodations.

In contrast, the administrators in the *Divided Co-Teaching* approach stated they did not have conversations with their co-teachers regarding how to implement co-teaching and relied on whatever co-teaching approach was in existence when they joined the school as the administrator. Some of these administrators felt the one teach, one assist approach was successful in the co-taught classrooms based on their observations of seeing the general education teacher be the lead teacher and the special education teacher working solely with the students with disabilities either in the back of the room or sitting next to the students providing individual one on one support. While other administrators in the *Divide Co-Teaching* schools felt that pulling students with disabilities to the back of the room to provide support was not fulfilling the promise of inclusion since this was not a way to include students with their same-aged peers. These same administrators also felt this was not the best way to utilize the special education teacher in the general education classroom. These administrators hoped to improve co-teaching in the future but did not have a plan to do so.

Another support the administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools provided to co-teachers was formative feedback. In the early stages of co-teaching implementation, administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools observed the co-teaching dyads with weekly walk-throughs and provided positive formative feedback; specifically, what they observed was working between the co-teachers. The administrators stressed that the feedback was not evaluative and that it was positive and built on the strengths of the co-teachers. The purpose of the feedback was twofold. One, to encourage the co-teachers to continue building on their co-

teaching strengths. Two, to encourage co-teachers to continue to work together collaboratively to support all students. The administrators stressed that the walk-throughs were scheduled visits, so the co-teachers never felt that the observations were to "catch" them doing something wrong, but rather to support them in their co-teaching practices.

The administrators also spoke of the importance of building relationships with the co-teachers. Administrators mentioned that if problems arose, the key to co-teaching success was not isolating one teacher from their partner and making them feel like they did something wrong or that they were being reprimanded. When speaking to co-teachers, they should always be spoken to as a team, as their relationship should be respected with concerns worked out together. The administrators mentioned that it was important that teachers enjoyed co-teaching and had job satisfaction. This was in contrast to the administrators in the *Divided Co-Teaching* schools who did not discuss relationship building or job satisfaction as an aspect of co-teaching.

Another support the administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools provided was a common planning time for teachers to collaborate and co-plan. Although this was a major challenge for all the administrators to find common plan time, they all made this a priority in their schools. There was an expectation that co-teachers used the common planning time for collaboration, planning together, discussing student progress and concerns. The administrators in the *Divided Co-Teaching* schools stated that co-teachers also had common plan time; however, they were not required by contract to meet with their co-teaching partners during this time. The administrators stated that they were not sure how often the co-teaching dyads actually met together to collaborate and co-plan.

The final finding showed that administrators in the *Shared Co-Teaching* schools provided on-site professional development to co-teachers. This professional development was created and

implemented by the administrators, allowing them to design the professional development and share their vision of how they wanted co-teaching implemented with the co-teachers. They shared clear expectations for the co-teaching approaches they wanted the dyads to use, which was a shared co-teaching approach. They also allowed teachers to have shared responsibility asking for teacher input into what they needed and wanted during the professional development sessions. Release time was provided to teachers to observe other co-teaching teams within the school to help support their co-teaching practice. The *Divided Co-Teaching* schools did not provide on-site professional development and were not aware of any district provided professional development. Some of the administrators were aware of outside opportunities, but they stated that their co-teachers did not attend these professional developments.

Overall, results from the pilot study showed that administrators who had co-teachers that demonstrate a *Shared Co-Teaching* approach in their inclusive classrooms provided the following supports; 1) clear expectations for co-teaching delivery; 2) articulated their vision to the co-teachers, 3) observed co-teachers through weekly walk-throughs 4) provided formative feedback; 5) provided specified common planning time for the co-teachers; and 6) had on-site professional development opportunities on co-teaching.

Results from this pilot study support research that state administrators that provide professional development opportunities on co-teaching may improve the co-teaching practice (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Huberman et al., 2012; Mackey, 2014; Pratt, 2014; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Ornelles et al., 2007). In addition, providing common planning time for co-teachers to collaborate may also support teachers' ability to co-teach time (Austin, 2001; Burstein et al., 2004; Daane et al., 2000; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Mackey, 2014; Magiera et al., 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Pratt, 2014; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). By improving

teachers' ability to co-teach, academic outcomes for students with disabilities may be improved. Building on findings from this pilot study, research from this case study may be able to impact co-teaching reform.

III. METHOD

Findings from the literature review revealed a need for research in professional development for administrators on co-teaching and collaboration practices and the impact this support would have on their ability to support co-teachers. As discussed through the literature review eligibility criteria, an extensive search was conducted to locate studies in this research area. A dearth in the literature indicated that an understanding of inclusive practices, co-teaching, collaboration, and professional development from the view of administrators and teachers in needed. The lack of research on these topics strengthens the argument for the need for this research study on providing professional development in co-teaching and collaboration to administrators. Moreover, findings from my pilot study also support that a more extensive study that implements professional development with administrators to explore the impact the professional development has on their ability to support co-teachers in the inclusive co-taught classroom is a needed area of research. Through a case study design, the following research questions to explore the central phenomenon through qualitative methods utilizing semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, observation field notes, and document reviews.

Research Questions

This case study explored the following question and sub-questions

1. How does professional development for administrators on co-teaching and collaboration affect their knowledge, skills, and perceptions?
 - a. How do administrators support co-teachers through observations?
 - b. How does professional development support administrators' ability to provide feedback to co-teaching dyads?

- c. How do administrators use information from professional development to inform change in practice and policies related to co-teaching and collaboration?

Research Design

Case Study Design

Case studies are descriptive research methods that are valued for their examination of the lived experiences of the participants or a specific issue, problem, or concern from the insight of the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals being observed (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In addition, qualitative research constructs knowledge from the individuals' lived experiences and how they make sense of their world (Merriam, 2009). Merriam states, "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences." (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). The defining characteristic of case study research is the case itself of a bounded system. Merriam (1998) describes a case study as "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 27). She further describes a case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p. xiii). Drawing from Sanders, (1981), Merriam (1998) shared, "Sanders (1981) writes, 'case studies help us to understand processes of events, projects, and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue and object' (p. 44)" (p. 33). Merriam (1998) clarified that providing the researcher can identify the phenomenon of interest and draw its boundaries they can name it as a case. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth state that "In a collective case study (or multiple case study), the one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue." (2017, p. 99). In this study, the bounded case is the central phenomenon of

understanding the administrators' ability to provide support to co-teachers after participating in professional development.

By using case study qualitative research methods, I was able to place myself in the world in which I was observing (Merriam, 2009, p. 2) allowing myself to study the phenomenon of study in its natural environment, in this case, providing a voice to the two administrators and their lived experiences, while also generating findings toward building a theory. Case study research allowed me to gain an insight and understanding of the administrators and to discover the phenomenon of study through their experiences (Merriam, 1998). This case study research aimed to explore how professional development trainings impacted the administrators' practice and thus how the two administrators provided the co-teacher dyads support after they received professional development on co-teaching and collaboration and provided feedback to the co-teaching dyad.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Merriam (2009) stated that a "Case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. She offered that data analysis is "the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). Thus, to analyze the data in this case study, grounded theory methodology was used. Creswell and Poth (2017) state that the primary data sources for grounded theory are interviews due to the constant comparative analysis of the data to gain an emergent theory, (p. 84) while Glaser (1998) states "all is data" (p. 8) making a case to observe all that surrounds the topic of discovery. Birks and Mills (2015) list data source as interviews focus groups, field notes, memos, journals, diaries, logbooks, questionnaires, surveys,

documents, web blogs, social networking, photographs, videos, artwork, music (p. 65). Staying true to this concept, every aspect of information collected during this study, including informal conversations and observations, added value to the study and was used to construct the theory. Following case study methods, several primary measures were employed for this research study, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and document reviews. Merriam (1998) confirms that "using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation strengthens reliability" (p. 207) of a study. Furthermore, by using sound case study methods and triangulating multiple sources of data, the administrators lived experiences remained central to the data analysis rather than open to my interpretations, thus adding to the credibility and validity of the case study design.

In order to target school administrators and co-teaching dyads to participate in this study, purposeful sampling was used to locate educators who met the criteria for participation. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Purposeful sampling allowed for the understanding of the central phenomenon to be discovered (Creswell & Poth, 2017) and to best inform me about the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

Administrators and co-teachers who met specific criteria were recruited to participate in this study in order to answer the research questions. Based on Merriam's presentation of conducting purposeful sampling, she suggests that "The criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases." (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The criteria are listed in detail in the next section.

The Role of Professional Development in this Research Study

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) define effective professional development "as structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes." (p. v). As the researcher, I designed and implemented the professional development for the administrators. As such, to ensure the professional development would be an effective intervention that may impact change in co-teaching practices, I based the implementation on the characteristics of effective professional development described below.

Educators feel that professional development is effective when it is directly related to their specific needs and concerns. Research shows that educators should have input into the content that is provided in professional development opportunities (Beavers, 2009), thus allowing for the learning to be practical to their needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Educator input recognizes their need to feel ownership and shared responsibilities (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2006). When professional development is authentic, educators can see a connection to their job responsibilities, and they are more likely to have an interest in and buy into the professional development topic.

Educators should be encouraged to participate in professional development through engaging activities and should take an active role to help facilitate learning activities (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Guskey and Suk Yoon (2009) noted that workshop type professional developments are ineffective because educators feel they are treated as "students" by the professional development facilitator who acts as a "teacher." Thus, professional developments are designed to utilize a variety of learning experiences and activities that address adult learning styles (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009). Finally, providing ongoing opportunities for interactive feedback, collaborative

discussions, and reflection (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009) allows educators time to process what they have learned in order to make a change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009).

Professional Development Study Characteristics

Using the research findings on effective professional development, the design of this professional development for this research study aimed to meet the following characteristics.

Administrator Choice

A resource binder with a material with co-teaching material was given to each administrator. The resource binder had a wide variety of material for the administrators to choose the material they felt fit the co-teachers they were supporting needs the best. The resource binder is explained in further detail under Procedures. The resource binder had a variety of topics to choose from, allowing for the administrators to provide input into the topics they wanted to cover during their professional development session (Beavers, 2009) and choose as resources during their feedback sessions with the co-teachers. By providing the administrators' choices of materials to use throughout this process, they were able to choose appropriate materials that supported the co-teachers' specific needs. Having the administrators choose the materials and topics to support the specific needs of the participating co-teachers, may provide for an authentic connection to the educators' co-teaching practice, and the co-teachers may be more likely to implement the feedback that was given to them by their administrator.

I worked closely with each administrator to develop a timetable for implementing the one-on-one professional development. It was an essential component of ensuring the intervention was successful, that I was cognizant of the administrators' unique needs. I needed to understand the multiple responsibilities that administrators have throughout the day, and it was imperative to

allow them to choose what worked best for them in terms of how they wanted to receive the professional development—thus, allowing them to choose if they wanted weekly sessions or all them all in one day, in a more condensed manner. As long as they received the same content, they could choose how I provided the professional development to them. I was flexible with their time, understanding that other situations may arise during the day, and I may have to wait for our scheduled time. Although, in reality, I did not have to wait for either administrator often, I was prepared to do so if necessary.

Engaged Learning

Professional development sessions should utilize a variety of learning experiences and activities that address adult learning styles (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009); thus, the professional development had a variety of engaging activities for administrators to access. During the professional development sessions, administrators had access to activities such as Youtube videos, PowerPoint presentations, co-teaching rating scales, readings, walk-throughs, and reflective discussions. To support learning, foster engagement, and to meet the administrators' individual learning needs, the UDL framework was utilized as a teaching framework for the professional development to support the administrators to access the content. UDL is based on scientific insights and enhances learning. UDL focuses on the why of learning by utilizing multiple means of engagement to support motivation and interest for learning; the what of learning by presenting material in multiple ways of representing information in various ways to meet the learning needs of all participants; and the how of learning through multiple means of expression allowing participants various ways to express the content they have learned (CAST: Until Learning Has No Limits, 2018).

Active Participation

Another characteristic of effective professional development was providing ongoing opportunities for interactive feedback, collaborative discussions, and reflection (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009). Active participation occurred throughout the professional development between the administrators and myself. Throughout the study, opportunities for the administrators to reflect on their learning and the supports they were providing co-teachers occurred. Collaborative discussions between the administrators and myself were also pertinent to the professional development as they allowed for a deeper understanding of their needs allowed for a richer insight into their perceptions of the central phenomenon.

On-Going Reflection

The final characteristic of effective professional development was to provide ongoing opportunities for interactive feedback, collaborative discussions, and reflection (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009). During each professional development session, there were opportunities for the administrators to reflect on their learning. Also, throughout the research study, collaborative discussions on co-teaching topics took place between each administrator and me. The collaborative discussions, in particular, were pertinent because they allowed for a deeper understanding of the administrators' needs and provided a richer insight into their perceptions of the central phenomenon.

Setting and Participants

Setting

The setting for this study was secondary schools because of the dearth of co-teaching research conducted in this setting and due to the unique challenges that exist in implementing

inclusive practices such as co-teaching in secondary schools. Secondary schools are defined as schools that housed 7th grade and above.

One unique barrier within the secondary settings is the difficulty in arranging for common plan time for effective collaboration due to scheduling challenges (Austin, 2001; Burstein et al., 2004; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Mackey, 2014; Olson et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Additionally, content knowledge becomes increasingly challenging for special education teachers to learn in the secondary setting. Finally, the learning gap between students with IEPs and their same-aged peers in the general education classroom was a concern for teachers in the secondary classrooms, making inclusive practices more challenging when supporting students with modifications and accommodations to meet their learning needs (Daane et al., 2000; Ornelles et al., 2007).

Also, the classrooms of the study were content-specific inclusive co-taught classrooms. Content-specific classrooms are classrooms taught by teachers trained in specific content knowledge subjects such as math or language arts. Shulman (1992) has stated that content-specific classrooms allow teachers to be more effective in the content knowledge of the subject they teach and thus more successful with specific teaching strategies due to their knowledge of academic issues and understanding of content-based concerns that may arise when teaching the subject. In this study, content-specific classrooms are used due to the unique nature of general education teachers being the content knowledge expert and the special education teachers being the modification expert in the co-taught classroom.

Recruitment

Recruitment: School Administrators

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained through the University for this study (Appendix I). Administrators were recruited from secondary schools outside a large Midwestern metropolitan city to participate in this research study. Administrators were recruited using an Administrator Recruitment/Consent Form (Appendix G) who meet the following inclusionary criteria: (1) they identified as having supervision responsibilities of at least one of the co-teachers in the dyad, either the general education and/or the special education teacher and the co-teachers taught in content-specific grade classrooms; (2) they self-identified the dyads of teachers were engaged in co-teaching in an inclusion classroom; (3) they agreed to participate in one-on-one professional development sessions provided by myself and implement feedback from the professional development to the participating co-teaching dyads, and; (4) they agreed that the classroom walk-throughs and corresponding feedback that they provided to the participating co-teachers had no bearing on the co-teachers' performance evaluations and that the information collected from this research study observation was for the sole purpose of this study.

Recruitment: Co-Teaching Dyads

Participating administrators identified co-teaching dyads willing to participate in the study. The Co-Teacher Recruitment/Consent Form (Appendix H) was sent to co-teachers who met the following inclusionary criteria: (1) teachers as being dyads, general and special education teachers who were willing to take part in the study and; (2) teachers were co-teaching in a content-specific inclusive classroom.

Participants

Administrators

Administrators from two separate districts participated in this study. One principal ($n=1$) from a 4th-8th grade school outside a large metropolitan city participated with an 8th-grade math

co-teaching dyad ($n=2$). River School is in a small district with a school enrollment of approximately 300 students. The school had about 15% of students with IEPs, the highest number of students with IEPs in any of the local schools, as reported by the participating administrator. Almost 90% of the students are Caucasian, with the rest of the students being Asian and Hispanic. About 2% of the students are identified as English Language Learners, and less than 2% of the students are considered low income and receive free or reduced lunch. Over 90% of the teachers at River School are Caucasian.

A director of special education ($n=1$) also agreed to participate in this study from a high school outside a large metropolitan city with an English 1 as known as a Freshman co-teaching dyad team, ($n=2$). Woods High School has approximately 1,500 enrolled and 11% of the student population with IEPs and about 15% of the students being identified as English Language Learners. Woods High School is a diverse school with about 30% of students reported as Caucasian, 65% as Hispanic, and the rest a mix of Asian, African American, and American Indian. About 50% of the students are considered low income and receive free or reduced lunch. The teachers at Woods High school are about half male and female and about 85% Caucasian with the rest of the teachers being a mix of Hispanic, Asian, and African American. Table 1 provides demographic information about the participants.

Co-Teachers

Both co-teaching dyads co-taught in general education co-taught classrooms. The administrators stated the teams were interested in participating in this study to improve their already successful co-teaching practices and strong relationships. The dyads were also interested in participating in this study because they were reflective practitioners interested in improving

their teaching practices. During their interviews, all of the teachers self-reported their co-teaching teams were effective and had they had positive relationships with their partners. The administrators agreed with the co-teachers' self-descriptions. The co-teachers also identified as having inclusive philosophies, believing that inclusion was best for all students to be included

Table 1

Teacher Demographics

Participant (Pseudonym)	Position	Highest Degree Earned	Certification/ Endorsement	Years in Education	Years in Current Position
Olivia	Principal	Doctorate Master's Plus	General Education Administrative	20	3
Kayla	Director of Special Education	Master's Plus	Special Education Administrative	23	1
Rachel	Special Education Teacher	Masters	Special Education Severe Disabilities	5	3
Ann	General Education Teacher	Masters	General Education Middle School Mathematics Social Science	7	1
Jacob	Special Education Teacher	Master's Plus	Special Education Administrative	11	11
Ellie	General Education Teacher	Master's Plus	General Education Reading Specialist	19	14

as having inclusive philosophies, believing that inclusion was best for all students to be included in their teaching practice. During their interviews, all of the teachers self-reported their co-teaching teams were effective and had they had positive relationships with their partners. The administrators agreed with the co-teachers' self-descriptions. The co-teachers also identified as having inclusive philosophies, believing that inclusion was best for all students to be included in the general education classroom for academic and social benefits, further explored under the Results section. Table 2 presents Classroom Demographics.

Table 2

Classroom Demographics

Co-Teaching Dyad (Pseudonyms)	Years as Co-Teachers	Classroom Demographics	
<u>River School</u>		<u>Special Education Students</u>	<u>General Education Students</u>
Rachel/Ann	1	2 IEPs/2 504 plans	8
<u>Woods High School</u>			
Jacob/Ellie	5	4 IEPs/1 Speech/3 ESL	13

Note: ESL= English as a Second Language

Procedures

Professional Development Design

I provided one-on-one on-site professional development to the administrators on co-teaching practices, specifically on co-teaching and collaboration and providing feedback to help improve the administrators' knowledge of co-teaching so they could support co-teachers to improve their co-teaching practice. I developed the material for the resource binder the administrators were provided. Materials for in the resource binder were located through an extensive internet search on co-teaching, inclusive practices, collaboration, and professional development programs and activities, and some articles were taken from my personal collection. Sources were located from uncited documents from a variety of school district and university

websites offering co-teaching resources; citations are provided when available. Sources and documents were adapted to meet the needs of this research project. Some material in the resource binder was also modeled and adapted from Friend's *Co-Teach! A Handbook for Creating and Sustaining Effective Classroom Partnerships in Inclusive Schools* (2014), which are copy righted sources. Material in the resource binder also included articles that supported inclusion, collaboration, co-teaching, and strategies for providing feedback. The resource binder was created to provide resources, strategies, supports, materials, and rubrics for the administrators to use during the professional development session. The administrators could also use the resource binder as a support during the feedback sessions with the co-teachers.

To further support the administrators, if a topic arose that they needed extra support or further explanation on, I provided additional materials to them that was not already in the resource binder to help with this new topic. For example, the topic of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) supports came up with Kayla of Woods High School and I provided readings, videos, and handouts to support her understanding of the concept. It was vital that I was prepared to support the administrators on any topic related to the research study that would help to enhance the professional development and in turn, help them support the co-teachers.

During the on-site professional development, the following supports were discussed: providing professional development to co-teachers on collaboration, the purpose of common plan time for co-teachers to collaborate, completing weekly walk-throughs to provide formative feedback to the co-teachers, and fostering an inclusive community in the school. The professional development was developed on the previously discussed characteristics of effective professional development. Administrators participated in engaging activities such as walk-throughs and viewings of videos to experience exemplary collaboration interactions that helped

to foster their understanding of quality co-teaching practices. During the professional development, administrators had opportunities to share ideas and discuss their learning of best practices for providing feedback to co-teachers, on co-teaching practices, on collaboration, and feedback with myself. After the first professional development session, the administrators were asked to develop a vision of how they wanted to implement inclusive practices with the co-teachers. Administrators had time to reflect on the new strategies they learned to support co-teachers and discuss how to facilitate change in their own practice, such as providing effective feedback to support co-teaching. During the post-professional development interview (see data collection section for explicit details), administrators had opportunities to reflect on how they would implement providing feedback on inclusive practices after the research study ended.

Professional Development

The professional development focused on providing support on co-teaching practices and preparing administrators with tools to implement change by providing effective feedback to co-teachers that may improve the administrators' ability to impact co-teaching in the inclusive classroom. After the initial interview with the administrators and prior to the first professional development session, administrators at both sites conducted a classroom walk-through that allowed them to become familiar with the data collection instrument that would be used to assess, reflect, and understand the co-teachers teaching practices. During this initial walk-through, the administrators and I completed the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) and reviewed the data collected with each other to gain baseline data to understand the co-teachers' current practice. Data from the initial walk-throughs was used during the first professional development session for administrators to develop their vision to be able to provide supports for quality co-teaching practices.

Professional Development Sessions

The professional development included three core learning sessions: *Core Learning Sessions*. Although the professional development had three core learning sessions, the sessions were flexible; thus, I was able to add content to the core content learning sessions, allowing for individualization of the professional development that met the needs of the administrators and the co-teachers. As data started to come in from the baseline walk-throughs and by listening to the needs of the administrators, I added to the content of the core learning sessions for each administrator. For example, as previously stated, content on UDL was added to Kayla's professional development. For Olivia's professional development, content on co-teacher expertise was added. In providing the administrators individualized content to their professional development based on doing so, this helped to support administrator choice, one of the characteristics to effective professional development (Beavers, 2009). Furthermore, it also enhanced the administrators learning of the co-teaching and collaboration and in turn their ability to support the co-teachers.

Core Learning Session 1: Research Overview and Co-Teaching Practices

During *Core Learning Session 1*, administrators learned the purpose of the research study and their role as administrators in improving co-teaching practices. During the Co-Teaching portion of the session, administrators learned the following: what co-teaching is and is not, steps for successful co-teaching, what co-teaching should look like in practice, co-teaching tools teachers can utilize to improve their practice and the various co-teaching approaches they can compare and contrast to understand how to apply them in the classroom setting.

After *Core Learning Session 1*, administrators communicated how they wanted to articulate their inclusive vision to the school stakeholders. They did this by reflecting on their

initial classroom walk-through and looking over the data collected on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). Administrators discussed the co-teachers' current levels of co-teaching practice using information from the walk-through observations, recent interactions with co-teachers, any feedback from the co-teachers that had been positive, any areas that had been working well, or any areas of growth for the teachers that were recently observed. From this triangulation of data, the administrators were able to develop a clear vision of areas they wanted to focus on and began to articulate a vision of how they wanted to implement their supports to the co-teachers. At the end of *Core Learning Session 1*, in relation to the topics learned, administrators verbally reflected on areas the co-teachers were doing well, areas they felt the teachers could grow, and ideas they had to implement supports for collaboration for co-teachers. Both administrators developed a walk-through schedule for the co-teachers for the entire length of the study. They communicated the schedule to the co-teachers and myself via email. The schedule was placed on the administrators' calendar and blocked off for the duration of the study so no meetings would be planned during that time to interfere with the walk-through schedule. Time was scheduled for the administrators to speak with me to discuss the walk-throughs and the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) after each walk-through.

Core Learning Session 2: Collaboration and Professional Responsibilities

Throughout *Core Learning Session 2*, administrators learned the nuances of collaboration and discussed strategies to facilitate effective collaboration. They also learned how to foster positive co-teaching relationships, brainstorm effective co-teaching responsibilities, learned how to promote effective lesson planning between co-teachers, and worked on effective planning schedules for co-teachers. Videos of exemplary demonstrations of effective collaboration

between co-teachers allowing administrators to see first-hand how collaboration should look between co-teachers were shared.

Before *Core Learning Session 2*, co-teachers were asked to submit their current co-taught lesson plans to their administrators. The administrators would use the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) to analyze the co-teachers' co-taught lesson plans and look for change throughout the study allowing the administrators to understand how the co-teachers were collaborating during their lesson planning. These documents would allow the administrators to reflect on what the co-teachers were doing well and any areas of growth they saw on the co-teachers' lesson plans. At the end of *Core Learning Session 2*, in relation to the topics covered, administrators verbally reflected on areas co-teachers were doing well, areas they felt the teachers could grow, and ideas they had to implement supports for collaboration for co-teachers.

Core Learning Session 3: Facilitating Effective Feedback

In the final professional development session, *Core Learning Session 3*, administrators learned to analyze co-teaching and how to better support co-teachers with feedback to effectively collaborate and implement co-teaching practices. Upon the completion of the three-hour on-site professional development, the administrators and I met for the mid-semi-structured interview (see data collection section for explicit details on interviews). We also discussed their plan on how they would implement the co-teaching practices they learned in the professional development sessions to impact change in the co-teachers' practices and how they planned to provide feedback to the co-teaching dyads.

In keeping with the characteristics of effective professional development, I needed to not choose the topics or materials the administrators chose to share with the co-teacher dyads. The

administrators' based their choices on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) from the walk-throughs and based on the needs of the co-teaching teams. Each administrator decided what materials and supporting documents, if any, they wanted to use and share with the co-teachers from the resource binder. They also determined how they wanted to implement the feedback with the co-teachers based on the professional development they were provided. By allowing the administrators to choose the materials and how they wanted to implement the feedback, it would result in the supports not being influenced by my biases and the data collected being unbiased and grounded in data.

The administrators were asked to implement what they learned in the professional development sessions for a total of four weeks. When providing feedback to the co-teachers, the administrators were asked to audio record the sessions as I was not present at these sessions to collect data. The administrators provided the recordings to me, so I could later transcribe and code the data. In the final week of the research study, the administrators and co-teaching dyads participated in the final semi-structured interviews (Appendices C and E, respectively).

Resource Binder

The resource binder contained supporting documents to help the co-teachers such as documents to help create effective lesson plans and articles and supporting readings on co-teaching practices and collaboration. The supporting documents were interwoven into each professional development session and were used as discussion topics between the administrator and myself. The administrators were able to choose documents from the resource binder to support their discussions during their feedback sessions with the co-teachers.

Professional Development Timeline

As explained earlier in Administrator Choice, I individualized the content each administrator received. In addition, I also individualized how I implemented the professional development to each administrator, to best support their specific needs. In order to do this, at the initial meeting with each administrator, I explained the components of the research study. At this time, we created a schedule that would work best for them to participate in the study. Each administrator put into place a calendar of dates that worked best for them to participate in the professional development sessions, conduct the observation walk-throughs - based on the participating co-teachers schedule, and to participate in the follow-up interviews. When making the calendar, the administrators also included time after each observation walk-throughs to debrief with me on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). To ensure the administrators provided the co-teachers with timely feedback, they also arranged the feedback sessions early on in the study. They scheduled the feedback sessions during the co-teachers' common plan time and for the feedback to take place one or two days after the observation walk-throughs. Both administrators sent invitations to the co-teachers through their school emails, so the date and times were placed on everyone's school schedule to attend the feedback session.

When scheduling the professional development sessions, observation walk-throughs, debriefing time after the walk-throughs, and follow up interviews, I needed to remain flexible. I needed to understand that the administrators may have meetings scheduled before ours, and there was always the chance they would run a few minutes late. In addition, there was the possibility that a teacher would stop by to speak with them, or a parent would call to discuss something with them on the phone. Unexpected situations could cause the administrators to run a few minutes

late for our scheduled time. Running late due to other obligations is the nature of being the leader of a school or the leader of a department in a high school. In these situations, in order to ensure that the professional development was implemented with fidelity and to ensure that the administrators received the entire content of the professional development, I made sure that I was available for extended lengths of time, in order to be available when the administrator was ready to meet.

The administrator and the co-teachers had the same research study components, however each site had slightly different schedules, based on their needs. As I explained earlier, I individualized the content of the professional development and also how I implemented the professional development to each administrator. For example, Olivia and the co-teachers from River School participated in this study for eight weeks, their schedule is presented in Table 3. While Kayla and the co-teachers from Woods High School participated in this study for six weeks, their schedule is presented in Table 4.

Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews: Administrators

Semi-structured interviews (Appendices A-C) were used throughout the study to gather information from the participants to develop an understanding of their insights and connection to the central phenomenon explored. Administrators participated in a total of three semi-structured interviews ranging in length of approximately one hour for each interview. Interviews took place at each of the administrators' schools. The initial interview used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) to develop a rapport with the administrator and to gain an understanding of their teaching and administrative background and current supports they were providing to the co-teaching dyads.

Table 3*Professional Development Timeline, River School*

Week	Administrator Timeline	Co-Teacher Timeline
Week 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in initial interview 2. Learn <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in initial interview
Week 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in Professional Development Session 1: <i>Research Overview and Co-Teaching Practices</i> 2. Conduct classroom walk-through #1 with researcher to practice using the <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off week; Administrator at a conference 	
Week 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in Professional Development: Session 2: <i>Collaboration and Professional Responsibilities</i> 2. Classroom walk-through #2 to collect baseline data 3. Participate in Professional Development: Session 3: <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #3 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback session 3. Participate in mid-interview 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #4 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback session 3. Member checks; review emergent themes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #4 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback session 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in final interview 2. Member check; review emergent themes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in final interview

Table 4*Professional Development Timeline, Kayla, Woods High School*

Week	Administrator Timeline	Co-Teacher Timeline
Week 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in initial interview 2. Learn <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form</i> 3. Conduct classroom walk-through #1 with researcher to practice using the <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in initial interview 2. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in Professional Development Session 1: <i>Research Overview and Co-Teaching Practices</i> 2. Participate in Professional Development: Session 2: <i>Collaboration and Professional Responsibilities</i> 3. Classroom walk-through #2 to collect baseline data 4. Participate in Professional Development: Session 3: <i>Facilitating Effective Feedback</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #3 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback given by the administrator during feedback session 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #4 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback 3. Participate in mid-interview 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback given by the administrator during feedback session 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom walk-through #5 2. Provide feedback to co-teaching dyad/record feedback 3. Member checks; reviews emergent themes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to submit lesson plans and planning agendas 2. Implement feedback given by the administrator during feedback session 3. Observed by administrator and researcher
Week 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in final interview 2. Member check; review emergent themes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in final interview

After participating in the professional development sessions on co-teaching practices that focused on providing feedback to the co-teaching dyads, the administrators participated in a mid-semi-structured interview (Appendix B). This interview took place while they were providing the feedback to the co-teaching dyads and helped me to understand how the administrators felt the feedback was supporting the co-teachers and ascertaining any success or challenges the administrators were experiencing with the co-teachers' instructional delivery or perceptions and attitudes toward co-teaching.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Co-Teachers

Co-Teachers completed two interviews, an initial and final interview (Appendices D and E, respectively); both interviews used a semi-structured interview protocol. The initial and final interviews were to assess the co-teachers' level of co-teaching and their satisfaction with co-teaching before starting the study. The also determined any changes at the completion of the study. The initial interview was used to develop a rapport with the co-teachers and to determine background information and their teaching experiences. The initial interview was to understand the supports co-teachers felt they were currently receiving from their administrators, the supports they were still needed, and their satisfaction with the level of supports they were currently receiving in co-teaching practices from their administrator. This interview also explored the co-teachers' perspectives and satisfaction with co-teaching, with their co-teaching partner and with inclusion.

The final interview (Appendix E) took place at the end of the study after the co-teachers received feedback supports on co-teaching practices from their administrators. This interview sought to explore what feedback the administrators provided to the co-teachers and the co-teachers' perception of how the administrators provided the feedback to them. I also wanted to

uncover any success or challenges the co-teachers had with implementing the feedback they received. It was also essential to ascertain if the co-teachers were able to determine if they felt the feedback was effective, and it had any impact on their planning, instructional delivery, or if they perceived any changes in how they supported students. The interview also delved into understanding the effect the administrator's feedback may have had on the co-teachers' relationship with their partner or in their co-teaching roles and responsibilities. I asked questions to help me understand any changes they will take moving forward as a result of the feedback they received. Finally, I wanted to explore what, if any, additional supports the co-teachers felt they still needed from their administrator to be successful co-teaching in the future.

The co-teachers were interviewed separately at their respective schools, and I did not discuss their interview responses with either their co-teaching partner or their administrators. All interviews were held in strict confidence.

Observations

Administrators scheduled three walk-throughs to observe co-teachers during a co-taught lesson. I also observed the walk-throughs at this time with the administrator to support the reliability of the data collection. The *Facilitating Effective Feedback: The Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) for classroom room walk-throughs were provided to the administrators in the resource binder. Both the administrator and I completed the form during the same walk-through observations to allow for the triangulation of data sources. After the walk-through, the administrator and I discussed the results of the walk-through and went over the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). The discussion allowed for a comparison between the data the administrator and I completed, and we were able to discuss similarities and patterns between the two forms.

These discussions were part of data reliability of the study to ensure that the administrator and myself were completing the data collection form with fidelity. If there were areas that we had not rated the co-teachers the same, we would need to discuss our ratings to come to a consensus on a rating. However, in both settings, this was not needed. The administrator and I completed the form the same based on the evidence we saw during the walk-through observations. I used the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) to triangulate data and compare it to the feedback session data the administrator had with the co-teachers. These discussions served to document changes in the administrator's skills and comfort level by providing feedback on co-teaching and inclusive practice that were associated with the professional development.

Data Collection Instrument. The administrators used the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: The Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) to collect evidence during the walk-through observations and document review of the co-teachers' lesson plans and planning agendas. I completed an extensive search for existing feedback or evaluation forms for co-teaching dyads in order to gain an understanding of effective data collection forms that were currently in use when observing co-teachers. As a result of this search, a dearth in feedback or evaluation forms was found; thus, I created the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: The Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) by looking at the key areas identified throughout the literature as needed for effective co-teaching. Therefore, the data collection form I created had four domains, *Collaboration*, *Environment*, *Instructing*, and *Professional Responsibilities* that were used to understand the co-teachers' practice. Domain 1: *Collaboration* looked for evidence that the co-teachers worked together to support students through modifying and accommodating student work and also that they co-teachers lesson

planned together. Domain 2: *Environment* explored evidence to ensure that the co-teachers integrated all students into the classroom setting and shared responsibility for the management of the classroom. Domain 3: *Instructing* examined evidence from the teachers planning meetings to ensure they have collaborated and designed lesson plans in parity to instruct and support all students in the classroom. In addition, this domain explored to see if the co-teachers planned instruction around their expertise. The final area the data collection form looked at was Domain 3: *Professional Responsibilities* to glean evidence that the co-teachers had reflected after their instruction on topics such as the co-teaching methods, instructions, assessments, student needs in order to improve their practice to support their students. The administrators used evidence from the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: The Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) as a guide to support the feedback they gave to the co-teachers after the walk-through observations.

Document Review

At the start of the study, co-teachers were asked to submit their existing lesson plans, planning agendas, or any other documents they used during their co-planning process for review. These documents were to be used as baseline data to understand how the co-teachers were lesson planning and collaborating before receiving feedback supports. The administrators would use the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) to collect data on the teachers' planning process and triangulate it with information from the feedback sessions. The co-teachers were asked weekly throughout the study to submit any planning documents that they had.

Data Analysis

Coding

As stated earlier, case studies do not follow any specific data analysis procedures (Merriam, 2009). In a qualitative case study, the goal of data analysis is to make sense of the data by "moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178), the data from this case study was analyzed using grounded theory methodology in the tradition of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978). The data collected in this study allowed for the application of the constant comparative method and the generation of theory. A widely used method of data analysis in qualitative research is constant comparison analysis (Merriam, 1998). For this study, I followed the grounded theory approach of constant comparison analysis outlined by Charmaz (2014) for data analysis and coding.

Charmaz (2014) presents a more modern turn on grounded theory using a constructivist view in "which she grounds her theoretical orientation in the views or perspectives of individuals" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 25) that allowed me to move toward a deeper understanding of the research question. Charmaz (2000) explains,

The power of grounded theory lies in its tools for understanding empirical worlds. We can reclaim these tools from their positivist underpinnings to form a revised, more open-ended practice of grounded theory that stresses its emergent, constructivist elements. We can use grounded theory methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures. (p. 510)

Furthermore, as a constructivist, by taking Charmaz's stance on grounded theory, this methodology aligned with my philosophical assumptions. I believe that our experiences

construct knowledge, and we seek an understanding of the world in which we live from our lived experiences. I further believe many factors impact the experiences that we have in the world around us, not just those experiences we face in our daily lives, but from those experiences from people and situations that come in and out for brief moments also impact us to make sense of our environment and shape our learning. In research, Creswell and Poth (2017) state, "Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and sharpened by the individual experiences." (p. 35). In constructivist grounded theory, when conducting interviews, social bonds may occur (Charmaz, 2014), building on the belief that the researcher is constructing knowledge from the lived experiences of the participants. Charmaz (2014) further states, "A constructivist approach theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation. The theory depends on the researchers' view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it." (Charmaz, 2014, p. 239). My personal experience as a co-teacher drove this research study as well as being an instructor in higher education, striving to support preservice teachers with feedback on the co-teaching service delivery option. Thus, during data analysis, it was necessary to stick close to the data to avoid bias, yet acknowledge that my personal experiences with co-teaching may impact data interpretation.

Data analysis followed the three stages of coding outlined by Charmaz (2014), initial, focused, and theoretical. Throughout the data collection and each stage of coding, I memoed, which Birks and Mills (2015) likened to a written recording of my thinking during the research process. In grounded theory, Yin (2014) advises when conducting a case study to collect evidence from data that can be compiled into themes, which he compares to memoing in grounded theory (p.135). Thus, I compared all data sources, interviews, feedback sessions, field

notes, and memos, allowing for comparison between data sources. During the initial coding phase, data were defined by going through the data line by line to look for emergent themes. ATLAS.ti was used to organize the coding process by attaching a label, or code, to data segments. Charmaz (2014) recommended that during this phase to, "Stick closely to the data" (p. 116). Therefore, during this phase, not only did I code the interviews but also the feedback transcripts line by line while comparing the data to my memos and field notes, which included the conversations I had regarding the walk-through observations.

Charmaz (2014) then recommends moving to focused coding where the codes that occurred the most frequently are categorized, sorted, and organized into larger chunks of data. In this phase, I moved these larger chunks of coded data into broad categories. To do this, I placed every code from Atlas.ti into an excel chart. From there, I hand sorted the code into categories by cutting the codes into strips and then sorting them into cups until all of the codes were sorted, and broad categories emerged. After this first round of coding, I took the strips of coding from each of the broad categories and sorted them again to further refine the categories based on patterns and similarities to start to develop themes. This offered a deeper knowledge into the participants' insights.

In the final phase of coding, theoretical coding, Charmaz (2014) explains, "the purpose of these codes is to theorize your data and the focused codes" (p. 150). At this point, I looked at the smaller categories I had created in the previous stage, and used color-coded post-it notes to start to make sense of the emergent themes. I used the colored post-it notes to move into core categories or themes and to move to theory building. As stated, during all phases of data collection, constant comparative analysis took place. As interviews were collected, I coded them and compared the data to other data sources such as the walk-through observations and the

feedback transcripts for similarities and patterns. This comparison took place continually as data were collected and coded until theoretical saturation for emergent themes was met (Birks & Mills, 2015). After enough data was collected, and no new codes emerged, theoretical saturation occurred. Once theoretical saturation has occurred, core categories were created (Birks & Mills, 2015). As will be explained during the results section, no data were collected for document review, as no co-teachers submitted any lesson plans or planning agendas. As such, no document reviews took place.

Throughout data collection, member checks were used by asking administrators to review the themes and core categories to provide input into my interpretations, which added to the internal validity of the grounded theory methods (Birks & Mills, 2015). The use of member checks also added credibility and increased the trustworthiness of this case study (Merriam, 2009). Table 5 presents an overview of the data analysis procedures used in this case study and the categories and themes that emerged during coding.

Table 5

Data Analysis Method Using Constant Comparative Analysis (Charmaz, 2014)

Data Analysis Strategy	Data Analyzed	Method Used
Initial Coding	Interview transcripts, feedback transcripts, observation field notes, memos uploaded to Atlas.ti Data Collection form	Ongoing constant comparative analysis 1. <i>Round 1 coding</i> : stuck close to the data and coded line by line; coded in vivo.
Focused Coding	Codes generated through Atlas.ti and from Data Collection form	Chunking into larger data pieces 1. <i>Round 1 coding</i> : cut codes into strips and sorted into broad categories. <i>Round 1 categories</i> : administrator responsibilities; administrator supports; co-teaching practices; co-teachers' roles, responsibilities, and relationships; evaluations; feedback outcomes for co-teachers; inclusion beliefs; planning and collaborating; professional development outcomes for administrators; special education teacher issues; teacher needs 2. <i>Round 2 coding</i> : sorted the strips from previous category to further refine and gain a deeper understanding of participants' insights <i>Round 2 categories</i> : a. administrator supports i. no current supports or current professional development in co-teaching;

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- ii. common plan time
 - b. co-teaching practices
 - i. no teams follow any identified co-teaching approaches, teaching comes “naturally”
 - ii. special education teachers feel valued
 - iii. all teachers mentioned respect, trust, and communication as essential
 - c. co-teachers’ roles, responsibilities, and relationships
 - i. no defined roles and responsibilities; came “naturally”
 - ii. teacher have equal roles, parity happened “naturally”; – both teachers lead, assess, and plan; both are the “same”
 - iii. if they had to say, the general education teacher is the facilitator of content and the special education teacher is the modification expert, but they both lead content and modifying
 - iv. positive relationships, happened “naturally”; shared philosophy; natural connection
 - d. evaluations
 - i. teachers evaluated by different evaluators
 - ii. admins have different expectations of co-teaching
 - iii. Danielson does not support co-teaching practices
 - iv. formal evaluations only address one co-teacher; only discuss co-teaching approaches; lacked focus
 - e. feedback outcomes for co-teachers
 - i. planning more purposeful to support IEP students
 - ii. teachers more cognizant of their expertise; used expertise more purposefully
 - iii. teachers more articulated planning and lessons with more descriptive language
 - iv. understood IEP process
 - v. teachers felt validated, more energized to continue doing a good job co-teaching
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- vi. administrators felt the co-teachers bonded; strengthened their already strong relationship

Theoretical Coding

Moved into core categories or themes from previous codes

Core Categories

1. Transferred codes onto colored-coded post-it notes, and categorized, sorted, and organized them by placing similar codes on the same color post-it note to start to develop patterns
 2. Sorted the color-coded post-it notes into categories by charting them on large boards based on patterns and similarities and started to develop themes
 3. Once the post-it notes were grouped and categorized and patterns emerged, theoretical saturation took place; no more coding was needed
 4. Themes were developed once theoretical saturation was met
 5. *Core Categories/ Themes: All for One, Inclusion Co-Teaching; Including All Students; Shared Philosophy; It is All Natural: Co-Teacher Dynamics; Roles, Responsibilities, and Partner Relationships; Working in Parity: How Co-Teachers Instruct; All Out, Professional Development Outcomes; We Are All the Same Until We are Not: Co-Teaching Teams in Practice; What is in an Evaluation? The Uniqueness of the Evaluation Process in Co-Teaching; Provide Feedback to Co-Teaching Dyads?; Supporting Growth Through Feedback; Appreciation Goes a Long Way: Teacher Validation; For Feedback's Sake: To Evaluate or Not; There is No I in Co-Teacher: The Power of Two; That's Why we are Here: Supporting Students; To Plan or Not to Plan: Planning and Collaborating*
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IV. RESULTS

This case study is bounded by the central phenomenon of understanding how professional development impacted administrators' ability to support co-teachers. One central research question explored this phenomenon: How do professional development for administrators on co-teaching and collaboration affect their knowledge, skills, and perceptions? Moreover, three sub-questions also aimed to understand the central phenomenon: How do administrators support co-teachers through observations? How do professional developments support administrators' ability to provide feedback to co-teaching dyads? and How do administrators use this information to inform change in practice and policies related to co-teaching and collaboration? The findings will be presented in two sections. First, in order to understand the target research question, it is essential to understand the co-teachers current co-teaching practices, concerns, and current supports from their administrators on co-teaching practices. Furthermore, exploring the administrators' current practices and perceptions toward the co-teaching dyads must also be understood. Second, overarching patterns across the central phenomenon are presented with attention to the main research question and sub-questions. Representative quotes from the participants are used to illustrate conclusions that were drawn across the central phenomenon.

Section One: All for One, Inclusion Co-Teaching

This section presents the participants' beliefs on co-teaching and inclusive practices and the co-teachers current practices to gain a better understanding of the unique perspectives they brought to the research study. I explored the central phenomenon over two cases to look for similarities and patterns. Each case was comprised of one administrator and one co-teaching dyad. One special education teacher and one general education teacher made up each co-teaching dyad. Understanding how the participants felt regarding inclusion, inclusive practices,

co-teaching, and co-teaching practices was fundamental to this study. Insight into their beliefs and perceptions helped to lay the groundwork for how I would implement the professional development with the administrators. Exploring the participants' beliefs and perceptions helped me to develop how I would implement the professional development to the administrators based on the needs of the co-teachers.

As discussed at the start of this thesis, an understanding of inclusion and co-teaching was presented. The importance of common plan time to collaborate, a shared teaching philosophy between co-teachers, compatible personalities and teaching styles, and the importance of content knowledge was explained (Daane et al., 2000; Downing et al., 1997; Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Ornelles et al., 2007). In addition, teachers who have an inclusive philosophy believe that students with disabilities belong with their same-aged peers (Burstein et al., 2004). Teachers also felt that administrators play an essential role in the success of co-teaching and provide supports such as professional development on co-teaching practices and a common plan time (Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Huberman et al., 2012; Mackey, 2014; Pratt, 2014; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Ornelles et al., 2007). Research also indicated that administrators who take an active role in the school community promote a collaborative vision to the school community (Smith & Leonard, 2005). Therefore, it necessary to gain insight into the participants' beliefs on inclusion and co-teaching.

Including All Students

Within the school context, both administrators exhibited an inclusive philosophy that they fostered in their school community through their beliefs regarding inclusion. Olivia felt strongly in having a clear purpose for including students to ensure the students were included for the right reasons to support their unique learning needs. She explained that it was essential that students

are included based on their needs rather than just for the sake of inclusion. In doing so, she felt that teachers were better prepared to support the students because they understood why the student is included and how to support them effectively. Moreover, she believed that with purposeful inclusion, teachers, students, and parents better supported inclusive practices. Olivia shared,

Olivia, Principal, River School: Inclusion is, having all students in a setting and able to access learning regardless of any challenges they have. I think inclusion has gotten a bad rap in that people think we are just putting every kid in there, and they don't belong, or they are not able to do anything. For me, when you have a positive inclusive situation, I think it's really important to talk about the purpose of why the student is being included. Do we want to have them working on grade-level work with their peers? Is it purely for social exposure? I find that if we have inclusion for inclusion's sake, we often have teachers who lack skills to support the student, you have kids who are getting frustrated, and parents who are indifferent. But inclusion with a purpose and the right supports, *works*. It is important to be clear for all parties about what our purpose is for inclusion.

Like their administrators, the participants in each setting also had inclusive philosophies and felt that inclusion was best for all students. The co-teaching dyads shared that two teachers were able to support all of the students in the inclusive classroom, thus removing the stigma for students who receive special education services.

Building on the beliefs of her administrator, Ann attributed benefits of inclusion to academic and social outcomes for all students by stating,

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: [Inclusion] allows for kids to step up as leaders that maybe wouldn't necessarily be leaders in another setting. When peer teaching

is happening, they have to explain it, and it allows them to understand the content at a deeper level. I also think that having special education students in the classroom allows them to learn from their peers, it's an additional resource besides the teacher. I think it also helps the students with IEPs see that they can do it and that they don't need to be separated from their peers. I think that, in turn, it helps them socially as well.

When sharing her view of inclusion, Kayla, took a more global view,

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods High School: I think people with disabilities are in our communities, our families, and our lives. I think it helps to normalize the differences that people have and the way they experience school.

I think it positively impacts a lot of our awareness and understanding of each other and the differences that we all have.

Kayla's inclusive philosophy embodies a comprehensive view of how inclusion supports all students in the inclusive classroom. It shows not only a commitment to inclusion in the educational setting but also her commitment to preparing all students in the school community for real-world experiences. Her inclusive philosophy supports real-world experiences for general education students, as inclusion provides opportunities and experiences to interact with a variety of people that fosters an understanding of students with disabilities' unique needs, that general education students will encounter outside of their school environment in the real world.

Similar to their administrator, when sharing their beliefs about inclusion, the high school co-teachers both shared that all students belong together, by students with disabilities being educated alongside their same-aged peers. Their beliefs mirrored Kayla's that students with disabilities should be included with their general education peers.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: Inclusion is all students, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, the right to grow academically in your classroom. I really think that our students are, all of them are, valuable and special and unique, and all of them are challenging in their own way.

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: Inclusion to me is making sure that students' needs are met across the board. It really includes all students in an environment where they can get what they need and stay in line with the expectations of their peers.

When exploring co-teaching beliefs, it was again essential to gain insight into the core beliefs and perceptions of the participants. Once more, all the participants closely agreed on their opinions on co-teaching practices with the co-teaching dyads, strongly aligning with their administrators' philosophies, much like they did on inclusive practices. Coming from a general education background, Olivia, the principal from River School, had positive experiences to share concerning co-teaching. She explained that her experience co-teaching as a 7th and 8th science teacher informed her practice of co-teaching. She shared that before co-teaching, she had a different view of the role of the special education teacher, but this changed once she started to co-teaching. Olivia shared, "I think I saw the special education teacher more as a helper and I when I was co-teaching it really came clear to me that - no, we're all in this together and it's so much better for kids." Additionally, she shared, "I think if it's done well, [co-teaching] impacts students in such a positive way and not just academically, but also social-emotionally. I think co-teaching is really important. I think it's the best thing for kids."

Building on Olivia's co-teaching beliefs, Kayla, the Special Education Director from Woods High School, explained how co-teaching supports all students and does not stigmatize

students who receive special education services. All students in the school receive the supports they need, and co-taught classes are not just for students who receive special education services. In addition, the way the school is laid out with each subject having their own hallway or wing, students each go into all different directions and to a variety of classrooms, so no one knows where anyone is heading. Kayla explained, "I've had conversations with kids where they didn't really realize they were in a co-taught class. Our classrooms have multiple adults in them for many reasons. We have student teachers, teaching assistants, and ESL supports in classrooms. So, co-teaching is not specifically just for the Special Education Services. We have some of our ESL classes that are co-taught, with the dually certified teachers." She also explained that the philosophy of the school is to offer co-taught classes in every subject and grade level. By offering co-taught classes in every subject and level, students with IEPs have opportunities to be included with their same-aged peers in every class offered at the school. Since this is Kayla's first year at Woods High School, her understanding is this shift in offering co-taught classes to students with IEPs came from a State audit several years ago. The State audit looked at how students with IEPs were placed in classes, specifically concerning LRE. Since that audit, the school made the change to offer the co-taught delivery service option to students with IEPs.

The high school co-teaching dyad along of Ellie and Jacob along with their administrator Kayla's, are evident how they are all committed to supporting students with disabilities with their same-aged peers in the co-taught. Furthermore, the elementary co-teaching dyad, Ann and Rachel, also expressed that co-teaching benefited all students and believed this was best teaching practice to support all children. All participants strongly believed that all students belonged in the general education classroom; through co-teaching, they were better able to support all students.

Co-teaching dyads described co-teaching philosophies that were similar to the beliefs expressed by their respective administrators. The dyads believed that having two teachers in the room was best for students by offering all students the most out of what they each had to offer, whether it be their unique personalities, teach styles, or their teaching expertise. Building on the belief that two teachers are better than one, the dyads self-described their co-teaching styles as seamless and that during their instruction, no one could tell who was the special education teacher and who was the general education teacher because both teachers supported all of the students. As stated in the previous section, the co-teachers both took on all roles and responsibilities. Their respective administrators supported their assertion that it was hard to tell the two teachers apart when they were co-teaching, and that their instruction looked seamless. This was also confirmed through interviews and walk-through observation data. Ann shared that a benefit to co-teaching was having two people in the room to support students with multiple views of delivering content.

Ann, 8th grade General Education Teacher: We can touch more students by having two people in the room, rather than a teacher and an aide. When an aide isn't a part of the planning process and isn't necessarily always as comfortable with the content. I think that when you have two teachers that are fully invested in the content, in the unit, and the scope and sequence, I think it makes a really big difference. I think that it gives kids multiple representations of the information, hearing from two different people.

While during their first feedback session, Ellie and Jacob took the opportunity to joke that students got two teachers for the price of one, but just a dollar!

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: To the kids, we're both your teachers, you get two for the price of one. You're so lucky!

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: Two for a dollar.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: Right, for a dollar! Two for the price of one!

Beyond academic and social benefits, Jacob explained that an extrinsic social benefit of co-teaching was that students could experience positive adult relationships. He felt it was important for students to see adult relationships play out concerning when adults had a disagreement and worked through conflict. Seeing adults have healthy conversations and come to a compromise with each other was important for students to see. In his situation with his co-teaching partner, he felt that it was especially pertinent for high school students to see a positive male and female relationship, especially during conflict resolution.

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: We don't always agree, but when we don't, it's not a private thing. You know what I mean? We're not screaming at each other in class, but it's a very healthy banter. Kids can see disagreements, and they can see apologies, they can see a lot of social skills that you just can't see when there's only one teacher.

Ann also mentioned that she felt it was important for students to see adults working together and for students to see adults support each other when they make mistakes. She shared, "I think that's really helpful, not only to correct my mistake but to show the kids how we work together and learn from each other's mistakes."

Shared Philosophy

Throughout the research, findings showed that having a shared teaching philosophy was fundamental to working together and having a compatible co-teaching relationship (Naraian, 2010; Pratt, 2014; Rivera et al., 2014; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). The findings from these studies

have implications for administrators as they must be aware of the importance of pairing co-teaching partners together that have incompatible personalities and co-teachers with different educational philosophies. When pairing incompatible personalities and different educational philosophies, co-teachers state that co-teaching will not be successful. The administrators and co-teachers in this study identified that having shared qualities such as similar educational philosophies and work ethics were essential to effective co-teaching.

Olivia shared that in her own co-teaching experience which impacted how she views co-teaching, she felt that along with the importance of communication, “it all comes down to a shared philosophy.” During the first feedback session with Ann and Rachel, when discussing a rating scale they completed that analyzed their co-teaching, Olivia shared her doctoral dissertation findings, validating the importance of a shared philosophy between co-teachers.

Olivia, Principal, River School: I mentioned that I wrote my dissertation on a similar topic, and some of the findings that I had were that on any team, whether it's a co-teaching team or a whole team if you don't have that shared philosophy, it doesn't work.

Ann expressed that having the same philosophy as Rachel made lesson planning easy. She voiced that they are always on the same page, and due to this, planning comes naturally to them. Her co-teaching partner, Rachel, supported this sentiment by sharing, "I feel like there are some people that you naturally connect with and others that you don't. I think we both take our job seriously, so we connect and have the same philosophy." In her final interview, Ann shared, “I think that this experience has reassured me and make me feel really fortunate to have such a strong co-teacher where we share the same beliefs and philosophy.”

Conversely, when teaching philosophies do not match, co-teaching partnerships can be a challenge even if one of the partners is committed to supporting students with an inclusive

philosophy in the co-taught classroom. If both partners are not on the same page, co-teaching will not work. Olivia voiced this conundrum during her first interview.

Olivia, Principal, River School: I have some special education teachers that don't want to go into some general education teachers' rooms because the general education teachers see them as just the helper teacher. They want the special education teacher to make copies for them. So, I think the general education teacher has to have an open mind, and they have to have a shared philosophy with the special education teacher about students. I can think of one teacher whose perspective on students, is just so different from the special education teacher that works on her team. They're never going to work well together because the general education teacher is very much into blaming the child. In this situation, the special education teacher, has to say, "No, we're here to help the students to be successful, not place blame on them."

As has already been presented, successful co-teaching goes beyond shared philosophies between co-teaching partners. If administrators want to support co-teachers successfully, they must also have an inclusive philosophy that they share with the school community. Olivia continued to share,

Olivia, Principal, River School: I've worked with some really strong Special Education Administrators, and we shared the same philosophies, so we were able to support the co-teachers really well. I've also worked with some not strong Special Education Administrators where we had different philosophies. In those situations, I find it more difficult to support the co-teaching teams.

It is All Natural: Co-Teacher Dynamics

According to research, co-teachers need to discuss their roles and responsibilities before co-teaching together, so the special education teacher does not become a helper in the classroom (Ornelles et al., 2007). In contrast, the co-teachers in this study did not discuss their roles or responsibilities before co-teaching with each other. When seeking to understand how the two co-teaching dyads functioned together concerning their roles and responsibilities, relationships, and teaching style, each teacher explained that things happened "naturally." All of the teacher participants stated they did not have defined roles or responsibilities, per se, and the ones they did have happened naturally with their partner. Since they all self-described as having positive relationships with their partners, neither team discussed exact roles or responsibilities, but rather roles and responsibilities happened naturally as things would come and as were needed. They also said that they had great relationships and had a natural connection. When describing how they instruct their lessons, they explained that things happened naturally, based on what is best for the lesson and students. The special education teachers in this study, Rachel and Jacob, both stated that they felt valued in the classroom in their roles and responsibilities.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Partner Relationships. When discussing their roles and responsibilities, the 8th-grade team at River School stated that the general education teacher seemed to “fall into the role” of initiating the start of the weekly class website page, and the special education teacher fell into taking on the role of posting the homework. They did not discuss these responsibilities between each other, but instead, things started to “flow.” Once things seemed to be working well, they kept these roles. Furthermore, they asserted their roles were the same and equal in planning and leading lessons, neither of them felt that one did more than the other. They did acknowledge that, per their titles, Ann, as the general education teacher,

is technically the driver of content while Rachel, the special education teacher, is the modification expert.

Nevertheless, they see each other taking on both of these roles. They attributed this to a couple of factors. One, Rachel looped with her caseload from the previous year; hence this is her second year with the students having followed them from 7th grade she is familiar with their academic and social needs. Also, she is familiar with the math content having taught math last year, and therefore she is comfortable teaching the 8th-grade curriculum allowing her to contribute to the lessons comfortably. Also, Ann states she is very comfortable with inclusion and providing supports such as modifications to all students who need them.

Building on Rachel's sentiment, Ellie stated that due to her Reading Specialist background, by all rights, she is also a special education teacher like Jacob and can support students with reading; thus, their roles and responsibilities are also blurred as they both see themselves as equals in the classroom. Concerning their roles and responsibilities, Ellie stated the following about her special education partner, Jacob,

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: We don't ever formerly say, "Today you will be doing the speaking. You will talk for 10 minutes, and then I will talk." We don't do that. We both know where we're going. We know, "How am I going to explain that?" We were both facilitators, we were both editors, clarifiers, and we graded that one together, so we co-assess on that one as well. We don't ever say, "You have 15 minutes with the students as your time, and once you're done, and you can sit down and let me do it." We have never operated that way. We are both very fluid.

She also explained that, at times, the students dictate which teacher provides the support. For example, if a male student needs support, they may feel more comfortable with her co-teaching

partner, Jacob. At those times, as partners, they understand which one of them is best for the student. However, it is not something that they discuss ahead of time; it comes naturally.

When discussing their relationships, all of the teachers spoke highly of their partners, stating they were satisfied with co-teaching and with their co-teaching relationship. All of the partners described their relationships as positive and having a natural connection or occurring naturally.

However, along with ensuring that the special education teacher feels valued in the classroom, research also suggests that it is essential to discuss and determine roles and responsibilities before co-teaching together, to ensure that each teachers' expertise is brought to the classroom (Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Morgan, 2016; Pratt, 2014). Determining the roles and responsibilities ahead of time that provides is a higher chance that this took place during plan time, and each teacher will then support the students with the expertise they bring to the classroom. How teachers decide their roles and responsibilities to best support students has implications for administrators as they should be aware of how co-teachers are working to support students.

Working in Parity: How Co-Teachers Instruct. Building on this, the co-teachers stated that they worked in parity in the classroom, with their planning, instruction, assessing, and managing student behavior between their partners being equal responsibility. Each co-teacher stated that parity happened naturally. The co-teachers view each other as equals, and as such, when it comes to supporting students, they have the same roles and responsibilities in the classroom and cannot be distinguished apart from each other when instructing.

Concerning working in parity, Jacob shared,

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: I see my role as an equal to what's going on. We're both there to teach, so any responsibility that would have fallen under a general education teacher is also my responsibility.

When discussing how he and Ellie came to work in parity, he talked about their teaching experience and time working together.

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: A lot of things that just happened naturally –she's a veteran too. We've got a lot of educational experience. We've got a lot of like crossover in our degrees and our educational level, along with a lot of experience. That helps a lot.

Interestingly, the co-teaching team from the elementary school, Ann and Rachal are in their first year of co-teaching together, and they both have under ten years of teaching experience each, and they expressed the same sentiment about working together coming naturally.

Rachel, Special Education Teacher, River School: It just happened very naturally. This is Ann's first year here, but we got to know each other very quickly, and so I feel like we know how each other work and we can like interrupt each other in class, and it's fine, or we can add on to what the other one said and it works.

Her co-teacher had similar feelings to share and explained how they supported students together.

Ann, 8th grade General Education Teacher: I think roles come on naturally a lot between us. We always plan the lesson, but we don't plan out who's going to say what. We just naturally let that happen and kind of feel out the class. Sometimes maybe if I'm struggling explaining something or the kids aren't getting it, she'll jump in or vice versa. A lot of that happens naturally with us.

This finding is significant for administrators as it is vital to know how co-teachers work together to support students while they are co-teaching. Although the co-teaching dyads in this study were identified as highly effective, as Kayla articulates in the excerpt below, co-teachers should have a purposeful conversation with each other about how they work together to support students. The following is from Kayla during a feedback session with Jacob and Ellie as she discussed a document they had completed on parity with the co-teaching dyad.

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods High School: So that I think it helps to become intentional about these conversations. I think a lot of conversations happen and maybe naturally, but my thought is to have them be more proactive versus you know, the classes were loud, someone gets upset and the other person is like, oh, they were all collaborating. I didn't realize it. That was a trigger for you.

During this conversation, although Ellie and Jacob do work very well in parity and she acknowledges that their work comes naturally to them, but she also is guiding them to have purposeful conversations that support what happens in the classroom so they can continue to support the students at the level at which they currently support them.

Additionally, when describing the co-teaching approaches they used when instructing with their partners, all of the co-teachers shared that they did not use any identified co-teaching approaches identified by Cook and Friend (1995). Their instruction came naturally, and they taught lessons in ways that worked for them and their students. However, when the co-teachers described how they supported the students during instruction, it was evident they did use a variety of teaching methods that aligned with Cook and Friend's (1995) approaches such as team-teaching or parallel teaching/alternative teaching when they divided their classes into small groups with each teacher taking a group to instruct. The small groups would be compared to

either parallel teaching or alternative teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995), depending on how they decided to use the groups to support the students.

Section Two: All Out, Professional Development Outcomes

The following section answers the central research question and subsequent sub-questions by presenting key findings, patterns, and representative quotes. Professional development session was provided to the administrators at their respective school. The professional development sessions are described in detail in the Methods section of this thesis. After the administrators received professional development on co-teaching and inclusive practices, they conducted walk-through observations and collected data on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). From there, they provided feedback to the co-teaching dyads. What follows are the findings from this study.

Central Research Question: How Does Professional Development for Administrators on Co-Teaching and Collaboration Affect Their Knowledge, Skills, and Perceptions?

Qualitative case study methods were used to gain insight into the central phenomenon to answer this central research question. By providing the two administrators in this study individualized on-site professional development in co-teaching and inclusive practices, the evidence from the data analysis shows that the professional development had a positive impact of the administrators' knowledge, skills, and perceptions.

Olivia shared that professional development impacted her knowledge on co-teaching practices and improved her ability to support the co-teaching dyad in her school. She stated,

Olivia, Principal, River School: Starting out, I had a pretty solid understanding of what co-teaching can look like and the characteristics of effective co-teaching. Through this

process, what has added to that knowledge base is this idea of how we can get teacher expertise at the table. Which is something I didn't necessarily think about. I thought it's really important for the kids to see them both as equal teachers. That was what I was sort of focused on, but I never really thought about it in the frame of expertise. That sort of shifted how they are bringing their expertise to the table. If I was doing this a year ago and I was meeting with both of them, I would say to the general education teacher, you need to include each other more. It would have been very vague. Like, play nice, you should be taking turns. That would have been so ridiculous, and it would not help them make a difference in their practice. It would've made them anxious and like, okay, I've talked for five minutes now you better talk. It would have had them focusing on the wrong things because, essentially, of a lack of focus on my feedback to them. Now I'm able to say, it's important for you to bring the special education teacher's expertise to the table, it's a lot more precise feedback.

This was Kayla's first year as the special education director at Woods High School. There had been turnover in her position for the past four years as she was the fourth special education director in as many years. She was excited to participate in this study to help her learn her new role as special education director and to get to know the participating co-teaching dyad.

Furthermore, when she started as the special education director, she was tasked with making improvements to the co-teaching model that was in use in the school. Participating in this study fit in line for her to start looking into the structure of how co-teaching works at the high school so she can begin to understand the co-teaching model to implement changes as needed. In seeking to understand if the professional development made an impact on Kayla's knowledge, skills or perceptions of co-teaching, she shared the following,

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: I feel like I have more specific feedback that I can give to co-teaching partners. I can also acknowledge what they're already doing that's put in place that maybe I didn't even realize they were doing. I feel a lot more confident since receiving some professional development.

I was able to be more aware of my role in the co-teaching process, and I really learned a lot. I'm grateful for the resources and the research, and the worksheets are supports that I can use in continuing to provide support to the co-teachers here in this school.

After receiving professional development, evidence showed that Kayla's skills in her ability to support the co-teachers on co-teaching practices were shown during the second feedback session with the co-teachers. During this session, Ellie expressed a desire to learn about students' IEPs so she could better support the students with individualized supports to meet their unique learning needs. As is the set up in the high school, the general education teacher does not have access to the IEPs, only the special education does. During the professional development sessions, we talked about accommodations and modifications and who was responsible for supporting the students in the co-taught classroom on the IEP. Meaning, were both co-teachers listed as being responsible for providing services to students with IEPs? At that time, Kayla learned that on the IEPs on the special education teacher was listed as being responsible for students with IEPs in the co-taught classroom. Hence, only the special education teachers had access to the goals, accommodations, and modifications for the students. Upon learning that the general education teacher did not have access to the IEPs and learning of Ellie's request for access to the IEPs to support the students, Kayla created an IEP binder that contained all the IEP information with the goals and supports of each student. During the second feedback session,

Kayla explained the documents to Ellie so she would be prepared to support the students in her co-taught classroom.

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: One of the pieces of feedback that I wanted to give you was from when you asked where are their IEPs, what do they look like, what are their goals? I am rolling this out with you guys to take a look at how we could better support co-teachers. This is just your second-period class, and it's what we can pull out of the program of their IEP. It's an IEP summary so that you can have this for now.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: Great!

Kayla goes on to explain the “basic information” the IEP has to offer, the case manager for the student, the classes in which they are registered, included the co-taught classes, the eligibility for the students, and their identification. Kayla then speaks about behavior plans for students and uses the acronym that is common to special education teachers, BIP. Ellie is unfamiliar with this term and questions the term. Kayla takes time to explain the acronym and what a behavior plan is for a student. She further explains the minutes of instruction in each setting the student receives every week, another aspect Ellie was unaware of and is excited to learn. Before heading into explaining the goals, she explains related services such as speech, social work, occupational therapy, and transportation.

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: One of the things I learned in the professional development sessions is understanding who's monitoring the goals in the co-taught class? Is it the special ed teacher? Is it both of you? The way we have them written, it's just the special ed teacher. That is why you don't know the IEPs, but wouldn't you like to know what the student is working on? Reading fluency, or reading

comprehension, or behavior? One of the students in there, her primary eligibility is emotional disability.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: I didn't know that.

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: Right, you didn't know that.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: At least now I can help!

Kayla then gives a brief overview of the rest of the components of the IEP, including the goal section.

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: These are the goals in the areas they are eligible for. Also, everyone has transition goals in education, employment. So, take a look and see if it is something you would ever pull out during plan time or your common plan to help with your lesson plans. Would you use this if you had it for every section you co-taught?

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: Yeah! I would use it! This helps to know about the students and how I can help them, specifically.

After receiving the binder, Ellie mentioned she wants help in knowing what to say when she attends IEP meetings. She shared, "I'm never sure of what is the right thing to say" in an IEP meeting and "I need to review some special education courses" to help learn some suggestions to be professional in IEP meetings. Kayla appreciated this feedback and said she understood Ellie's concerns and would work on supports in this area and moving forward.

By having this open dialogue during the feedback sessions and listening to Ellie's needs, Kayla was able to support the co-teacher, and may in the long term, see improved outcomes for students. In addition, as explained earlier, since this was Kayla's first year at the school and because she does not evaluate Ellie, this was a new opportunity for the two of them to sit down

and discuss co-teaching. After Kayla shared the IEP binder with her, Ellie said about Jacob already know about IEPs and how to support the students, “You're living the dream already, and I'm just learning about the dreams.” This illustrates how invested Ellie was in wanting to support the students, and the impact the IEP binder that Kayla provided to her made.

In her final interview, Ellie shared, “I feel more comfortable, because of that open dialogue, I feel more comfortable because I didn't really have any conversations outside of the classroom with Kayla, being the new director before.” While not in the tradition of typical feedback about co-teaching practices per se, the open dialogue during the feedback session allowed Ellie to express a need she had to help her support students with disabilities, and Kayla met that need. The process of participating in the professional development on co-teaching practices did have an impact on Kayla’s skills to support the co-teachers as she was able to meet the needs of the teachers when they asked for supports, if not for the feedback sessions as a result of the professional development, this support may not have occurred.

We Are All the Same Until We are Not: Co-Teaching Teams in Practice. When discussing roles and responsibilities as well as when describing their instruction, along with stating these came naturally, teachers also used words such as “seamless” and “equal” to describe their instruction with their co-teaching partners. Each teacher felt the concept of being equal and that not being able to tell them apart was very important in their classroom. The dyads worked very hard to ensure that it was not possible to identify the general education teacher from the special education teacher during their instruction. When they were co-teaching, it was vital that the students saw them as equals in the classroom and that they both supported all students equally. Ellie summed up her and Jacob's classroom style by sharing,

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: The best thing I would say particularly about our class is that Jacob and I don't distinguish who's the English teacher, who is the special education teacher. All you need to know is that you're in our class, and you all get double the amazing.

During the walk-through observations, the administrators found evidence of the co-teachers "sameness" instruction. Both Olivia and Kayla discussed the concept of the teachers being interchangeable, not being able to tell them apart, in the first feedback sessions with their respective co-teaching dyads. In her first feedback session, Olivia shared her baseline data from her first walk-through.

Olivia, Principal, River School: So how you guys shared responsibilities, which really was seamless. I don't know if you guys work that out ahead of time, but not just the back and forth with the direct instruction pieces, but the answering the questions was seamless. In fact, I tallied, and I think Ann actually spoke to more kids on your caseload than you did [Rachel]. Which to me is sort of a sign of that even flow of, I'm not just here for these kids, but really, it's a co-teaching model. When you guys are planning, do you talk about, I'll do this part, and I'll do this part, or does it flow naturally?

After the first walk-through observation to collect baseline data, both Olivia and Kayla were very impressed with their respective co-teaching dyads' ability to support all the students in the classroom and that they were unable to distinguish the co-teachers apart. During the first feedback session, both administrators remarked how if they did not know who the students with IEPs were, they would not know who was supporting them during instruction. They were both very pleased with the instructional set up, and co-teaching approaches of the dyads were implementing.

However, after listening to the feedback that the administrators provided to the co-teachers, I guided them to the resources binder and asked if they had read articles on the importance of co-teacher expertise. I explained that when co-teachers are interchangeable in the classroom and describe themselves as having the same roles and responsibilities, they are neglecting the expertise they each bring to the co-taught classroom and thus may not be meeting the individual needs of the students with IEPs. It is essential to remember that the general education teachers are trained to be content experts, and special education teachers are trained to be modification and accommodation experts. While co-teachers should be equal in status in the classroom, they should each have distinct roles and responsibilities that they each bring to their instruction (Rice, 2006). Through listening to the feedback sessions and hearing the feedback the administrators provided to the co-teachers, I was able to provide an extension to the professional development and connect to materials in the resources binder that would benefit them in providing supports to their co-teachers. This was critical to the growing their knowledge, skills, and changing their perceptions concerning the importance of co-teacher expertise to effectively support students.

Sub-Question #1: How do Administrators Support Co-Teachers Through Observations?

After receiving professional development, both administrators conducted walk-through observations then provided feedback on co-teaching practices to the co-teaching dyads. During the feedback sessions, the administrators offered positive feedback to the dyads on their co-teaching practice based on evidence they collected during the walk-throughs, which they documented on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). Evidence of administrators' ability to support the co-teachers through observations was shown through data analysis of the interviews and the recorded

feedback sessions. Evidence showed the administrators supported the co-teachers after the walk-throughs as Olivia explained,

Olivia, Principal, River School: I think by observing them and being very transparent that I was coming into observe co-teaching and then processing the feedback with them, together. I think that's something that I want to continue to do in the future. I think it's an important message to send to teachers that I value co-teaching and that I want to coach them to become even better co-teachers, as opposed to having it be an evaluative thing. I feel like over time, if I can do this more and more, it'll build my relationship with co-teachers and hopefully their relationships with one another and their ability to reflect on their practice.

As Olivia shared, the walk-through observations allowed her to provide feedback to the dyads that showed she valued co-teachers, and she wanted to support their practices. After receiving feedback from Olivia, Ann shared,

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: I think the biggest thing I got from the feedback is that it made us feel really good, and we had more reflective conversations together. It's always nice to get feedback and have more people to talk about your practice. I think it's energized us and encouraged us to continue doing what we're doing.

What is in an Evaluation? The Uniqueness of the Evaluation Process in Co-Teaching. A significant revelation of this study was that co-teachers in each dyad in both of the settings had different evaluators. In the elementary school setting, general education teachers were observed and evaluated by the school principal. However, special education teachers were observed and evaluated by the director of special education. In the high school setting, the dyad had a similar situation for evaluations. The general education teachers are observed and

evaluated by their division leaders, and the special education teachers are observed and evaluated by the director of special education. This process of evaluation means that when discussing the current supports the teachers received from their administrator, each teacher had a different administrator "point person" for their evaluations. Ann is observed and evaluated by Olivia, the principal who participated in this study, while Rachel is observed and evaluated by the director of special education, who did not participate in this study. Ellie is observed and evaluated by the division leader, who did not participate in this study, and Jacob is observed and evaluated by Kayla, the director of special education, who did participate in this study. The evaluation process becomes a conundrum when looking at co-teaching supports and practices.

A significant revelation of this study was that co-teachers in each dyad in both of the settings had different evaluators. In the elementary school setting, general education teachers were observed and evaluated by the school principal. However, special education teachers were observed and evaluated by the director of special education. In the high school setting, the dyad had a similar situation for evaluations. The general education teachers are observed and evaluated by their division leaders, and the special education teachers are observed and evaluated by the director of special education. This process of evaluation means that when discussing the current supports the teachers received from their administrator, each teacher had a different administrator "point person" for their evaluations. Ann is observed and evaluated by Olivia, the principal who participated in this study, while Rachel is observed and evaluated by the director of special education, who did not participate in this study. Ellie is observed and evaluated by the division leader, who did not participate in this study, and Jacob is observed and evaluated by Kayla, the director of special education, who did participate in this study. The evaluation process becomes a conundrum when looking at co-teaching supports and practices. The issue of different

evaluators came up several times throughout the study. Kayla explained that there are Union rules she has to abide to when conducting formal or informal observations. Since she only evaluates the special education teacher and thus can only share the evaluation with the teacher she observed, not the co-teaching dyad, even if she observed them as a team. She shared,

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods, High School: There are real prescribed steps for the way that we provide feedback to the teacher that's being formally observed or even informally observed. What I say verbally and in the document that I share, is solely with the Special Education Teacher.

In the elementary school, Rachel explained the evaluation process as similar. Even if the observation occurs during a co-taught lesson, her evaluator does not share the feedback with her and her co-teaching partner in tandem.

Rachel, Special Education Teacher, River School: Olivia does Ann's formal and informal observations, and the director of special education does mine. If we receive different feedback, it's not helpful for us co-teaching together because we're getting different messages. Yes, we could go back to each other and share the information, but that does not always happen.

Olivia explained that if she wanted to discuss an evaluation with the director of special education, she could. However, again, there are rules, and they could not formally discuss the evaluation from one teacher with both co-teachers together. The power of providing non-evaluative feedback to the co-teaching dyads together is what makes this study stand out.

Co-Teachers, being evaluated by different administrators, brings to light a plethora of issues. As was stated with lesson plans and plan times, there are Union rules that administrators need to abide by with observations, even non-evaluative observations. Both administrators

explained similar Union rules concerning observing co-teachers and providing feedback to them together. For example, if one of the dyads is observed for a formal or informal evaluation during a co-taught lesson, by Union rules, their administrator can only discuss the lesson with them and not their partner, since they do not evaluate their partner and also because their partner may not be in their evaluation cycle. As Rachel explained, she receives different feedback from her administrator after an observation than her co-teacher does. On this topic, Jacob expressed, "We've said, you're in a marriage with somebody. You are bound together, your success is bound together, your failures too. You have a very diverse set of students that you're dealing with." Ellie's had concerns that they should receive feedback as a team since they co-teach together, how else will they improve their co-teaching practice?

In addition to different feedback, the dyads also receive supports from different administrators. Rachel shared that this can lead to different expectations in her role as a co-teacher. At present, she is expected to truly co-teach only in the math class, which is the class she teaches with Ann. In the other classes that she is assigned to co-teach, the expectation is she co-teaches in more of an assistant role. When asked about how she feels when co-teaching in her other classes, Rachel shared,

Rachel, Special Education Teacher, River School: I think because, in the other co-taught classes, I often feel like I'm playing catch up or I am struggling to support the students that I'm in there to support. Part of it is like, things might not be modified in advance because I don't know what's happening. I'll generally know like the main idea of what's being taught, but I won't know like how it's been taught. I'm much more along for the ride and helping my students as I do things. I don't leave feeling like, man, I killed it, like that

was great! Whereas in math, I always know what's happening, it's just like a different vibe.

Sub-Question #2: How Do Professional Developments Support Administrators' Ability to Provide Feedback to Co-Teaching Dyads?

After the walk-throughs and collecting data of the dyads co-teaching practices, the administrators provided feedback to the dyads. Evidence from the data analysis indicated that professional development was able to support the administrators' ability to provided positive feedback to the co-teaching dyads that improved the co-teachers' growth in their teaching practice. The professional development provided a data collection form for the observation walk-throughs so the administrators could collect evidence on the co-teachers practice and use the evidence to support their feedback. Furthermore, professional development provided information to the administrators on providing positive non-evaluative feedback to the co-teachers in tandem to improve their co-teaching practice. Olivia also expounded on the concept she learned from the professional development sessions of acknowledging the co-teachers' needs and allowing them to guide the feedback topics to improve their growth. Olivia explained,

Olivia, Principal, River School: It's really helped me give very specific feedback because it was so appropriate. I didn't need to give feedback on every single component of the [data collection form] document, but just what could we get the most bang for our buck. Honestly, I think to have a couple of areas [domains from the data collection form] in my back pocket and sitting down with them and to let them own whatever is going to kind of bubble to the top has also been really effective.

Kayla shared she learned to reframe how she spoke to teachers. Kayla shared she learned to reframe how she spoke to teachers. She focused on areas of strengths of the dyad, instead of looking for areas they were doing wrong. She shared,

Kayla Director of Special Education, Woods, High School: I liked the way that I reframed the feedback, having just finished an evaluation cycle where it seemed like I had to be more constructive or more identifying areas of need or you know, maybe ways to grow. That stuck with me from the beginning of just praise what they're doing, which was, it was easy. But on the other hand, too, you know, sometimes you go in with the lens of, okay, what do they need to fix? What do they need to improve? So, I thought that was helpful for me is just like focusing on what they're doing well and then grow that. It was kind of cool.

During the professional development sessions, the administrators were provided a resource binder that had materials on co-teaching and inclusive practices they could use to support them in providing feedback to the co-teachers. The materials in the resource binder leaned toward supporting new co-teaching dyads with information on learning how to start co-teaching together or supporting dyads who need to learn to work together effectively. As already mentioned, the co-teaching dyads that participated in this study were highly effective and reflective teams. Both administrators felt that many of the materials in the resource binder were not needed for use during the feedback sessions. With this being said, each administrator did find one document they thought would be helpful to use with the co-teachers during a feedback session. Olivia shared during her mid-interview,

Olivia, Principal, River School: I actually looked at a lot of the documents and have not selected any at this time. I think because the documents talk about the structure of co-

teaching and what makes effective co-teaching and a lot of it we already do. I think an area that they could use more work in is, an effective co-teacher can do this. Like now, how can they get from good to great.

Olivia later chose to share a rating scale with Ann and Rachel, that analyzed their co-teaching in the following areas, on a scale from 1-5 on the importance that the areas are present in their co-teaching situation and also the importance of the areas. The areas were: *Personal Prerequisites*, looking at their teaching style, subject content knowledge, and contributions to the classroom; *Professional Relationship*, parity between co-teachers, working toward a shared goal, shared decision making; *Classroom Dynamic*, perceptions of how teaching and learning occur, academic and social curriculum knowledge, use of strategies; and *Contextual Factors*, importance of shared planning. The dyads completed the scale and discussed the ratings in the second feedback session. In looking over the data from the scale, they both scored extremely high, feeling the areas are important and also in agreeing that the areas listed are also present in their current co-teaching situation. This again solidifies that this dyad is a highly effective team. After sharing rating scale document with the co-teachers, with respect to having the resource binder with material to choose from, Olivia shared,

Olivia, Principal, River School: I think the rating document that the teachers took was just a really helpful reflective piece for them and also a starting point for conversation for all of us. Like, ok, you guys are really good at what you do, and this is how we can improve it. As opposed to me trying to scramble and come up with some suggestions. And while in this case, I think they are such a successful co-teaching pair, knowing that I had the resources at my fingertips and that I could always pull an article and share it with

them was really helpful. I can see using those articles with other newer or less effective co-teachers in the future.

Kayla shared a document that came from the resource binder of material that was created for the professional development session on parity. In her mid-interview Kayla expressed,

Kayla, Special Education Director, Woods High School: I wanted to do this with this team, knowing that they have a lot of these skills already. But with the thought of this is something I'd like to roll out at the beginning of next school year to teams, just to get an idea. Again, it was quick, it was short, research-based, and I thought it would be a quick way to have this pair, be aware of the way that they interact together.

After sharing the parity document during the feedback session, Ellie and Jacob felt validated that they were co-teaching in parity. Ellie's excitement was heard on the audio, saying, "We really do this!" She later discussed the document in her final interview, saying she liked completing it as it validated that her Jacob was working in parity. It felt good to know they were doing that aspect of co-teaching correctly.

Although the administrators did not use many of the documents, both administrators shared they were extremely pleased with the one supporting document they did choose. They also reported that the documents were a good starting point for conversations between the co-teachers during the feedback sessions, and moving forward, the material would be beneficial with new co-teaching teams or teams working to strengthen their co-teaching relationships.

Supporting Growth Through Feedback. The strength of the findings in this study lay in the feedback the administrators provided to the co-teachers. Results showed that two aspects made the impact of the administrator's feedback effective: the non-evaluative nature of the feedback and providing feedback to the co-teaching partners at the same time.

Appreciation Goes a Long Way: Teacher Validation. The non-evaluative feedback validated the work that the co-teachers were doing in their classrooms. The teachers reported feeling more confident after receiving feedback from their respective administrators. Ann continued to share, “It's always nice to get feedback and have more people to talk about your practice with, but I think this just energized us and encouraged us to continue doing what we're doing.” Ann was not the only teacher that indicated the feedback validated they were doing a good job with their co-teaching practice. Ellie shared, “It's nice when you get positive feedback; it can be just as helpful and rewarding as like, I don't want to say critical, but critical or room for improvement. I feel confident. I think it made us feel confident, competent in what we were doing because we think we have a good thing going, but you never know.”

The administrators shared their intentions for the feedback they provided. The feedback was purposeful and with intent, built on the needs of the co-teachers.

Olivia, Principal, River School: I like to think that through my feedback and validating what they're doing, they feel more empowered, whether that means to take more risks or they get out of their comfort zone. I hope that that's sort of a byproduct of just giving them a lot of positive feedback.

Kayla's sentiments were similar to Olivia's, she expressed,

Kayla, Director of Special Education, Woods High School: My intention was to be very positive and proactive and specific, and some of the tasks that I observed or the collaboration or the partnership. So, I think it reemphasized that teaching partnership and how they feel comfortable with one another.

The affirmations from the administrators helped the teachers to feel they were working well with their partners and that their hard work was noticed. They all stated that although they did not feel

as though they were seeking this validation, yet it made them feel good about the work they were doing and encouraged them to continue to work hard in their co-teaching practice. Ellie shared that the feedback "Really solidifies, hey, you're on the right track. Bump it up a notch. Right?"

Validating co-teachers' positive practices is an essential finding for administrators to be aware of when supporting co-teachers. According to both dyads in this study, they were satisfied with their hard work being acknowledged. This finding confirms that providing positive feedback on the co-teaching practices the dyads are doing well helps to support their practice as they will work to continue the aspects they are doing well, and reflect to improve on their areas of growth.

For Feedback's Sake: To Evaluate or Not. From the start, this study was designed around walk-through observations and administrators providing non-evaluative feedback to the co-teacher dyads. As previously mentioned, administrators can support teachers with observations to improve their teaching practice (Portin et al., 2003). The non-evaluative nature of the feedback played out in a walk-through observation of Ann and Rachel and was discussed throughout feedback sessions and interviews. It demonstrates that by building on their strengths, Olivia was able to support their co-teaching and inclusive practices successfully.

During two separate walk-through observations for Ann and Rachel, there were significant content errors during the instruction of their lessons. During the second observation, a student pointed out the error, and the co-teachers praised the student for noticing it, and they recovered from the mistake and carried on with the lesson. Ann shared that because they were being observed, she was sweating from being nervous when the mistake happened. Building on the positive aspects of the lesson despite the error, Olivia discussed their co-teaching practiced with them during the final feedback session rather than focusing on the content error.

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: I thought they asked really good questions. Even when M (student's name) called me out when I made the mistake again on the board. I was like, yes! They're paying that much attention that they're catching my mistake!

Olivia, Principal, River School: I thought it was actually quite remarkable. I think the way that you guys played off each other when that happened. I think the whole lesson was an untraditional way of approaching things, but I think so representative of what I think you two believe how you want kids to learn. It's not about the score or the grade. It's how you really want them to demonstrate understanding. To me, basically stopping a test midway and being able to re-teach and say oh, they didn't quite get this, is kind of the epitome of what we want summative assessments to look like. This is just a check that they really didn't understand everything, and it's not a "gotcha." I was just really impressed with the fact that you guys took that risk to do something different.

In my field notes, Olivia and I discussed the feedback session. She shared that the structure of the walk-throughs changed her outlook on providing feedback to the co-teachers. By focusing on their co-teaching practice rather than the error, she was able to provide feedback that she felt better supported their practice as a team. In past observation conversations, she would have focused on the error, which would not have been helpful to them in their co-teaching practice. She did share that this was a challenging shift for her to make, but one she found very rewarding for her personal growth. In the constructive and non-evaluative nature of the feedback, Olivia provided to the co-teaching dyad had a positive impact on Ann. During her final interview, Ann reflected on the feedback she and Ann received from Olivia regarding this lesson. This was

powerful to hear that the feedback impacted her and how she felt validated that she and Rachel were doing a good job in their co-teaching practice.

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: We did this direct teaching piece, and that's not normally what we do. Normally we're not direct teaching for that long. But the kids were really engaged, and we felt like it went well. We had really positive feedback from Olivia on that lesson, *despite a mistake*. She was talking about how she was really impressed because we cared so much about the understanding of the concepts rather than the grade. I think that made me feel really good and was really reassuring to me and made me want to continue to focus on their understanding and – yes, grades are important, but at the end of the day, we want them to feel confident and feel good about these concepts, and we need to do whatever we can to get them there.

This exchange from Ann is strong evidence that the non-evaluative feedback supported her and Rachel's ability to support students effectively, and she can better articulate the instructional decisions she makes with her co-teacher.

There is No I in Co-Teacher: The Power of Two. The second aspect that made the impact of administrators' feedback effective was providing feedback to the co-teachers as a team. Olivia shared that providing feedback to Ann and Rachel as a team allowed her to focus on co-teaching practices; it gave her feedback a purpose, "I was really focused on the co-teaching aspect, and it would feel disjointed if I met with them separately about it. I think treating them as a team and talking to them as a team, it goes a long way." The co-teachers have different evaluators and have never received feedback together on their co-teaching practice. Findings from this study resulted in administrators reporting positive outcomes in giving co-teachers joint

feedback. When providing non-evaluative feedback to the co-teaching dyads, Olivia discussed the power that joint feedback held.

Olivia, Principal, River School: I guess here's the thing, if we're focused on in terms of professional growth for the two of them in relation to their co-teaching practice, then I think this is the only way to do it. If there are other concerns outside of co-teaching, this is probably not the best forum. So, for example, if I had concerns about the gen ed teacher and classroom management, then doing this together as a co-teaching team would not be effective. But if we really want to give effective feedback, I can imagine saying to the Director of Special Education, I will evaluate that special education teacher because she's tenured, they've developed a co-teaching system, and I'm happy to sort of taking both co-teachers on. I think again, it's the focus, and in systems where it's not really valued, the co-teaching piece, this won't work. If co-teaching has not been prioritized, then it's, you know, not beneficial. But if co-teaching is prioritized and you have settings where it's the expectation, then I think this is the best way to do it. I'm having all these light bulbs right now. I'm really right! Yeah. I think that would be the best way.

Kayla also felt that providing feedback to Jacob and Ellie in tandem was powerful.

Kayla, Director of Special Education, Woods, High School: It provided an opportunity for me to give feedback to both of them at the same time. They really fed off that and kind of took it to the next level with each other and talked a little bit about what they felt like they did well, what they know they needed to improve, and how they can continue to grow. I think it was fabulous to be able to sit down with both of them at the same time and get feedback from a lesson.

Olivia shared that by providing feedback to the dyad together, she observed changes in the co-teaching relationship, even if Ann and Rachel felt their relationship had not changed throughout the study. Olivia stated, “This might even be like subconsciously on both of their parts, but I feel like when they’re getting feedback together, it builds the trust between one another.” Providing joint feedback to co-teachers was conveyed as an effective support during my pilot study.

Administrators shared that they found when they spoke to co-teaching partners separately, it appeared as they were going behind the other partner’s back, and this created a climate of distrust. Throughout this process, Olivia felt that providing feedback to the dyads together strengthen their relationship because she felt they were “in this together.”

Likewise, Kayla felt the feedback had a positive impact on Ellie and Jacob. She shared that it allowed Ellie and Jacob the opportunity to share strengths about each other that they may not have otherwise expressed to each other, “This relationship was pretty strong, to begin with. What I noticed was some actual labeling of what one person does well; what the other person does well. But I think it allowed an opportunity for them to really acknowledge what each other does and each other’s strengths and areas of need where they support one another.

Teacher evaluation practices and the impact the evaluations have on the co-teaching dyads came to light during this study. Through this study, the need for co-teachers to be observed and to receive feedback as partners emerged. Administrators need to be cognizant that if they want to focus on improving co-teaching practices, the only way to do this is to observe and provide feedback to the co-teaching dyad together.

Sub-Question #3: How Do Administrators Use This Information to Inform Change in Practice and Policies Related to Co-Teaching and Collaboration?

Based on the findings the administrators saw in their respective co-teaching dyads, both administrators expressed wanting to continue the practices they learned in the professional development on co-teaching and inclusive practices. Both administrators mentioned wanting to explore changes to the structure of evaluations and find ways to observe and provide feedback to the co-teachers together. Considering a change to the evaluation practices and policies in their schools is a direct result of the professional development they received on co-teaching and inclusive practices. In addition, exploring the evaluation practices aligns with one of the essential findings of the study as a barrier to providing feedback to the co-teachers in tandem. Kayla shared,

Kayla, Director of Special Education, Woods, High School: I would like to try to talk to the administrative team about how we go about maybe even just for our informal evaluations for co-teaching partners and what that can look like. I talked a little bit about taking turns with some of the informal observations. Maybe I do some teams who aren't necessarily on my full evaluation roster, but people who are teaching with someone in my department, because sitting down with the two of them together allowed an open dialogue.

In terms of long-term plans, both administrators shared similar goals in expressing wanting to remain consistent with continuing with walk-through observations and providing feedback to the co-teachers in tandem. The administrators both stated they would need to schedule the walk-throughs and write them on their calendars and follow up with timely and quick feedback. They both noted that feedback only needs to be a quick positive note and does not need to take long. The feedback sessions for this study lasted between 8-15 minutes, with the longer sessions being the first sessions, and they became shorter toward the end. Feedback sessions are quick,

focused, and positive and should not take an extreme amount of time. Also, because both co-teachers must be present, time must be scheduled during their common plan time, something to be aware of when scheduling feedback sessions. The administrators shared their plans for moving forward with implementing what they learned in the professional development sessions.

Olivia, Principal, River School: Honestly, I think the design of your study forced me to do it in a certain way. It was very structured, it wasn't just like go in there, I had the right tools to be able to use, to know what to look for, and to provide positive feedback. I think it's important to always have a tool when you're doing an observation. It's not just like I randomly made this up out of thin air when it comes to the feedback. The tool that you gave was really helpful. And needing to do it to set the time and then to have it all planned out where it wasn't just like an on the fly. I think sometimes walk-throughs, not sometimes, all the time walk-throughs are sort of the last thing on your agenda so we don't do them. This forced me to really commit to doing them, which I think can impact my practice going into the future because I can put it on the calendar. I need to know when they're co-teaching and it needs to be a very purposeful walk-through.

I know I talked about, the consistency in scheduling. I think for me I also probably have to set my goals for the year, my professional goals and really prioritize this.

Kayla shared similar plans for continuing her practice for walk-throughs observations and providing feedback to the co-teachers.

Kayla, Director of Special Education, Woods, High School: What I really took from this is just a quick little note, love how you were both engaged in this or love how the students were interacting in this activity. Just something really positive and specific to give some kind of feedback. A quick walk-through with a little note or a little email right

afterward just to keep that going, I think, this will really enhance the co-teaching program here.

I think because of the consistency of our checking in with one another was effective. And it's really simple. One of the things I took from this is just keep it real positive and because it's not evaluative, this is just feedback and I feel like it is being implemented. And again, some of the things that they were already doing is reinforced it's more intentional now.

In addition to the walk-throughs and feedback supports, Kayla also intends to create an IEP binder for all general education teachers who are co-teaching. The IEP binder was a support she created for Ellie in response to Ellie's request for information on IEPs. The IEP is information on students' IEPs and supports that general education teachers can use to better support students with disabilities in the co-taught classroom. The IEP binder was well received by Ellie as a positive support provided by Kayla as a result of the feedback sessions. According to Kayla, as a result of the feedback sessions,

It raised my awareness of what the general education teachers even know about special education. Now keep in mind, I'm the 4th person this position in four years, and I will be back next year, for some consistency. I think if I hadn't had the feedback conversation with the general ed teacher in this forum where I felt it was very safe and she really let me know where she felt like this co-teaching program needed some support, I never would have known. This experience allowed me to get that real direct feedback. To the point where she wasn't sure what students' eligibility were, or even how to get that information. She implemented the feedback from the IEP binder I gave to her into the next lesson.

That's Why we are Here: Supporting Students. Both dyads established a strong commitment to inclusion and co-teaching. The co-teachers have demonstrated robust co-teaching practices such as ensuring they work in parity, respecting their partners, and supporting all students by working with them seamlessly during instruction. However, data collected indicated that despite this, the co-teachers not articulate purposeful planning to support the specific needs of students with IEPs.

Throughout this process, Ellie was very expressive about not having access to the students' IEPs and not knowing their goals, modifications, and accommodations. Like many high schools, at Woods High School, Jacob is not necessarily the Case Manager for the students in the classes in which he co-teaches. Based on the large numbers of students receiving special education services, many high schools use case managers to write and manage student IEPs while the special education teachers support the students in the classroom. Jacob shared that he is the case manager for several students, and he may or may not support them throughout the day in co-taught classes, it depends on the schedule. In light of this, he explained that it is not their practice to have the case manager share the students' IEP information with the general education teachers who serve students with IEPs. In these cases, the special education teacher has access to the students' IEPs and supports in their PowerSchool system, and it is the responsibility of the general education teacher to read the students' goals on their own. He concluded by stating it has never been their practice to go over students' IEP goals or planned supports with the co-teachers; this is the responsibility lies with the general education teacher. Basic information with respect to student goals is available in the school's PowerSchool system.

However, according to Ellie, she has looked for IEP information to better support students, and it was not available in PowerSchool. Thus, she stated, "I don't feel like I can fully

support all students if I'm going in unaware of their needs." Furthermore, she stated that she has asked for supports to understand not only IEPs and how to provide modifications, but also supports how to understand IEPs in general.

Although she and Jacob utilized differentiation and UDL lessons, she stated that they tend to "treat all students like they have IEPs." This could mean they are not focusing on the specific diverse needs of the students with IEPs. Although UDL supports intend to reach all students, if the general education teacher is unaware of the students' IEP goals, she cannot purposefully plan lessons to support their needs. Ann and Rachel expressed the same practice when they shared they grouped students for the test review, but they were unable to express how they grouped them or which of them would work with the specific groups. In not being able to articulate this, are the students' with IEPs having their unique needs met?

After receiving feedback from Kayla on co-teaching and collaboration practices, Ellie shared the following statement in her final interview.

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: We are making sure that we communicate more consistently on our IEP kids individually because sometimes Jacob and I tend to treat everybody like they're IEP kids. But we've sat down and looking specifically at our designated kids and make sure that we're serving them. So I think the feedback has helped with that.

Discussed earlier in this thesis are the social benefits of including students with disabilities with their same-aged peers in the co-taught classroom. Co-taught and inclusive practices help to reduce the stigma that some students with disabilities feel when they are pulled out for support or when a special education teacher supports only them in the general education classroom. However, we cannot overlook that students with disabilities are in the co-taught classroom to

address their individual needs. Providing access to UDL supports to the entire class is an effective strategy and may be appropriate to support students with disabilities, yet, the co-teachers must ensure that the UDL supports they are providing are appropriate to meet the needs of the students they serve. Moreover, the co-teachers must be aware of and provide specific supports that target the students' individual needs. Ellie also stated that after the walk-throughs and having feedback on how they were providing supports, she felt she had a better understanding of how to support students with disabilities. "I think the overall idea of making sure that you present modifications or possible modifications to students if they want to take them. And I think even just being part of this study made me want to be a better teacher to my special education students as well." Ellie.

To Plan or Not to Plan: Planning and Collaborating. All of the teachers had common plan time, which they stated was a support they felt their administrators provide to them. However, when asked about specific planning practices, it was unclear how planning time was utilized. Ann stated, "So even if we're not sitting down doing it together, we're always talking to each other." She also shared that she and Rachel collaborate via text messages and throughout the day by continually checking in with each other. She also shared that they meet after school when the day was behind them to discuss the lesson since their common plan was first thing in the morning before they co-taught together. When it came to planning, this dyad made it clear that they do whatever they have to do to plan. With this being said, it remained unclear just how often and how many days they used their common plan time. Rachel shared that she co-teachers with three other teachers, but due to the expectations of her job and the lack of common plan time with the other co-teachers, she only truly co-teachers in the math class with Ann. In the other classes, she is more of an assistant.

Jacob has taught at Woods High School his whole teaching career. He said that he doesn't have a way to compare co-teaching the collaborative planning process to anything else, which provides an interesting take on how he views this process since this relationship is all he knows. He did share that since he has been with Ellie for five years, they do have a genuine co-teaching relationship and that he co-teaches with other teachers where he is more of a helper due to lack of plan time. Jacob's co-teaching classes can change each year because of the nature of high school schedules. The needs of each department and students dictate where special education teachers are needed, and sometimes they are placed in co-taught general education classes for only a year. Unfortunately, this does not allow time to develop lasting relationships or to learn content. This, combined with limited plan time, makes co-teaching a challenge.

Despite this, Jacob shared that he felt valued in all of his co-teaching settings, just as he does with Ellie. He attributed this having to do with his personality; he feels he can assimilate to different situations, and he gets along with everyone. He also stated that, for example, in one co-taught class this year, he discussed his role with his co-teacher, and since the content teacher really is a specialist in the content, it only makes sense that the classroom teacher takes the lead in instruction. Since he does not have time to plan with all of his co-teachers, he does the best he can in understanding the content. He uses his other strengths, like in technology, when in classes where he does not know the content very well. Jacob shared that as long as he discusses his roles ahead of time with his co-teachers, he is ok with taking the back seat as a helper, and he feels 100% valued. It is when, as a co-teacher, they do not make this decision together that he thinks trouble can start. Thus, in all of his classes, he feels valued, and he doesn't feel treated like a helper.

When asked how often the dyads used their common plan time, no dyad provided a clear answer. In fact, both dyads explained they did much of the planning "on the fly." When seeking to understand how they actually used their common plan time, they all said they used the time, but again, there was no clear answer on how many days a week or for how many minutes a week they used of their common plan. When asked about common plan time for co-teachers, both administrators shared that they are required to provide plan time for teachers, and they work extremely hard to schedule common plan time for co-teachers; however, co-teachers are not required to meet during this time in accordance with the Union rules. The administrators cannot require the co-teachers to meet during their common plan time; they only provide the common plan time to them.

Moving forward, all of the teachers except Jacob identified they want more common plan time as a support they need from their administrators. Ann stated she was satisfied with the amount of common plan time, but of course, she could always use more. While her partner, Rachel, indicated that she could use more since she needed to collaborate with many people in the school, such as speech teachers and other related services. Ellie shared that she felt that she and Jacob would benefit from more plan time to discuss student data and review their needs. They could also use the additional time to provide feedback to students, not necessarily to plan.

For data collection for this study, co-teachers were asked to submit weekly lesson plans and any co-planning documents they used. They were asked weekly to submit any planning documents they used during the study. No teachers submitted any documents. However, when asked about lesson planning, all of the teachers said that they write lesson plans together. The 8th-grade team provided a link for me to access their class website as their "lesson plan" that had what appeared to be an agenda for the week for students and parents to view. The web page also

had the class expectations and homework for the week. Ann used this website for all of her classes, not just their co-taught class. Both Ann and Rachel worked on this, but they stated not always together, Ann would start it, and Rachel would do the homework. Ellie and Jacob, the high school team, did not provide any planning documents. Both administrators made it very clear that Union rules stated that] teachers are not required to submit lesson plans. Therefore, they could not even ask the co-teachers for their lesson plans, even for this study.

In discussing common plan time with Olivia, she stated that the teachers in her school each have three plan periods a day, and the co-teachers each have two common plan times. Thus, Ann and Rachel each have two common plan times each day to collaborate. She shared that if teachers felt they needed more plan time for specific reasons such as to plan a unit, she would never say no, and would arrange for coverage of their classroom. Having said this, she shared that if she did provide additional plan time, then she did expect to hold the teachers accountable for what they planned during that time. Holding the teachers accountable for planning is an exception to what she can do during their daily plan time when she cannot require them to meet or submit lesson plans.

V. DISCUSSION

The co-teaching dyads in this study were highly effective and well-functioning teams. How the dyads performed together was illustrated with the data analysis that was triangulated across interviews, walk-through observations, and co-teacher feedback sessions with their administrators. Throughout this study, the administrators were provided professional development on co-teaching and inclusive practices and provided feedback to the dyads, which the dyads implemented in their co-teaching practice. Each administrator chose different feedback to provide to their dyads based on the needs of the co-teachers they worked with in the study. Olivia focused her feedback on teacher expertise, and Kayla focused her feedback on UDL planning and IEP supports for the general education teacher. Although both administrators were at different sites, in schools with different grade levels, and provided different feedback to their respective co-teachers, they reported similar outcomes in their ability to successfully support co-teachers after receiving professional development on co-teaching and inclusive practices.

Data from this study showed that professional development had a positive impact on both administrators' knowledge, skills, and perceptions on co-teaching practices and improved their ability to support the co-teaching dyads in their respective schools. The administrators shared that after the professional development, they had a better understanding of co-teaching and inclusive practice. Their ability to provide feedback to the co-teachers in tandem after conducting walk-through observations was enhanced. The administrators believed the feedback they provided to the co-teachers improved the dyads' abilities to support their students by using each of their expertise in the classroom as well as becoming more efficient in using teaching strategies such as the UDL framework to support students.

The Language of Teaching: How Co-Teacher Dyads Talk About their Practice

One area that administrators should be aware of when supporting co-teachers is how the dyads plan for the co-taught classroom and the language the co-teachers use when describing how they support students. Throughout this study, data were triangulated from teacher interviews, walk-throughs, and feedback sessions to gain an understanding of the co-teachers' planning and collaboration process. Also, after each walk-through, the administrators and I discussed the data collection form with each other to ensure that we agreed on our ratings. Discussing the data collection form with each other added to the validity of the data collection. However, as stated in the Results section, no dyad submitted lesson plans or planning agendas; as such, no data was analyzed on lesson plans or collaboration. Having no lesson plans to review and analyze was in itself considered part of data collection, as "all is data" according to Glaser (1998, p. 8). One reason the dyads may not have submitted lesson plans, as explained earlier, is that according to each schools' Teachers' Union, teachers are not required to submit lesson plans. In addition, administrators are required to provide plan time to teachers, and although both administrators worked to provide common plan time for the co-teachers, Union policy does not dictate how the co-teachers are required to use the common plan time that is provided to them. Nevertheless, as I analyzed the data from the sources I collected and began to build theory, the lack of concrete lesson plans by the co-teachers presents a noteworthy point of discussion.

To understand this phenomenon and discover how administrators can support co-teachers in lesson planning and collaboration, I explored Domain 1: *Collaborating on the Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F). I looked at how the co-teachers collaborated to plan for instruction. Part of the evidence that I expected to analyze for this domain was lesson plans. However, when no dyad submitted lesson plans despite

being asked each week, I began to look at their instruction. During the lessons, it appeared that both dyads were supporting all the students. It also looked like both teams were providing appropriate modifications and accommodations to all students. Still, there was no evidence that planning occurred to make this happen. During the interviews, the co-teachers explained that their planning came naturally. The topic of lesson planning did not come up in either school sites' feedback session with the administrators due to Teacher Union policy. Kayla explained she was not comfortable asking for their lesson plans. She stated she would ask general planning questions, but she would not ask to see their lesson plans as this could be a Union issue. As a new administrator, she did not want to cross any lines.

I understood that a barrier to the co-teachers submitting lesson plans might have been due to their Union policies, however, through the data analysis and my memos the co-teachers' instruction had been shown to be seamless, the co-teachers also self-described their co-teaching practice, as "natural," "seamless," "same," and "equal." However, when the co-teachers were challenged to explain details of how they specifically planned their lessons and collaborated, neither dyad was able to provide specifics on how they supported students with disabilities nor why they chose specific instructional strategies. Both dyads continued to state that during instruction, they supported all students with seamless instruction between the general education teacher and the special teacher. Even though data from the administrator walk-throughs on the *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) supported this assertion that their instruction was seamless, and both teachers shared instructional delivery no data was collected on planning or collaboration. Being seamless during instruction is not a way to describe how students are being supported and what instructional strategies are being used to support the students. Administrators should consider

that it is not enough to assume that the co-teachers are effectively planning and collaborating when supporting students; evidence must be shown.

I began to connect with my experience as an instructor in higher education, specifically my background supporting preservice teachers in their student teaching classroom placements. I considered the language that the co-teaching dyads used to describe their planning and collaboration process, specifically how they supported students with disabilities, as compared to the expectations I have for my preservice teachers. As an instructor in a higher education teacher preparation program, I instruct preservice teachers in what I call, the *Language of Teaching*. I explain the *Language of Teaching* as; the descriptive academic language we use to articulate how we support students with research-based strategies and why we choose specific instructional decisions to support students. Essentially, it is the how and why of teaching. It is especially crucial for teachers, and perhaps even more essential for co-teachers who serve students with disabilities, to be able to explain how they are meeting the specific needs of students and why they chose the instructional strategies they did in order to meet the students' needs. In these days of accountability, it is not enough to state that the lesson came together naturally, or they just collaborated naturally; teachers must be able to explain and support their instructional decisions. Despite not being required to submit lesson plans, co-teachers should be able to explain the how and why of their instructional choices. Administrators should consider that an outcome of this study was that after receiving feedback on co-teaching and collaboration practices from their administrators, it appears the administrators were able to impact the dyads' ability to improve their *Language of Teaching*.

During the walk-throughs, Ellie and Jacob were observed providing UDL supports for students during their co-taught instruction. For example, when teaching Romeo and Juliet, they

provided UDL supports, such as offering lines and page numbers to all the students in case they needed to locate any information in the text. They also embedded video links into their materials to support all students. Kayla brought up this instructional strategy in their first feedback session and gave a name to the strategy, explaining that she also had a refresher course on the UDL framework with me during one of our debriefing sessions. Ellie was happy to learn a name to attach to the strategy as she did not know their instructional practice was a research-based method prior to this feedback session with Kayla. When asked if this was something they often did with the students, Jacob explained, "It might be something that not everyone needs, but it's there just in case anyone does need it." When asked why they chose these particular instructional choices and how these supports benefited students with IEPs, Ellie shared this is how they typically teach, using these instructional strategies. Concerning this teaching method, Jacob shared this thought process for the UDL framework.

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: [It is a] natural combination of teaching experiences. Ellie is also a reading specialist, and we very easily defer to one another for what we think is best. We both have different learning styles too. If I were doing this, I would want this, then if she were doing it, she would want this. It's just really been a culmination of our learning styles, the learning styles we've observed in the students that we teach. And then the mixture of our diverse teaching backgrounds coming together to create those things.

However, after receiving feedback from Kayla, concerning planning for instruction and deciding what instructional strategies to use for students, Ellie shared, "I think actually the feedback has enabled us to communicate more." She also stated, "The feedback wasn't necessarily you should do this, you should do this, but have you thought about, or what was your reason to do this?" By

considering the reason behind their instructional decisions' teachers can better articulate the why and the how of supporting students.

Observations also showed Ann and Rachel supporting all the students during their co-teaching instruction. During one observation, Ann and Rachel placed their students into heterogeneous groups for testing review. During their first feedback session with Olivia, they discussed this lesson. The dyad shared that although they purposely divided the students into groups, when Olivia asked how they chose which one of them would take each group for instruction, they could not explain their decision. The following conversation occurred during the first feedback session between Oliva, Ann, and Rachel.

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: There was a group that didn't understand compound and simple interest at all. There was a group that sort of understood it and maybe had one or two small mistakes. We figured they could help each other. There was a group that clearly understood it. I don't know how we decided who took which group. We were just like, which group do you want to take?

Rachel, Special Education Teacher: I don't know that it was strategic of who took each group.

Olivia, Principal River School: I wrote a question. Could this be an opportunity for the resource teacher, Rachel in this case, to share strategies or to tag team in and out, in terms of understanding that you each bring different expertise to the table. You [Ann] have the math expertise, you [Rachel] have all of these special education-like strategies and things in your toolbox. I think you both have clearly been sharing them really well. But at what point does this happen, or could this happen in the planning process? Thinking about kids that don't understand it, because the kids were clearly not getting it. It was frustrating for

them. You [Ann] actually explained it three separate ways, and they were still like, "We don't know what you're talking about." That brought me back to thinking about what your goal could be in your co-planning and looking at next week's co-teaching. Are there ways that you can build in some of those supports, using your expertise, either ahead of time or tag team appropriately?

After receiving feedback from Olivia, and discussing the power of using her and Rachel's expertise while instructing, Ann was able to share a more descriptive explanation of their roles during a lesson utilizing the expertise they both have.

Ann, General Education Teacher, River School: I think just being more thoughtful about who's explaining what, just like for instance, we were doing this one problem where we were putting numbers in order, then we were doing it again when we were looking at negative exponents, and Rachel pulled in, zero wasn't one of the choices in the number line. Rachel stepped in and said, "Let me step in here. Let's put zero here on the line so we can visualize this more." I think just being more aware of our expertise has helped a lot.

Both sets of co-teachers showed growth in using their *Language of Teaching* after receiving feedback from their administrators. The co-teachers were able to articulate the instructional decisions they made by being more transparent in their methods and cognizant in their instructional activities. They also demonstrated a stronger use of descriptive academic language to explain their instructional decisions during their co-taught lessons when supporting students with disabilities. Rachel shared, "I'm more cognizant of making sure that I say things in a different way or picking up on when students are confused and need extra support. Because it's okay that we have different focuses and one's a special ed teacher, and one is a math teacher."

The growth co-teachers showed in their use of their *Language of Teaching* is an essential implication from administrators receiving professional development on co-teaching and collaborative practices and the impact it had on their ability to support co-teachers' practices.

Supports or Supportive: What are we Asking Administrators to Do?

Building on this, throughout the literature, co-teachers state they need supports from their administrators, such as common plan time and professional development opportunities to be successful in co-teaching and inclusive practices. The purpose of this study was to understand the impact professional development had on administrators' ability to support co-teachers. Evidence has been presented that the administrators' ability to support co-teachers was impacted positively, that their ability to provide purposeful and focused feedback on co-teaching practices improved. Findings showed there have been administrator and co-teacher outcomes from the professional development the administrators were given. Olivia stated that even though she felt Ann and Rachel, "didn't have a ton of things that they really needed to work on. We talked about this idea of co-planning and getting deeper into the co-planning, and I think it seems like when we had the conversation about tapping into expertise, it seems like that struck something for them." Her assumption was correct because, in her final interview, Ann stated, "a piece of really helpful feedback was, defining our roles and thinking about what each one of us brings to the table, our expertise." This illustrated that Olivia was able to provide the dyad with feedback that supported their co-teaching practice, and the co-teachers were able to implement her feedback.

Co-Teaching dyads also indicated they are feeling more confident in their co-teaching practice due to being validated by hearing their administrators' feedback. The dyads also demonstrated improved use of their *Language of Teaching* when discussing their instructional practices. Another outcome for both Kayla and the co-teaching dyads she supported was in their

ability to support students by using purposeful instruction. Kayla listened to the needs that Ellie expressed in wanting to have access to students' IEP information so she could better support the students. In light of this open conversation during a feedback session, Kayla created an IEP Binder for Ellie that contained student IEP information that would be helping in supporting students. This allowed Ellie to provide specific supports to the students to meet their individual needs. Jacob shared,

Jacob, Special Education Teacher, Woods High School: We've got about 25 kids broken up into five different groups doing six different projects. We need a rubric that'll meet all of those kids' needs. Lesson planning might not be all about what you're going to do, but how are you going to evaluate. How are you going to allow these kids the freedom to learn in a way that they want to? Then, it is backed up by the fact that Kayla's in there giving positive feedback about it. Also, she gave us the IEP Binders saying, "Hey, here are all the various needs of all these students." Make sure that everything is... she never said make sure it's accommodated. I don't want to say that cause that's evaluative in nature. But you just have all these ways to continue to make sure you're doing exactly what you're supposed to do. We have all these supports that we need to help the students.

When it comes to providing additional supports to the team, Kayla shared,

Kayla, Director of Special Education, Woods High School: I'll be interested to see from a gen ed perspective, what's missing or what would be helpful for the gen ed teacher to better understand the students. I was really grateful for her [Ellie's] candor. You know, and really what she's doing is advocating for all the students, especially the students with disabilities and advocating for the gen ed teachers who really need that support. And,

really identifying what that support looks like. It's information, it's connection, it's communication.

At the start of the study, the teachers indicated they felt comfortable receiving feedback from the participating administrator. Keeping in mind that at River School, Rachel does not typically receive feedback from Olivia and at Woods High School, Ellie does not receive feedback from Olivia. Despite this, they both indicated they trusted the feedback from these administrators based on their background in co-teaching. Furthermore, all of the co-teachers mentioned that the administrators had an open-door policy, and they felt that although they had no current issues with co-teaching, if they did, they would feel comfortable speaking to the administrators for help.

In their final interview, each teacher was asked several questions to understand any changes they felt the administrator feedback had on their co-teaching practice. When each teacher was asked what supports they felt they needed to continue from the administrator in order for them to be successful in co-teaching and inclusive practices, they each stated common plan time. No teacher indicated walk-throughs or feedback as a necessary support from their administrators.

When exploring this further to understand why the teachers may not have indicated they needed feedback as a support, they stated that they did not consider the walk-throughs or feedback as a support. In addition, the conundrum of administrator evaluations resurfaced. Rachel stated that since Olivia was not her evaluator, it was not a necessary support she felt she needed since she never received feedback from Olivia before and would not again. She said it would be nice if it could happen, but she wasn't sure it was a possibility. This brings back up the issue of evaluations and co-teachers being observed separately and receiving separate feedback.

If administrators are to value co-teaching in their school and to support co-teachers to improve their practice, they must create a way to observe co-teachers together and provide formative feedback to the dyads that is outside of their scheduled evaluation schedule. This was a critical finding from this study that co-teachers benefit from non-evaluative observation and from receiving feedback in tandem.

Concerning the feedback support, Ellie was directly asked if moving forward she thought the feedback should continue as a support. Her mouth popped open in shock, and she stated, "I thought that was just for your data collection!" This opened the door for a conversation that was helpful to understand what teachers felt were supports. She loved having the time with Kayla to get to know her and she felt she learned a lot and was able to get some of her needs met. In addition, Ellie is advocating for some procedure to evaluative the co-teaching process. She stated that the current evaluation process used in the school, the Charlotte Danielson Framework, does not address co-teaching. Dieker (2001) supported a need to develop a co-teaching evaluation plan to support co-teachers' practice. Dieker stated that an evaluation plan is a good way for co-teachers to check in with each other on their process and to see if they wanted to continue working together.

In light of having no formal evaluation plan and not considering the feedback as a support, Ellie did feel that she would like the feedback and walk-throughs to continue as she thought they were valuable, especially when she was now viewing the feedback sessions through the lens of a support and not as data collection for the research study. She also stated that she would want the administrator who provided feedback to her experience in co-teaching. Meaning, that she wanted to ensure that if a Division Leader were to conduct a walk-through for the

purpose of providing feedback on co-teaching practices, she would want to know that they had co-teaching experience. She shared her feelings with this statement,

Ellie, General Education Teacher, Woods High School: My division leader, I value her feedback as a classroom instructor because she's taught before, various levels of courses. I have no problem taking feedback from her. But if somebody were just to come in to give feedback that has never co-taught? I would prefer somebody that has experience.

Her co-teaching partner, Jacob, was more transparent on the subject of administrator walk-throughs. Although he also did not see the feedback necessarily as a support, he felt that teachers should have nothing to hide and should be open to having administrators come to observe their classes at any time. He was also open to receiving feedback because it “couldn’t hurt; it can only improve our teaching.”

Considering that none of the teachers stated they benefited from the feedback or listed it as a needed support, is feedback a support? Support is defined as something that one provides to someone (Collins Dictionary, 2020). It can also be broken down into the multiple meanings of the word with these examples; “You can support someone and their ideas” or “If a fact supports a statement or a theory.” (Collins Dictionary, 2020). In the case of providing common plan time or providing professional development opportunities, would be relevant examples of administrators providing supports. I asked myself, is feedback providing something to the teachers? I circled back to what Jacob (2016) shared, that supports can be professional coaches, time to plan, classroom observations, and providing targeted feedback on an area of focus. So yes, providing feedback is a support. However, I was not satisfied with this summation as it was not a clear deduction for me that feedback is, in fact, a support. I can see how the teachers in the study felt this way too, that feedback was not a support, but rather something that just happened.

I can also see that the teachers felt it wasn't a support since it was something new to them that they had not experienced before. I turned to the definition of supportive, a derivative of support. The definition of supportive is "feeling or showing care and compassion for other people" (Collins Dictionary, 2020). Can supportive be considered an act of doing something, an act of providing something with care in mind? Is this what co-teachers are asking from their administrators, for them to be supportive? Are they asking for administrators to care and feel compassion toward them?

Case in point, the co-teachers identified that the feedback validated the positive aspects of their co-teaching practice, they reported being energized by this, they were encouraged to work harder and to support students more effectively. They also stated they felt more confident about their co-teaching abilities. Nevertheless, they still did not indicate that feedback was a support or that they benefited from the feedback. The data from the administrators and co-teachers' interviews would indicate otherwise, that all of the participants benefited from the feedback. Did they like the feeling of being cared for by their administrator? The co-teachers stated they felt their practice did not change, but rather, they felt good about themselves. The administrators did indicate a change in the co-teachers' practice, which evidence the data analysis showed. Administrators should consider that in addition to the feedback supporting and validating the co-teachers' practice, it also could support co-teacher job satisfaction when they feel good about the job they are doing with their co-teaching partner. Positive feedback and job satisfaction connects back to what Conoley and Conoley (2010) expressed with respect to importance of happiness when working with a partner and building strong collaborative relationships, which can lead to greater success in the workplace.

The Past is Now: Special Education Teachers' Roles in Co-Teaching

Experience and knowledge with co-teaching and inclusive practices influence how teachers view and understand their current co-teaching practice. For Olivia, her experience co-teaching as a general education teacher led her to understand the supports she provides to co-teachers. During her time in the general education class before she co-taught, she viewed the special education teacher as a helper. However, when she started to co-teach, she saw the value of the special education teacher. She shared, “Co-Teaching really came clear to me that - no, we're all in this together, and it's so much better for kids. When you have shared planning, share responsibilities, it all comes down to the shared philosophy.” This belief in co-teaching and inclusion helps her to support the co-teaching process in her building. Building on this, Ellie shared, “I feel like we are constantly taking each other's input. I really do feel it's 100% team. I've worked with other Special Ed Teachers, where that was not the case. I felt like sometimes it was actually seemed like more work for me to work with them.”

Rachel shared that in the past, one general education teacher in particular that she worked with was very comfortable with the curriculum and structured in her instruction. Her former co-teacher had already created all of the materials and was okay with Rachel modifying when needed. Since she did not know the curriculum, in this situation, she took on the role of a helper. Like, Jacob stated previously, she also shared that this is just how things worked out, and there was no animosity between her and this teacher.

Currently, she co-teaches with three other teachers in addition to Ann, but she only truly co-teaches with Ann. In the other classes, she acts more like a helper as she did in her class last year. She shared that she loves teaching and is very happy at the school, but she is more satisfied

in her co-teaching role and relationship with Ann than she is in the other settings where she takes on the role of a helper.

Rachel, Special Education Teacher, River School: I really like working with other teachers, and I definitely think that I appreciate knowing what's happening in advance so I can go in there and really support, not only support my students, but be able to support all students. Whereas when I go into the classroom, and the plans change, or I don't really know what's happening, it's more on the fly. I'm perfectly fine modifying things for my students on the fly. But I don't feel like I can fully support all students if I'm going and not knowing. But when I'm able to like fully collaborate, I really like it. I'd much rather be seen as a teacher for all students rather than just a teacher that's there to support.

An interesting finding of this study was that when directly asked if she felt she could take some of what she learned from the feedback sessions with Olivia to her other co-taught classes, such as using her expertise, she replied that she did not think that would work. Her reason is that since the expectation is that she does not co-teach in those classes and she is more of a helper, she does not see a way to utilize her expertise in any other relationship than the one she has with Ann.

When looking at the *Collaborating on the Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) no evidence was collected that either co-teacher dyad had clarity in their roles. The dyads also stated this throughout their interviews that when working with their current partners they never defend roles or responsibilities, that everything happened naturally. While that may be the case with their current pairings, both Jacob and Rachel stated that this is the only co-teaching partnership where they teach in parity. Rachel made it clear that the other co-taught classes she teaches in, she is in the role of an assistant, this is due to expectations, but also, at no point did she sit down and set forth her roles and

responsibilities with her other partners. Perhaps this would help her have less of an assistant role in those classrooms. As Jacob stated, he did set his roles and responsibilities with his other co-teachers, and it was decided that he would be more of a “back seat driver,” and because this expectation was set, he was fine with his role in the classroom.

Today for Us, Tomorrow for You: Co-Teachers’ Needs

The supports the administrators provided to the co-teachers as a part of this study demonstrated to be effective and improved the co-teachers practice.

Overall, all of the teachers are very satisfied with their co-teaching partners and the current supports they are receiving from their administrators. They listed the current supports as a common plan time and the administrators as having an open door if they ever needed anything. None of the teachers had concerns about co-teaching; however, some minor needs did surface. As stated throughout the literature, common plan time has been reported as an ongoing barrier for effective co-teaching. Although all of the teachers in this study stated they are satisfied with the amount of common plan time they are receiving, they all said they would like to have more. One reason they stated they want more common plan time is to focus more on student needs, such as providing students’ feedback. Another reason is that at times the special education teacher is pulled away from the common plan time due to their job multiple responsibilities. Rachel felt that she needed not just a common plan time, but a dedicated plan time. She explained that a dedicated plan time would be 100% dedicated to planning, during which this time she could not be pulled away for any circumstances. For example, if a student needed support during the dedicated plan time, another special education teacher would cover her. Also, during this dedicated plan time, no meetings IEP or parent meetings could occur. She felt this would also make collaboration more effective.

Teachers also shared that they value the feedback from their administrators because they both had experience with the co-teaching practice. They respected the insight they gave to them and felt they were invested in their practice. They also appreciated that their administrators participated in professional development on co-teaching practices in order to support them better. However, moving forward, if feedback continues, it should be from someone who also has experience in co-teaching or who has participated in professional development on the practice.

Teachers also expressed they would like professional development on co-teaching and special education strategies and supports. They would like opportunities to learn how to support the students better. The sentiment here was that they did not learn to co-teach or collaborate in school, and although they were doing well with the practice, it is always beneficial to learn more to take things to the next level. Ellie also expressed the need to have professional development in understanding IEPs and learning modifications and accommodations to better support all students.

Limitations

One limitation of this study arises from the difficulty of being able to generalize the findings to other settings. Creswell (2014) explains, “generalization occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases.” (p. 203). One reason findings might not be able to be generalized is due to the small sample size of the participants. A total of six educators ($n=6$) participated in this study. Two administrators ($n=2$) from two different school settings participated in this study; one administrator from an elementary school and one administrator from a high school. Along with the administrators, one co-teaching dyad ($n=2$) participated at each of the school settings alongside their administrator,

for a total of four individual ($n=4$) teachers. Due to the small sample size of participants, it was not possible to study additional cases to generalize the findings of this study.

Findings might also not be able to be generalized is because of the use of purposeful sampling to recruit the participants. Purposeful sampling was used to better inform me of the central phenomenon of study and to better answer the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). However, when choosing participants that may limit their views and perceptions, Creswell (2014) shares that this can impact the possibility of generalizing the findings or the external validity of the study, by drawing “incorrect conclusions” from the small sample size (p. 176). Creswell further explains, “Because of the narrow characteristics of participants in the experiment, the researcher cannot generalize to individuals who do not have the characteristics of participants” (p. 176). It is important to note that although the study took place in different school districts, an elementary and high school, the grade levels were only one year apart. The elementary setting was an 8th-grade math classroom, and the high school setting was a Freshman English classroom. However, it is essential to remember that both classrooms were taught by highly effective co-teacher dyads. Noting that highly effective co-teaching dyads taught the classrooms is important when seeking to understanding the impact the setting may have on generalizing the findings of this study due to the narrow scope of the classroom settings.

A final reason generalizing the findings of this study to other settings that might be difficult are because of the grounded theory methods in which theory was constructed by the researcher. Although rigorous grounded theory methods were used, such as triangulating data sources and employing member checks for emergent themes, it is essential to acknowledge that researcher bias still may exist. As shared earlier, when building a theory, it is an interpretation of

the research, and “The theory depends on the researchers’ view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it.” (Charmaz 2014, p. 239).

Another limitation of this study was due to challenges with participant recruitment. Challenges with participant recruitment were attributed to administrators’ not responding to the recruitment email, schools not practicing co-teaching, and to teachers’ attitudes around co-teaching. Recruitment emails were sent to twenty-five principals and assistant principals that may have supervised co-teachers in schools that housed grades 6th, 7th, and 8th. Using purposeful sampling techniques to target administrators who met the criteria, all the names of administrators were obtained either from personal contacts or contacts from former colleagues who knew administrators who may be willing to participate and who fit the study criteria. Sixteen ($n=16$) of the initial emails or the follow-up emails had no response from any administrator. Eight ($n=8$) administrators stated either they were too busy or there was no co-teaching in their school. Out of this first round of recruitment emails, one administrator ($n=1$) responded they were willing to participate.

The one administrator who responded they were willing to participate had two teams interested and willing to also participate in the study. Unfortunately, for personal reasons, one participant dropped out before the study started. To try to gain another participating dyad, I asked the participating 8th-grade special education teacher if she would be willing to participate with a second co-teacher for the study. However, she was not willing to do this for several reasons. Reasons included her relationship with the other co-teachers and the co-teaching approaches used in those classrooms. She also felt it would be an additional time commitment. Despite all efforts, no replacement co-teaching team was found due to maternity leaves at the school site.

To try to recruit additional participants and to widen the depth for a more robust case study, I revised my IRB to include elementary schools that housed 5th-grade classrooms. In the second round of recruiting, eight ($n=8$) recruitment emails were sent administrators who may be willing to participate in this study. I also reached out to three ($n=3$) more secondary administrators given to me through personal contacts, for a total of eleven ($n=11$) total recruitment emails sent. Out of this second round of recruitment emails seven ($n=7$) administrators did not respond to the initial or the follow-up email and two ($n=2$) of the administrators stated co-teaching was not occurring in their schools, and one ($n=1$) administrator responded they were too busy to participate in this research study. One ($n=1$) Director of Special Education responded she was interested and had one co-teaching team willing to participate.

In trying to understand the low response rate of the administrators, both participating administrators stated that they felt the lack of response from administrators was not due to my study topic nor to my study design. They both indicated as administrators, they receive hundreds of emails each day and that replying to an outside email is the last task on their list to do each day. Oliva from River School also stated that she receives numerous requests to complete surveys and to participate in research studies, and it is impossible to do everything. She was interested in my research study because it was similar to her dissertation on team teaching. Kayla, the administrator from Woods High School, was interested because it was her first year as the Director of Special Education at the school, and one of the school improvement plan goals was to look at their co-teaching models. Understanding the workload of administrators needs to be considered when recruiting and designing a study.

Also, trying to recruit potential co-teachers also proved to be a limitation. I again used purposeful sampling techniques to target co-teachers that met the study criteria. One potential

5th-grade general education teacher stated they would not participate because they did not want to write lesson plans, which was identified as part of my data collection procedures. While a general education middle school math teacher stated they were happy with the one teach, one assist approach they had settled into with the special education teacher in their room. Whereas a middle school special education teacher stated, they did not want to participate because their co-teaching partner was “buddies” with their administrator and they felt uncomfortable to have to speak about their partnership even confidentiality. A final potential special education teacher was a first-year high school teacher and, while aware that the walk-throughs were non-evaluative, was afraid to have their administrator in the room.

A strength of this study was also a limitation. As summarized in the Discussion section, the strength of this study lies in the walk-throughs being non-evaluative for the co-teachers and the administrators providing positive targeted feedback to the co-teaching dyads. Conversely, this strength is also a limitation. Throughout the IRB process, concerns were raised regarding the data collection form, *Facilitating Effective Feedback: Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) being evaluative despite the research study stating that the walk-throughs were non-evaluative. I acknowledged this concern. However, I designed the data collection form from an extensive research on existing data collection forms and evaluation forms because no extensive forms existed to support feedback for co-teachers. The data collection forms were designed to meet the needs of this study. It was essential that the administrator feedback not be evaluative in nature, and the participants knew that their teaching would not be evaluated. Drawing on this concept, Jacob (2016) shared that “instead of evaluating teachers for accountability’s sake, effective principals grow teaching practice (p. 20). Despite this, Charmaz (2014) warns, “not to assume that interviews forge direct links to authentic

experiences and immediate disclosure of the research participant's private self." (p. 78). Since interviews were used to understand the co-teachers' perceptions, it is vital to take note that co-teachers may be guarded in their interview responses despite the promise of confidentiality and the non-evaluative nature of the study.

Conclusion and Future Research

This study made progress toward addressing gaps in current research in co-teaching practice, specifically in understanding professional development trainings for administrators and their ability to provide support in providing feedback on co-teaching and inclusive practices to co-teachers. Findings in this study were consistent with previous research on co-teaching.

Co-Teachers identified wanting more time to plan and needing professional development on co-teaching topics to improve their own practice. However, findings from this study also show that professional development trainings for administrators on co-teaching and inclusive practice to improve their ability to be more supportive of co-teachers by providing them feedback. Co-Teachers felt the feedback validated their current practice, and they were encouraged to continue to work hard. Validating co-teachers' practice could increase job satisfaction and benefit co-teachers to want to co-teach in more classes. In addition, co-teachers improved their *Language of Teaching* and were able to better articulate how and why they chose instructional activities to support students in their co-taught classroom. Furthermore, after the co-teachers received feedback from their administrators, the co-teachers utilized their expertise to better support students.

Participating administrators noted they felt more confident in understanding co-teaching practices. They also were able to provide purposeful and focused feedback on co-teaching practice to the dyads, which they felt had an impact on improving the dyads co-teaching practice.

Administrators felt strongly that purposeful and structured walk-through observations should continue and that co-teachers must receive positive feedback that is focused on the dyads strengths to help them continue to grow their co-teaching practice. Both administrators stated that if the focus of feedback is to help co-teachers improve their co-teaching practice, then the feedback must be delivered to them as a team.

Data Collection Form

Co-Teachers in this study did not submit lesson plan documents; thus, *the Facilitating Effective Feedback Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form* (Appendix F) did not measure change or growth in Domain 1: Collaboration. This Domain sought to use lesson plans as evidence as a way to understand co-teachers' collaboration. Throughout the interviews, co-teachers described their collaboration and lesson plan process as coming naturally. One dyad did create an online web page that had the week's lesson and homework that students could access, and they shared responsibility for creating this. However, no team provided a specific process and steps they took to address student needs during lesson planning. Thus, it was not discovered how the co-teachers lesson planned to meet the needs of students.

Future research would need to explore collaboration between co-teachers differently to understand the way co-teachers plan and collaborate. In addition, a measurement tool may also be useful to gain an understanding of the growth teachers make after receiving feedback. Keeping in mind that this is still non-evaluative, but a measurement tool may be useful to understand if the feedback is effective. In her final interview, throughout the study, Olivia shared that of this research was the data collection form; however, she also expressed a need for a measurement tool,

Oliva, Principal, River School: A way to measure, and to know the effectiveness of them implementing the feedback, in addition to using this [data collection] tool. Going back had looking at the same criteria, where maybe they weren't at the collaborating level and seeing if there is growth. I also think there is student evidence, and then there's also teacher evidence to consider in growth.

Drawing on this need to measure growth, future research may include student data to see if administrator feedback for co-teachers improves students' academic outcomes.

Professional Development in Tandem

A strength of co-teaching is in having two teachers plan, deliver instruction, assess students, and manage behavior in parity. If the expectations are for co-teachers to work side-by-side toward a common goal to support students, the findings of this study that observations and feedback should also be given together are critical. Building on the power of two, the nature of co-teacher evaluation should be considered in which the co-teachers are currently observed and receive feedback by different administrators. While it may not be possible to change Teacher Union policy, an area of exploration for future studies would be to look at providing professional development to administrators in tandem. A future study could explore the impact of professional development on a team of administrators that currently provide feedback to a co-teaching dyad separately. A future study could seek to understand if professional development to both administrators would help to provide the co-teachers promote more consistent feedback. Moreover, future studies could explore if professional development on a team of administrators co-teaching provide clear and consistent expectations across co-teachers and throughout the school community.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Initial Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview #1: Initial Interview

Participant ID #:	Duration:
Date:	Location:
Things to SAY before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The purpose of this interview is to understand the impact of professional development on inclusive practices on the supports administrators provide to co-teachers in the inclusion classroom.</i> • <i>Whatever you say here will remain confidential. I will not reveal what was said here with your superiors, colleagues, or teachers, although I will summarize the information to reflect general patterns and themes. You will have a chance to review the themes.</i> • <i>I will record this interview and transcribe the recording verbatim. During the transcription and the study write up, I will use a pseudonym for you and any other names that you mention during the interview.</i> • <i>If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you do not need to answer them.</i> 	
Questions	Detail Probes or Expanders
Background <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What degrees/endorsements have you earned and what is your highest level of education? 2. How many years did you teach before becoming an administrator? 3. What grades/subjects have you taught? 4. How many years have you been an administrator? 5. What grade levels/schools? How many districts/schools? 6. Tell me about your experiences with co-teaching when you taught. 	<p>Middle Formed my approach, pushed my thinking</p> <p>Common philosophy, common plan</p>
Inclusive Practices <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe what inclusion means to you. 2. Tell me about the inclusive practices used in your school. Explain how you feel inclusion impacts students (their learning, academics or social.) 	<p>Give some examples of inclusion practices</p> <p>Can you clarify what you mean by...</p> <p>Give some examples of how student impact.</p>
Co-Teaching <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about a time you observed a successful co-teaching lesson. Walk me through what each teacher was doing, explain to me what the students were doing. The special education students? The general education students? 	<p>What kind of activities occurred?</p> <p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Describe what each teacher was typically doing, the general education teacher, the special education teacher. Explain the roles you saw the teachers take during the lesson. Discuss how you observed the teachers assessing the students and managing classroom behavior How do you think the teachers knew the students were learning? 3. Explain why you feel this was a successful lesson. 4. Share with me any feedback or discussion you had with the co-teachers after the observation. 	<p>Can you expand on...</p> <p>Why do you feel this was a successful lesson?</p>
<p>Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss how you ensure co-teachers have shared planning time. 2. Walk me through any parameters you provide to teachers for shared planning time. 	<p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss professional development opportunities that are offered on co-teaching or inclusion; what topics are addressed in the professional development opportunities. 2. Share with me the process how new general education curriculum that is adopted, how it is shared with co-teaching teams so that both general education and special education teachers receive the information. 	<p>Give some examples...</p>
<p>Supporting Co-Teachers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk me through the steps you take to address any challenges co-teachers bring up either with their relationships or with the co-teaching model. 2. Explain to me ways teachers are able to participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of co-teaching in your school. 3. Explain how you feel about your ability to support co-teaching needs in the inclusive classroom. 4. Discuss supports you think co-teachers need in order to be successful in the inclusive classroom. 5. What ways do you learn and keep informed about inclusive practices? 	<p>Can you expand on...</p> <p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p> <p>Can you provide examples of...</p>
<p>Things to SAY at the END:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would like to add or you think that I did not cover or you would like to share?</i> 	

Appendix B. Mid Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview #2: Mid-Interview

Participant ID #:	Duration:
Date:	Location:
Things to SAY before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The purpose of this interview is to understand the impact of professional development on inclusive practices on the supports administrators provide to co-teachers in the inclusion classroom.</i> <i>Whatever you say here will remain confidential. I will not reveal what was said here with your superiors, colleagues, or teachers, although I will summarize the information to reflect general patterns and themes. You will have a chance to review the themes.</i> <i>I will record this interview and transcribe the recording verbatim. During the transcription and the study write up, I will use a pseudonym for you and any other names that you mention during the interview.</i> <i>If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you do not need to answer them.</i> 	
Questions	Detail Probes or Expanders
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss how confident you feel in your ability to provide feedback on inclusive practices to co-teachers. 2. Discuss how effective you feel the feedback supports are being implemented. 3. Explain to me how you are measuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the feedback that you provided to the co-teachers. 4. Discuss any changes you see in the co-teachers' relationship. Explain how you understand these changes? 5. Describe any changes you have observed in the impact of inclusive practices on the students (academic or social.) Explain the measurements you are using to determine these impacts. 	<p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p> <p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p> <p>Give some</p>
Co-Teachers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe what the co-taught lessons looked like during your walk-throughs. 2. Walk me through what each teacher was doing, the general education teacher, the special education teacher. Explain the roles you saw the teachers take on during the lesson. Discuss how you observed the teachers assessing the students and managing classroom behavior. Discuss how you or the teachers knew the students were learning. 3. Explain to me what the students are doing. The special education students? The general education students? 	<p>What kind of activities occurred?</p> <p>Clarify the roles the co-teachers had during the lessons</p> <p>Expand upon....</p>

4. Explain if you feel this was a successful lesson and why or why not.	
5. How has this changed since the initial walk-through?	
Supports 1. Share with me how you decided what goals to make for the co-teachers? How did you decide these were the best goals? 2. Share how you feel the feedback has supported the co-teachers practice. 3. Discuss what supporting documents you have used and why you chose those documents. 4. How have you used the information for the supporting documents to help provide supports and feedback to the co-teachers?	Expand upon.... Give some examples of what you mean by... Can you clarify what you mean when you said...? Looking at data the form...
Perceptions 1. Can you talk about any changes to your knowledge in your ability to provide feedback to the co-teachers? 2. Discuss any skills you have gained through the professional development that has helped you to support the co-teachers. 3. Discuss if your perception of co-teaching or collaboration has changed as a result of providing feedback to the co-teachers	Can you expand on... Can you clarify what you mean when you said...? Can you provide examples of...
Things to SAY at the END: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is there anything you would like to add or you think that I did not cover or you would like to share?</i> 	

Appendix C. Final Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview #3: Final Interview

Participant ID #:	Duration:	
Date:	Location:	
Things to SAY before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The purpose of this interview is to understand the impact of professional development on inclusive practices on the supports administrators provide to co-teachers in the inclusion classroom.</i> • <i>Whatever you say here will remain confidential. I will not reveal what was said here with your superiors, colleagues, or teachers, although I will summarize the information to reflect general patterns and themes. You will have a chance to review the themes.</i> • <i>I will record this interview and transcribe the recording verbatim. During the transcription and the study write up, I will use a pseudonym for you and any other names that you mention during the interview.</i> • <i>If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you do not need to answer them.</i> 		
Questions		Detail Probes or Expanders
1. Can discuss any changes in your ability to support co-teachers on inclusive practices since the start of the study? What if any, impacted these changes? 2. What aspects of the professional development was helpful? 3. Discuss how effective you feel the co-teachers implemented the feedback that you provided them throughout the study 4. Discuss any changes you have observed in the co-teachers' relationship or in their disposition since the start of this study. 5. Describe any changes you see in the impact of inclusive practices on the students (academic or social) since the start of this study.		Give some examples of what you mean by... Can you clarify what you mean when you said...? Give some examples of how this impact
Co-Teachers 1. Discuss any changes you have observed in the co-teachers' lessons since the initial walk-through. What specific changes did you see in how each teacher supported students or in how they interacted with each other. 2. Discuss any changes in the roles each teacher took on in the classroom.		What kind of activities occurred? Clarify the roles the co-teachers had during the lessons Expand upon....
Supports 1. Share how receptive you feel the co-teachers were to receiving feedback. 2. How effective do you think they were in implementing the feedback throughout the study.		Give some examples of what you mean by... Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Share how you will ensure the co-teachers continue to implement the feedback and goals that you worked on during the study. 4. Share what supports you will provide to the co-teachers moving forward. 5. Discuss how you will provide feedback to the co-teachers moving forward 6. What additional supports do you think the co-teachers still need from you in order to continue to be successful? 7. Share how you will access the necessary supports on you feel you to support co-teachers need moving forward 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss what supports you feel provided the biggest impact to supporting the co-teachers. Why do you feel this way? 2. Share what you feel are the most essential supports needed for successful inclusive practices for teachers and for administrators 3. Discuss how you will determine a long-term plan for the success of the implementation of inclusive practices 	
<p>Things to SAY at the END:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would like to add or you think that I did not cover or you would like to share?</i> 	

Appendix D. Initial Co-Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Co-Teacher Interview #1: Initial Interview

Participant ID #:		Duration:	
Date: 2/11/19		Location:	
Things to SAY before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The purpose of this interview is to understand the impact of professional development on inclusive practices on the supports administrators provide to co-teachers in the inclusive classroom.</i> • <i>Whatever you say here will remain confidential. I will not reveal what was said here with your superiors, although I will summarize the information to reflect general patterns and themes. You will have a chance to review the themes.</i> • <i>I will record this interview and transcribe the recording verbatim. During the transcription and the study write up, I will use a pseudonym for you and any other names that you mention during the interview.</i> • <i>If there are any questions that you do not feel uncomfortable answering, you do not need to answer them.</i> 			
Questions		Detail Probes or Expanders	
Background <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What degrees/endorsements have you earned and what is your highest level of education? 2. How many years have you been teaching? 3. What grades/subjects have you taught? 4. How many districts/schools? 5. How many years have you with co-taught? Can you recall how many co-teaching partners you have had? 			
Inclusive Practices and Beliefs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you discuss how you feel about co-teaching in an inclusion classroom? 2. Explain to me how you feel inclusive practices impact students? 3. Share how you feel inclusion impacts students (academic and social.) Discuss how co-teaching impacts the students (academic and social). Give some examples of how this impact? 4. Explain how you feel about teaching collaboratively? 5. Describe your comfort level on implementing inclusive practices in the inclusion classroom 6. Describe what inclusion means to you. 7. Tell me about the inclusive practices used in your classroom. 		Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?	
Co-Teaching Practices <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about a really successful co-taught lesson that you and your co-teacher taught. Describe what you and your partner are 		What kind of activities occurred?	

<p>typically doing. What the students typically doing? The special education students? The general education students?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Discuss how you and your co-teacher assessed the students and managed classroom behavior. How do you know the students were learning? 3. Explain the roles you and your co-teacher take on during the lesson; how did you define the roles you each took on? 4. What do typical co-taught lessons look like in your co-taught classroom? 	<p>Give some examples of what you mean by....</p> <p>Why do you feel this was a successful lesson?</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk me through the planning process you and your co-teacher use for lesson planning. 2. Share how you ensure that you teach in parity 3. Discuss how satisfied you are with the shared plan time you receive. 4. Share what you feel you need to be successful to plan to implement inclusive practices. 	<p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p>
<p>Roles and Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about your role in the co-taught classroom. Can you give examples of typical activities you perform in this role? 2. Share how you and your co-teacher defined your roles in the classroom. 3. Discussion your satisfaction with your role during co-teaching 4. Talk to me about how you feel the students view your role in the co-taught classroom vs. your co-teacher's role. Discuss if you think there is a difference between students view your role? Explain if you feel the students see a difference between how they view you and your co-teacher 5. What are some of your responsibilities in the classroom? 6. Share how you and your co-teacher defined your responsibilities in the classroom. 7. Discussion your satisfaction with your responsibilities during co-teaching. 	<p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p>
<p>Relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss your relationship with your co-teacher. 2. Discuss how you have developed trust between each other. 3. Discuss your satisfaction with your teaching relationship. 	<p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p>
<p>Growth Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share the process for when new curriculum comes out. Share how often you receive new curriculum materials and supplies. 2. Discuss professional development opportunities you receive that support you in the classroom. 3. Discuss ways you learn and keep informed about inclusive practices 	<p>Expand on what the materials, supplies, professional development looks like</p>
<p>Administrator Supports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the supports your administrator provides to you on inclusive practices specifically on co-teaching and collaboration. 	<p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Explain how you feel about your administrators' ability to support your co-teaching needs in the inclusive classroom 3. What supports do you think you need in order to be successful in the co-taught classroom? 4. Share how you go about asking for these supports? 5. Can you describe the opportunities you have to discuss your experiences with co-teaching, both successes and challenges with administrators? Other teachers? 6. Share how you take advantage of these opportunities. 	
<p>Shared Decision Making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways are you able to participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of co-teaching in your school? 2. Describe how you have taken initiative to participate in these opportunities 3. Explain ways would you like to participate? 4. Share changes would you like to see in these opportunities. 	<p>Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?</p>
<p>Perception of Self</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk to me about how you feel as a teaching professional in your role as a co-teacher. 2. Share what you feel supports a positive perception of professionalism. 3. Share what you feel you need in order to support a positive perception of professionalism. 	<p>What did you mean when you said?</p> <p>Can you give examples of...</p>
<p>Things to SAY at the END:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would like to add or you think that I did not cover or you would like to share?</i> 	

Appendix E. Final Co-Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Co-Teacher Interview #2: Final Interview

Participant ID #:		Duration:	
Date:		Location:	
Things to SAY before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The purpose of this interview is to understand the impact of professional development on inclusive practices on the supports administrators provide to co-teachers in the inclusion classroom.</i> • <i>Whatever you say here will remain confidential. I will not reveal what was said here with your superiors, although I will summarize the information to reflect general patterns and themes. You will have a chance to review the themes.</i> • <i>I will record this interview and transcribe the recording verbatim. During the transcription and the study write up, I will use a pseudonym for you and any other names that you mention during the interview.</i> • <i>If there are any questions that you do not feel uncomfortable answering, you do not need to answer them.</i> 			
Questions		Detail Probes or Expanders	
Inclusive Practices and Beliefs Now that you have received feedback support on co-teaching and collaboration... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss how you feel about teaching in an inclusion classroom. 2. Explain how you feel about teaching collaboratively. 3. How has receiving feedback from your administrator changed how you co-teach and/or collaborate with your co-teacher? 4. How has receiving feedback from your administrator changed how you support students. 		Can you clarify what you mean when you said...? What did you reflect on	
Administrator Supports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to me the feedback that was provided to you to support your co-teaching and collaboration practices. 2. Describe how you utilized or implement the feedback you were provided. How did your co-teacher utilized or implement the feedback? 3. Discuss any documents your administrator shared with you and how you used these documents to support your teaching. 4. Discuss any supports on inclusive supports you think you need in order to continue to be successful in the inclusion classroom. Share how you would go about asking for these supports. 5. How you feel about your administrators' ability to provide supports, specifically feedback on your co-teaching needs in the inclusive classroom. 		Can you clarify what you mean when you said...?	
Co-Teaching Practices			

<p>Now that you have received supports on co-teaching and collaboration...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about a co-taught lesson in which you felt you implemented the feedback from your administrator really well. Walk me through what you and your partner did doing this lesson that met the goals of the feedback you discussed with your administrator. Explain to me what the students were doing. The special education students? The general education students? 2. Explain if you felt your role or your co-teacher's roles changed during this lesson from previous lessons before receiving feedback from your administrator. 3. How do you felt this lesson was as compared to lessons before receiving feedback? What changes do you see from your previous lessons? What impact do you see to the students? 4. How will you able to continue to apply the feedback you received to your co-teaching practice? 	<p>What kind of activities occurred?</p> <p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p>
<p>Classroom Dynamics</p> <p>Now that you have received feedback on co-teaching and collaboration...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain any changes you have made to your planning process. 2. Explain any changes in your relationship with your co-teacher. 3. Discuss if your satisfaction with co-teaching has changed. 	<p>Give some examples of what you mean by...</p>
<p>Growth Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how the opportunities you had to discuss your co-teaching lessons with your administrator impacted your teaching practice. 2. Discuss any changes you saw in your administrator's ability to support you in your teaching practice since participating in this study. 3. Discuss what supports you feel provided the biggest impact to supporting your co-teachers practice. Why do you feel this way? 4. What do you feel are the most essential supports needed for successful inclusive practices for teachers and for administrators? 5. Moving forward, what supports do you feel that you need to continue to be successful? 6. In the future, what steps will you take to participate in leadership opportunities regarding inclusive practices moving forward. 	
<p>Perception of Self</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After this experience, describe how you feel as a teaching professional in your role as a co-teacher. Share what you feel supports a positive perception of professionalism. Explain what you feel you need in order to support a positive perception of professionalism. 	<p>What did you mean when you said?</p> <p>Can you give examples of...</p>
<p>Things to SAY at the END:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would like to add or you think that I did not cover?</i> 	

Appendix F: Data Collection Form: Facilitating Effective Feedback Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form

Facilitating Effective Feedback Co-Teaching Observation and Data Collection Form

Domain 1: Collaboration Teachers should be able to provide evidence of modified tests/assignments, examples of accommodations provided to students, and/or materials provided to students. They should be able to show lesson plans they have collaboratively planned together indicating each teachers' role during the lesson, student supports, and how students will be assessed.				Evidence: <i>Lesson plans, planning agendas</i>
Component	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>	<i>Beginning</i>	
Willingness to Collaborate	Teachers exhibit enthusiasm for co-teaching as evident during collaboration plan time by attendance, daily conversations, willingness to support inclusive practices	Teachers exhibit some willingness to work together or willingness is emerging as evident during collaboration plan time by attendance, daily conversations, willingness to support inclusive practices	One or both teachers do not exhibit desire to work together as evident during collaboration plan time by attendance, daily conversations, willingness to support inclusive practices	
Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities	Expected roles have been defined and both teachers are clear about their roles; partners are flexible about changing roles	Expected roles are defined and both teachers are generally satisfied; imbalance of roles and responsibilities with one teacher carrying the "weight" of the class sometimes still occurs	Expected roles are not defined; imbalance of roles and responsibilities with one teacher carrying the "weight" of the class, lack of clarity of respective roles and responsibilities	
Collaborating for Lesson Planning	Lessons are jointly planned with evidence of both teachers' contributions on the planning document	Lesson plans are developed by the general educator, special educator adds specific instructional accommodations and supports	Lesson plans are developed by the general educator and shared with the special educator	
Student Supports	Lessons are differentiated as needed to best meet the needs of all students utilizing UDL guidelines; aligned to meet students' IEP goals.	Lessons are differentiated as needed to meet the needs of students on IEPs rather than all learners	No evidence is available that lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all students	

Modifications and Accommodations	It is clear both teachers have input to modifications and accommodations and they are clearly identified on lesson plans and it is identified who is responsible for providing the supports; supports are appropriate and aligned with student's IEP goals	Only the special education teacher provides input to modifications and accommodations and they may be on identified separate plans; they are appropriate and aligned with student's IEP goals	No evidence is available that modifications/ accommodations are discussed for assignments or classroom evaluations prior to the lesson being taught	
Knowledge of Content for Planning	Both teachers possess a general knowledge of curriculum; general education teacher/content teacher should support the special education teacher in learning the class curriculum	One partner is more knowledgeable about the entire curriculum but the other partner displays some knowledge of the content	One partner exhibits knowledge about the curriculum standards, frameworks, objectives, sequence) but the other partner is not familiar with the curriculum	
Use of Data to Inform Instruction	Teachers equally share in data analysis for all students; data is consistently used to inform instruction. Both teachers share in instructional decision making	Teachers share in data analysis of all students; data is occasionally used to inform instruction. One teacher dominates instructional decision making	Teachers divide data analysis responsibilities (special educator analyzes data for students on IEPs and general educator analyzes data for students not on IEP's). Data is minimally used to inform instruction	
Evaluation of Student Outcomes	Student achievement data are used to make decisions about instruction on an on- going basis by both teachers; a variety of data are used (test scores, products, curriculum-based assessment, etc.)	Student achievement data are reviewed by one or both teachers but are not used to evaluate or change instruction	Student achievement data are not used to make decisions; data are not reviewed	
Evidence:				

Domain 2: <i>Environment</i> Teachers should be able to show evidence of planning integrating students in the classroom i.e. teachers should be able to point out students with disabilities that are integrated into the classroom setting. In addition, classroom management plans show positive behavior plans. Teachers should be able to discuss how they share responsibility for sharing classroom management in the classroom.				Evidence: <i>Classroom walk-throughs, classroom management plans</i>
Component	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>	<i>Beginning</i>	
Integration of Students in the Classroom	Placement of students is carefully planned; students and teachers are fully integrated as a learning community; heterogeneous mix	Some initial planning the placement of students; students are becoming integrated; both teachers sometimes work with all students	Little to no planning for integration; students are minimally integrated; teachers view students as “mine” and “yours”	
Classroom Management	Teachers have consistent behavior expectations and responses to student behavior; both teachers equitably share classroom management	Teachers are inconsistent with behavior expectations and often differ in responses to student behavior	One teacher has primary responsibility for classroom management	
Parity	Teachers have equal, active roles in classroom, display equal status, evenly divide responsibilities, and value the contribution of each member	Teachers have equal status and roles are nearly equal; teachers still working to establish equal responsibilities or one person is more dominant or exhibits higher status	Teachers do not have equal role/status in classroom; one teacher is functioning as assistant or responsibilities are not shared	
Evidence:				

Domain 3: <i>Instructing</i> Teachers should be able to provide evidence from planning meetings that they have collaborated and designed lesson plans where they have planned to take 50-50 responsibility in instructing and supporting all students in the classroom. Lesson plans show a respect for each teachers' expertise building on the general education teacher's content knowledge and the special education teachers modification knowledge. However, both teachers show a comfort level in taking the lead in teaching and modifying work.				Evidence: <i>Classroom walk-throughs, planning agendas</i>
Component	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>	<i>Beginning</i>	
Shared Instructional Delivery	Teachers equally share instruction and actively engage in the lesson; both their voices are heard teaching and providing instruction	Teachers share instruction but not 50-50; or one teacher may teach a section of the lesson then another teacher may teach a section of the lesson but not in parity	The classroom/content teacher leads instruction while the special education teacher takes on the role of an assistant or supports only the students on IEPs	
Supporting Instruction	Teachers equally share responsibilities of supporting/assisting/monitoring/questioning all students; providing feedback to all students to support their learning growth and understanding of concepts	One teacher takes the lead in supporting/assisting/monitoring/questioning the students; providing feedback to support their learning growth and understanding of concepts' while the other teacher supports specific students or works with small groups of students on IEPs	The classroom/content teacher takes the lead in supporting/assisting/monitoring/questioning the students; providing feedback to support their learning growth and understanding of concepts' while the special education teacher supports takes on the role of an assistant or works only with the students on IEPs	
Shared Expertise	Both teachers contribute their expertise and are comfortable contributing to the instruction; teachers value each other's' expertise	Teachers are still working to determine how to use their individual expertise; one teacher is dissatisfied with role or opportunity to share expertise	Teachers have not determined how to use their individual expertise	
Supporting Specific Student Needs	Teachers have discussed a range of student needs and proactively differentiated the instruction as needed to best meet the needs of	Special educator anticipates student needs in context of instructional objectives and prepares instructional	Special educator reactively addresses student needs by providing on-the-spot supports (may or may not address specific	

	all students; both teachers provide instructional accommodations, modifications and supports	accommodations and modifications and supports	student accommodations and modifications)	
Evidence				
Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities Teachers should be able to show that they have reflected or debriefed after lessons about topics such as the co-teaching methods, instructions, assessments, student needs.				Evidence: <i>Administrator feedback discussion, lesson plans, planning agenda</i>
Component	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>	<i>Beginning</i>	
Reflection on Co-Teaching Relationship	Teachers engage in ongoing debriefing and review of co-teaching practices in order to continually improve co-teaching relationship	Teachers occasionally debrief co-taught lessons and use information to change future practices but rarely review broader co-teaching relationship	Teachers rarely debrief a co-taught lesson or review co-teaching relationship	
Reflection on Administrator Feedback	Teachers actively listen and attentive during feedback sessions and see feedback as a supportive component in the co-teaching process	Teachers listen during feedback sessions, but may be defensive about their actions or point of views; teachers may view the feedback as a supportive component in the co-teaching process if it aligns with their personal understanding of the co-teaching process	Teachers listen during feedback sessions, but may be defensive about their actions or point of views; teachers do not view the feedback as a supportive component in the co-teaching process	
Implementation of Administrator Feedback	Teachers discuss ways to implement the suggestions or strategies given during the feedback and implement the inclusive	Teachers attempt to implement the suggestions or strategies regarding inclusive practices given during the feedback session	Teachers rarely or never attempt to implement suggestions or strategies regarding inclusive practices given during the feedback discussions	

	practices discussed during the feedback session			
Communication	Teachers openly, honestly communicate; use active listening skills; and manage conflict with effective negotiation skills	Teachers consistently communicate outside of class, uses effective communication skills generally; some issues are difficult to discuss or not resolved	Teachers engage in minimal communication outside of class; does not discuss (or rarely discusses) concerns, issues or feelings	
Evidence:				



Consent for Administrator Participation in Research on Co-Teaching Professional Development

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form such as this one to tell you about the research, to explain that taking part is voluntary, to describe the risks and benefits of participation, and to help you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Deb Faermark, Doctoral Student

Faculty Sponsor Name and Title: Daniel Maggin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Department and Institution: Special Education Department
University of Illinois at Chicago

Address and Contact Information: 1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60607
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Why am I being asked?

You are being asked to be a subject in a research study on the impact that professional development trainings on co-teaching and inclusive practices for school administrators have on the administrators' ability to support co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. You have been asked to participate in the research because you are administrator working in a school that has co-taught classrooms. Please identify if you meet the eligibility criteria for the study.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), nor will it affect your relationship with your school or school district. **If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.**

Approximately 12 participants (4 administrators and 8 co-teachers) may be involved in this research.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research study is to explore the extent professional development trainings on co-teaching and inclusive practices for school administrators have on the administrators' ability to support co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. This study may help administrators better provide support to co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. In addition, it may add to the existing body of research on co-teaching and inclusion and support co-teaching reform.

What are the inclusion criteria?

Eligibility to participate in this study requires that all four of the following criteria must be met:

1. You self-identify as having supervision responsibilities of co-teachers in co-taught classrooms.
2. You are able to identify two co-teaching dyads who co-teach in an inclusive classroom and who are willing to participate in the study and the co-teachers consent to participate in the study.
3. You agree to participate in one-on-one professional development sessions provided by the researcher, implement feedback from the professional development to the participating co-teaching dyads, and other aspects of the research study outlined below. You further agree to have the information and data from this study collected for research.
4. You agree that the classroom walk-throughs and corresponding feedback that you will provide to the participating co-teachers has no bearing on the co-teachers' performance evaluations and the information collected from these observations is for the sole purpose of this research study.

The following describes more specifically what you will be asked to do:

- ***Identify co-teachers willing to participate in this study:*** You will be asked to identify two co-teaching dyads that are willing to participate in this study. You may choose the co-teaching dyads based on their availability, schedules, and their willingness to participate.

Co-Teachers will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in two interviews with the researcher
- Submit co-taught lesson plans and co-planning agendas for review by you and the researcher
- Be observed by you and the researcher during five co-taught lessons
- Meet with you four times to hear feedback on their co-teaching lesson
- Agree to try to implement the feedback that is provided to them on co-teaching practices

In addition, you will be asked to participate in the following:

- ***Interviews:*** You will be interviewed 3 times throughout the study. Each interview will last approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded. You will be asked to review the researcher's themes, this is in addition to the interviews.
- ***Professional Development:*** You will participate in three days of professional development over the course of three weeks on co-teaching and inclusive practices. The professional development will be provided by the researcher to you in a one-on-one setting. Each professional development session will take 90 minutes. You will receive a binder of material on co-teaching, collaboration practices, and providing feedback to teachers. You will then be asked to implement professional development in the form of

feedback on inclusive practices, specifically effective co-teaching and collaboration to the participating co-teachers. You will be asked to audio record the feedback that you provide to the co-teachers since the researcher will not be present at these meetings. These audio recordings will be used to understand the feedback that is provided to teachers on their inclusive practices.

- **Observations:** You will be asked to observe the participating co-teachers in the form of scheduled walk-throughs. Walk-throughs will provide information for the feedback on inclusive practices, specifically effective co-teaching and collaboration to support the co-teachers in their practice, they will not be evaluative in nature. During these walk-through observations, you will be asked to complete a data collection form that will be provided to you by the researcher. The researcher will be present at the walk-throughs to complete the data collection form. The researcher will compare both forms for inter-rater reliability.
- **Document Review:** You will be asked to review the participating co-teachers lesson plans and planning agendas during the course of the study. You will be provided a data collection form to review the documents. These document reviews will be used as part of the feedback you provide to the teachers on inclusive practices. The researcher will also review the documents on the data collection form. The researcher will compare both forms for inter-rater reliability.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. There is a possibility that others in the school may find out that you are participating in this research study. The students in the classroom being observed may be aware that you are part of the study, although the students are not a part of this study and no student data will be collected. There is the risk of a breach of privacy (others may find out the subject is participating in the research) and/or confidentiality (others may find out identifiable information about the subject disclosed or collected during the research.) However, these risks are minimal given the protections that are in place. Precautions will be taken to minimize risks, including the removal of any identifiers accidentally disclosed during when the recordings are transcribed and the replacement of subject names with pseudonyms during the transcription process. Neither your name nor any other identifiers will be used in presentations or publications regarding this research. In addition, you may also experience the following:

- You may find some feel uncomfortable being auto-recorded during the interview process.
- You may find some of the questions regarding the co-teaching relationship and process sensitive.
- You may feel uncomfortable with the co-teaching professional development due to the length of the professional development and sensitive topics such as collegial relationships that will be discussed.

You may withdraw from this research at any time, even if you sign this consent form without consequence.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

Participating in the study may not provide any direct benefit to you. You may however benefit from the professional development opportunities by learning co-teaching and inclusive practices that may improve co-teaching practices in the inclusive classroom. In addition, the information

provided through the professional development opportunities may help to expand your knowledge of the supports that administrators may provide to co-teachers with regard to inclusion practices in classrooms.

What other options are there?

You have the option to not participate in this study. You do not have to sign this form. Taking part in this study is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you may skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. You are also free to withdraw at any time. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current position at your school, school district, or your relationship with UIC or the researcher.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

Your privacy will be protected. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the study and only the researchers will have access to the list of names stored on a password protected excel document. Information will remain confidential and not shared with your superiors. All data will be stored on a password protected computer that only the primary researcher has access to at all times. Only the researchers will have access to a temporary list of names and contact information while interviews are still being conducted and to a password protected excel document on a password protected computer. This list will be destroyed when the interviews and any communications between the researcher and you regarding the accuracy of your interviews is complete. All audio recordings will be stored on a password protected device and destroyed once they are transcribed with identifiers removed and themes have been member checked by participants. Information will remain confidential and will never be shared with your superiors.

The people who will know that you are a research subject are members of the research team. Students and parents may know you are participating in the study. Teachers, co-teaching dyads and other school administrators will know you are participating in the research study. Otherwise information about you will only be disclosed to others with your written permission, or if necessary to protect your rights or welfare or if required by law.

Study information, which identifies you and the consent form signed by you, will be looked at and/or copied for checking up on the research by: UIC OPRS. The State of Illinois auditors may also monitor the research. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

What are the costs for participating in this research?

There are no costs to you for participating in this research. All materials will be provided to you.

Will I be compensated for this research?

During each professional development activity, you will be provided snacks and drinks. You will also be provided co-teaching and inclusion materials while participating in the study. Following your full participation (i.e. identifying co-teaching dyads, participating in three days of professional development, three interviews, conducting classroom walk-throughs, documents reviews, providing feedback to co-teachers, and review emergent themes via email) in this study,

you will be compensated with a \$50 Target gift card at the end of the study to thank you for your time and commitment.

Can I withdraw from or be removed from this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or a decision to discontinue participation will not result in any penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this research study will not impact your relationship with UIC nor your relationship with your school or your school district.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

You may contact Deb Faermark if you have any questions about this research study or your participation in it. Deb Faermark can be reached by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the faculty sponsor, Dr. Daniel Maggin by phone at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED].

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this consent form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312- 996-1711 or 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu.

Remember:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship with UIC or your school district.

You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

Signature of Subject

I have read (or someone has read to me) the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research. I will be given a copy of this signed and dated form.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____

Date (must be same as subject's) _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent _____



Consent for Co-Teacher Participation in Research on Co-Teaching Professional Development

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form such as this one to tell you about the research, to explain that taking part is voluntary, to describe the risks and benefits of participation, and to help you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Deb Faermark, Doctoral Student

Faculty Sponsor Name and Title: Daniel Maggin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Department and Institution: Special Education Department
University of Illinois at Chicago

Address and Contact Information: 1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60607
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Why am I being asked?

You are being asked to be a subject in a research study on the impact that professional development trainings on co-teaching and inclusive practices for school administrators have on the administrators' ability to support co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. You have been asked to participate in the research because your administrator identified you as a co-teacher willing to participate in this study. Please identify if you meet the eligibility criteria for the study.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), nor will it affect your relationship with your school or school district. **If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.**

Approximately 12 participants (4 administrators and 8 co-teachers) may be involved in this research.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research study is to explore the extent professional development trainings on co-teaching and inclusive practices for school administrators have on the administrators' ability to provide feedback to co-teachers to improve the co-teachers' inclusive practices in the classroom. This study may help administrators better provide support to co-teachers in the inclusive classroom. In addition, it may add to the existing body of research on co-teaching and inclusion and support co-teaching reform.

What are the inclusion criteria?

Eligibility to participate in this study requires that all three of the following criteria must be met:

1. You are a co-teacher who has been recommended by a participating administrator of your school as being part of a dyad willing to take part in this study.
2. You are a co-teacher who teaches in a classroom with students identified as having Individual Education Plans.
3. You are willing to participate in this study.

The following describes more specifically what you will be asked to do:

- *Interviews:* You will be interviewed 2 times, a pre-interview and a post-interview. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will be audio recorded. You will be asked to review the researcher's themes, this is in addition to the interviews.
- *Observations:* Your administrator will observe you and your co-teaching partner five times during co-taught lessons. These will be planned observations and will not have any impact on your yearly evaluation, they are solely related to provide feedback related to the content of the research topic.
- *Document Review:* You will be asked to submit a copy of your co-teaching lesson plans each week of the study to your administrator. This will require no additional work on your behalf other than photocopying your existing lesson plans. You will also be asked to show any planning agendas you have if you have one, if not, you will not be required to show this document.
- *Meetings:* You will be asked to meet with your administrator with your co-teaching partner after they observe your co-taught lesson to receive professional development in the form of feedback regarding collaboration and co-teaching practices. Feedback is meant to support and grow your co-teaching practice, not to evaluate your teaching. This session will be audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by the researcher.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. There is a possibility that others in the school may find out that you are participating in this research study. The students in the classroom being observed may be aware that you are part of the study, although the students are not a part of this study and no student data will be collected. There is the risk of a breach of privacy (others may find out the subject is participating in the research) and/or confidentiality (others may find out identifiable information about the subject disclosed or collected during the research.) However, these risks are minimal given the protections that are in place. Precautions will be taken to minimize these risks, including the removal of any identifiers accidentally disclosed during when the recordings are transcribed and the replacement of subject names with pseudonyms during the transcription process. Neither your name nor any other

identifier will be used in presentations or publications regarding this research. In addition, you may also experience the following:

- You may find some feel uncomfortable being auto-recorded during the interview process.
- You may find some of the questions regarding the co-teaching relationship and process sensitive.
- You may feel uncomfortable with the co-teaching professional development that will be provided in the form of feedback from your administrator on co-teaching and collaboration. Feedback topics may include sensitive topics such as collegial relationships and may also include co-teaching approaches.

You may withdraw from this research at any time, even if you sign this consent form without consequence.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

Participating in the study may not provide any direct benefit to you. You may however benefit from the professional development you will be provided in the form of feedback on co-teaching and collaboration from your administrator. You may learn co-teaching and inclusive practices that may improve your co-teaching practices in your inclusive classroom. In addition, the information you provide may help in expanding knowledge of the supports that administrators provide to co-teachers with regard to inclusion practices in classrooms.

What other options are there?

You have the option to not participate in this study. You do not have to sign this form. Taking part in this study is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you may skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. You are also free to withdraw at any time. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current position at your school or school district school or your relationship with UIC or the researcher.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

Your privacy will be protected. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the study and only the researchers will have access to the list of names stored on a password protected excel document. Information will remain confidential and not shared with your superiors. All data will be stored on a password protected computer that only the primary researcher has access to at all times. Only the researchers will have access to a temporary list of names and contact information while interviews are still being conducted and to a password protected excel document on a password protected computer. This list will be destroyed when the interviews and any communications between the researcher and you regarding the accuracy of your interviews is complete. All audio recordings will be stored on a password protected device and destroyed once they are transcribed with identifiers removed and themes have been member checked by participants. Information will remain confidential and will never be shared with your superiors.

The people who will know that you are a research subject are members of the research team. Students and parents may know you are participating in the study. Other teachers and school administrators will know you are participating in the research study. Otherwise information about you will only be disclosed to others with your written permission, or if necessary to protect your rights or welfare or if required by law.

Study information, which identifies you and the consent form signed by you, will be looked at and/or copied for checking up on the research by: UIC OPRS. The State of Illinois auditors may also monitor the research. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

What are the costs for participating in this research?

There are no costs to you for participating in this research. All materials will be provided to you.

Will I be compensated for this research?

During each professional development activity, you will be provided snacks and drinks. You will also be provided co-teaching and inclusion materials while participating in the study. Following your full participation (i.e. participating in two interviews, submit co-teaching lesson plans and planning agendas for document review, allow co-taught lessons to be observed, participate in professional development in the form of feedback from your administrator, and review emergent themes via email) in this study, you will be compensated with a \$25 Target gift card at the end of the study to thank you for your time and commitment.

Can I withdraw from or be removed from this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or a decision to discontinue participation will not result in any penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this research study will not impact your relationship with UIC nor your relationship with your school or your school district. You may be removed from this study if you are no longer co-teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

You may contact Deb Faermark if you have any questions about this research study or your participation in it. Deb Faermark can be reached by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the faculty sponsor, Dr. Daniel Maggin by phone at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED].

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this consent form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312- 996-1711 or 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu.

Remember:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship with UIC or your school district.

You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

Signature of Subject

I have read (or someone has read to me) the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research. I will be given a copy of this signed and dated form.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____

Date (must be same as subject's) _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent _____

Appendix I. IRB Approval



Approval Notice Amendment to Research Protocol and/or Consent Document – Expedited Review UIC Amendment # 1

January 15, 2019

Deborah Faermark, MAT, CAS
Special Education
Phone: [REDACTED]

**RE: Protocol # 2018-0901
“Improving Co-Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom through Professional Development for Administrators”**

Dear Ms. Faermark:

No enrollment/consent/data collection may take place until the sites have been identified and the appropriate letters of support/IRB approvals have been submitted, via an Amendment.

Members of Institutional Review Board (IRB) #2 have reviewed this amendment to your research and/or consent form under expedited procedures for minor changes to previously approved research allowed by Federal regulations [45 CFR 46.110(b)(2) and/or 21 CFR 56.110(b)(2)]. The amendment to your research was determined to be acceptable and may now be implemented.

Please note the following information about your approved amendment:

Amendment Approval Date: January 14, 2019

Amendment:

Summary: UIC Amendment #1 dated December 27, 2018 and received via OPRS Live January 2, 2019: An investigator-initiated amendment involving the notification of the expansion in the subject composition to include elementary school administrators. Thus the eligibility to participate in the study has been changed to eliminate the language “secondary”, “content-specific” and “6th, 7th, and 8th grade classrooms or higher” in the Initial Review Application (12/27/2018); the Administrator Recruitment/Consent form (V4; 12/27/18) and the Co-Teach Recruitment/Consent form (V4; 12/27/18).

Research Protocol(s):

- a) Improving Co-Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom through Professional Development for Administrators; Version 4; 12/27/2018

Informed Consent(s):

- a) Administrator Recruitment/Consent; Version 4; 12/27/2018
- b) Co-Teacher Recruitment/Consent; Version 4; 12/27/2018

Please note the Review History of this submission:



Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
01/02/2019	Amendment	Expedited	01/14/2019	Approved

Please be sure to:

→ **Use only the IRB-approved and stamped consent document(s) and/or HIPAA Authorization form(s) enclosed with this letter when enrolling subjects.**

→ Use your research protocol number (2018-0901) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure,

"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

(<http://tiger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/policies/0924.pdf>)

Please note that the UIC IRB #2 has the right to ask further questions, seek additional information, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-2939. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Jewell Hamilton, MSW
IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):

Please note that stamped .pdfs of all approved recruitment and consent documents have been uploaded to OPRSLive, and you must access and use only those approved documents to recruit and enroll subjects into this research project. OPRS/IRB no longer issues paper letters or stamped/approved documents.

cc: Daniel Maggin, Faculty Advisor, Special Education, M/C 147
Norma Lopez-Reyna, Special Education, M/C 147

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VITA

Deborah L. Faermark

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL **May 2020**

Doctorate of Philosophy in Special Education

Dissertation Title: Improving Co-Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom through Professional Development for Administrators

Chair: Dr. Daniel Maggin

Concordia University, Chicago, IL August 2009

School Leadership in Administration

National Louis University, Evanston, IL June 2006

CAS, Learning Behavior Specialist

National Louis University, Wheaton, IL June 1998

Masters of Arts in Teaching, Elementary Education

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL December 1995

Bachelors in Communication Disorders and Sciences

Minor Psychology

LICENSURES

- Professional Educator License

ENDORSEMENTS

- General Administrative
- Learning Behavior Specialist 1
- Director of Special Education
- Elementary Education
- Language Arts
- Social Sciences
- Middle School
- English as a Second Language (expected Summer, 2020)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

National Louis University, Chicago, IL 2011 – Present

- Adjunct Professor, 2011 – Present
- University Supervisor, 2011 – Present
- Alternative Teacher Licensure Program Coordinator, 2016 – 2018
- Professional Lecturer, 2013 – 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE, continued

Springman Middle School, Glenview School District 34, IL 2007 – 2011
Blue Ribbon School 2008

- Sixth Grade Student Services Teacher, Special Education

Harriet Tubman School, Dolton School District 148, IL 2002 – 2007

- Self-Contained and Resource Elementary Special Education Teacher

Harriet Tubman School, Dolton School District 148, IL 1998 – 2002

- Third Grade Teacher, General Education

James Hart Junior High, Homewood School District 153, IL Spring 1998
Blue Ribbon School 1996

- *Student Teacher, Eighth Grade Language Arts*
- *Long-term substitute teacher, Eighth Grade Language Arts*

SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION

National Louis University, Chicago, IL 2014 – 2015

- Field Experience Manager, Office of Field Experiences

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE: NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

- ECE 570: Internship Early Childhood Preprimary Setting (*traditional co-taught*)
- ECE 587: Early Childhood Resident Teacher Practicum (*traditional co-taught*)
- SPE 500: Introduction to Exceptional Children and Adolescents/Special Education (*online, traditional*)
- SPE 501: Educational and Diagnostic Assessment of Exceptional Children & Adolescents (*blended, traditional*)
- SPE 506: Frameworks, Perspectives, and Collaboration in Special Education (*traditional, blended, online*)
- SPE 507: Methods of Social/Emotional Support (*traditional*)
- SPE 509: Literacy Instruction for Students with Disabilities (*traditional*)
- SPE 523: Mathematics Instruction for Students with Disabilities (*traditional*)
- SPE 527: Differentiated and Individualized Curriculum and Instruction (*blended, online, traditional*)
- SPE 572: Practicum I: Developing Teacher Candidate Competencies (*blended, traditional*)
- SPE 587: Seminar/Teaching Children with Special Needs (*online, traditional*)
- SPE 592C: Practicum/Teaching Children and Adolescents with Special Needs (*blended, traditional*)

RESEARCH INTEREST

- Exploring the roles of administrators with regard to co-teaching and inclusion. Specifically, the impact that professional development trainings on co-teaching and collaboration for administrators have on their ability to provide feedback to co-teachers in order to support and improve their co-teaching practices.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Faermark, D.L.** (2018, December). *Disability Awareness and Successful Inclusion Supports*. Workshop Presentation at the Association of Illinois Middle-Grade Schools (AIMS) Conference
- **Faermark, D.L.** (2018, November). *Successful Administrator Supports for Co-Teachers in the Inclusive Classroom*. Paper presentation at the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Council of Exceptional Children
- **Faermark, D.L.** (2018, March). *Successful Supports for Co-Teachers*". Paper presentation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) EDU Conference
- **Faermark, D.L. & Zeitlin, J.M.** (2017, November). *Administrator Supports for Co-teachers in the Inclusive Classroom*. Paper presentation at the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Council of Exceptional Children
- **Faermark, D.L.** (2008, November; 2010, November). *Differentiated Curriculum in the Classroom for All Learners*, Invited Presenter New Teacher Workshop, Governor's State University
- **Faermark, D.L.** (2008, December). *Disability Awareness Through Simulations*, Workshop presentation at the Association of Illinois Middle-Grade Schools (AIMS) Conference
- Wakefield D.S. & **Faermark, D.L.** (2014, January). *Google Drive: A Tool for Collaboration, Co-Teaching and Classroom Connections*. Workshop presentation at the Assistive Technology Industry Association

HONORS and DISTINCTIONS

- **Excellence in Service & Engagement**, *Nominated*; 2019
- **Excellence in Teaching Award**, *Nominated*; 2019, 2020
- **Albin & Young Award** in recognition as a UIC Special Education doctoral student who shows promise of making significant contributions in the field, 2019

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Association of Illinois Middle Schools (AIMS)
- Council for Exceptional Children
 - Illinois Council for Exception Children
 - Teacher Education Division (TED)